Hutchinson
Tho. Adams 1730.
William Adams
1808.

THE

WORKS

Of the late LEARNED DIVINE

Stephen Charnock, B.D.

BEING SEVERAL

DISCOURSES

UPON THE

Existence and Attributes

OF

GOD.

VOL. I.

To which is added

His DISCOURSE of

DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

LONDON:

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XUM

Mr Toplady, speaking of this volume of Mr. Charnock on the Attributes of God, observes — "Perspicuity & depth; metaphysical sublimity & evangelical simplicity; immense learning & plain, but irrefragable reasoning conspire to render that performance one of the most inestimable productions, that ever did honor to the sanctified judgment & genius of a human being."

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TO THE READER.

THIS long ſince promiſed, and greatly expected Volume of the Reverend Author upon the Divine Attributes, being Tranſcribed out of his own Manuſcripts, by the unwearied diligence of thoſe worthy Perſons that undertook it, is now at laſt come to thy hands: Doubt not but thy Reading will pay for thy waiting, and thy ſatisfaction make full compenſation for thy patience. In the Epiſtle before his Treatiſe of Providence, it was intimated that his following Diſcourſes would not be inferiour to that, and we are perſwaded, that e're thou haſt peruſed one half of this, thou wilt acknowledg that it was modeſtly ſpoken. Enough, aſſure thy ſelf, thou wilt find here for thy entertainment and delight, as well as profit: The ſublimeneſs, variety, and rareneſs of the Truths here handled, together with the elegancy of the Compoſure, neatneſs of the Style, and whatever is wont to make any Book deſirable, will all concur in the recommendation of this. What ſo high and noble a Subject, what ſo fit for his Meditations or thine, as the higheſt and nobleſt Being, and thoſe tranſcendly glorious Perfections wherewith he is clothed? A meer Contemplation of the Divine Excellencies may afford much pleaſure to any man that loves to exerciſe his Reaſon, and is addicted to ſpeculation: But what incomparable ſweetneſs then will holy Souls find, in viewing and conſidering thoſe Perfections now, which they are more fully to behold hereafter; and ſeeing what manner of God, how wiſe and powerful, how great, and good, and holy is he, in whom the Covenant intereſts them, and in the enjoyment of whom their happineſs conſiſts? If rich men delight to ſum up their vaſt Revenues, to read

Mr. *J. Wichens.*
Mr. *Aſhton.*

over their Rentals, look upon their Hoords; if they bleſs themſelves in their great Wealth, or, to uſe the Prophets words *Jer.* 9. 23. *glory in their Riches*, well may Believers rejoyce and *glory* in their *knowing the Lord, verſ.* 24. and pleaſe themſelves in ſeeing how rich they are in having an immenſely full, and All-ſufficient God for their Inheritance. Alas, how little do moſt men know of that Deity they profeſs to ſerve, and own, not as their Soveraign only, but their Portion? To ſuch this Author might ſay, as *Paul* to the *Athenians*, *Whom you ignorantly worſhip, him declare I unto you.* Theſe Treatiſes, *Reader*, will inform thee who he is, whom thou calleſt *thine*, preſent thee with a view of thy chief good, and make thee value thy ſelf a thouſand times more upon thy intereſt in God, than upon all external Accompliſhments, and worldly Poſſeſſions. Who but delights to hear well of one whom he loves? God is thy *Love* if thou be a Believer, and then it cannot but fill thee with delight and raviſhment to hear ſo much ſpoken in his Praiſe. *David* deſired *to dwell in the Houſe of the Lord*, that he might there *behold* his *beauty*; How much of that *beauty* (if thou art but capable of ſeeing it) mayeſt thou *behold* in this Volume, which was our Author's main buſineſs, for about three years before he died, to diſplay before his hearers? True indeed, the Lord's Glory, as ſhining forth before his heavenly Courtiers above, is unapproachable by mortal Men; but what of it is viſible in his Works, Creation, Providence, Redemption, falls under the cognizance of his Inferiour Subjects here; and this is in a great meaſure preſented to view in theſe Diſcourſes, and ſo much we may well ſay, as may (by the help of Grace) be effectual to raiſe thy Admiration, attract thy Love, provoke thy Deſires, and enable thee to make ſome gueſs at what is yet unſeen; and why not likewiſe to clear thy Eyes, and prepare them for future *ſight*, as well as turn them away from the contemptible Vanities of this preſent Life? Whatever is glorious in this World, yet (as the Apoſtle in another caſe) *hath no glory by reaſon of the glory that excels*: This *excellent Glory* is the Subject of this Book, to which all Created beauty is but meer ſhadow and duskyneſs. If thy Eyes be well fixed on this, they will not be eaſily drawn to wander after other Objects: If thy heart be taken with God, it will be mortified to every thing that is not God.

Acts 17. 23.

2 Cor. 3. 10.

But thou haſt in this Book, not only an excellent Subject in the general, but great variety of Matter, for the imployment of thy Underſtanding, as well as enlivening thy Affections, and that too ſuch as thou wilt not readily find elſewhere; many excellent

excellent things which are out of the rode of ordinary Preachers and VVriters, and which may be grateful to the Curious, no leſs than ſatisfactory to the Wiſe and Judicious. It is not therefore a Book to be play'd with, or ſlept over, but read with the moſt intent and ſerious mind; for though it afford much pleaſure for the Phancy, yet much more work for the heart, and hath indeed enough in it to buſie all the Faculties. The Dreſs is compleat and decent, yet not gariſh or Theatrical; the Rhetorick maſculine and vigorous, ſuch as became a Pulpit, and was never borrowed from the Stage; the Expreſſions full, clear, apt, and ſuch as are beſt ſuted to the weightineſs and ſpirituality of the Truths here delivered. 'Tis plain, he was no empty Preacher, but was more for ſenſe than ſound, filled up his words with matter, and choſe rather to inform his hearers Minds, than to claw any itching Ears. Yet we will not ſay but ſome little things, a Word, or a Phraſe now and then he may have, which no doubt had he lived to tranſcribe his own Sermons, he would have altered. If in ſome leſſer matters he differ from thee, it is but in ſuch as Godly and Learned Men do frequently, and may without breach of Charity differ in among themſelves; in ſome things he may differ from us too, and it may be we from each other; and where are there any two perſons, who have in all, eſpecially the more diſputalbe Points of Religion, exactly the ſame Sentiments, at leaſt expreſs themſelves altogether in the ſame terms? But this we muſt ſay, that though he treat of many of the moſt abſtruſe and myſterious Doctrines of Chriſtianity, which are the Subjects of great Debates and Controverſies in the world, yet we find no one material thing in which he may juſtly be called Heterodox (unleſs old Hereſies be of late grown Orthodox, and his differing from them muſt make him faulty) but generally delivers (as in his * former Pieces) what is moſt conſonant to the Faith of *This*, and other the beſt Reformed Churches. He was not indeed for that Modern Divinity which is ſo much in vogue with ſome, who would be counted the only ſound Divines; having *taſted the old*, he did not *deſire the new*, but ſaid *the old is better.* Some Errours, eſpecially the *Socinian*, he ſets himſelf induſtriouſly againſt, and cuts the very ſinews of them, yet, ſometimes, almoſt without naming them.

* *Treatiſe of Providence and of Thoughts.*

In the Doctrinal Part of ſeveral of his Diſcourſes thou wilt find the depth of *Polemical* Divinity, and in his inferences from thence the ſweetneſs of *Practical*; ſome things which may exerciſe the profoundeſt Scholar, and others which may inſtruct and edifie the weakeſt Chriſtian; nothing is more nervous than his Reaſonings, and nothing more affecting than his Applications.

Though he make great uſe of *Schoolmen*, yet they are certainly more beholden to him, than he to them; he adopts their Notions, but he refines them too, and improves them, and reforms them from the barbarouſneſs in which they were expreſſed, and dreſſeth them up in his own Language (ſo far as the nature of the matter will permit, and more clear terms are to be found) and ſo makes them intelligible to Vulgar Capacities, which in in their original rudeneſs were obſcure and ſtrange, even to Learned Heads.

In a word, he handles the great Truths of the Goſpel, with that Perſpicuity, Gravity, and Majeſty which beſt becomes the Oracles of God; and we have reaſon to believe, that no judicious and unbiaſſed Reader, but will acknowledg this to be incomparably the beſt practical Treatiſe the World ever ſaw in *Engliſh* upon this Subject. What Dr. *Jackson* did (to whom our Author gave all due reſpect) was more brief, and in another way. Dr. *Preſton* did worthily upon the *Attributes* in his day, but his Diſcourſes likewiſe are more ſuccinct, when this Authors are more full and large. But whatever were the mind of God in it, it was not his Will, that either of theſe two ſhould live to finiſh what he had begun, both being taken away when preaching upon this Subject. Happy Souls! Whoſe laſt breath was ſpent in ſo noble a VVork, **praiſing God while* they had *any being*.

**Pſa.*146.2.

His Method is much the ſame in moſt of theſe Diſcourſes, both in the Doctrinal and Practical Part, which will make the whole more plain, and facile to ordinary Readers. He rarely makes Objections, and yet frequently anſwers them, by implying them in thoſe Propoſitions he lays down for the clearing up the Truths he aſſerts. His Dexterity is admirable in the Applicatory work, where he not only brings down the higheſt Doctrines to the loweſt Capacities, but collects great variety of proper, pertinent, uſeful, and yet (many times) unthought of Inferences; and that from thoſe Truths, which however they afford much matter for Inquiſition and Speculation, yet might ſeem (unleſs to the moſt intelligent and judicious Chriſtians) to have a more remote influence upon practices. He is not like ſome *School Writers*, who attenuate and rarifie the Matter they Diſcourſe of to a degree bordering upon Annihilation; at leaſt beat it ſo thin, that a puff of breath may blow it away; ſpin their Thred ſo fine, that the Cloth, when made up, proves uſeleſs; Solidity dwindles into Niceties, and what we thought we had got by their Aſſertions, we loſe by their Diſtinctions. But if our Author have ſome Subtil-

ties

ties and ſuperfine Notions in his Argumentations, yet he condenſeth them again, and conſolidates them into ſubſtantial and profitable Corolaries in his Applications: And in them his main buſineſs is, as to diſcipline a prophane VVorld for its neglect of God and contempt of him in his moſt adorable and ſhining Perfections; ſo likewiſe to ſhew how the *Divine Attributes* are not only infinitely excellent in themſelves, but a grand Foundation for all true *Divine Worſhip*, and ſhould be the great Motives to provoke men to the exerciſe of Faith, and Love, and Fear, and Humility, and all that holy Obedience they are called to by the Goſpel: And this without peradventure is the great end of all thoſe rich Diſcoveries God hath in his VVord made of himſelf to us. And *Reader*, if theſe elaborate Diſcourſes of this holy Man, through the Lord's bleſſing, become a means of promoting Holineſs in thee, and ſtir thee up to love, and live to the God of *his praiſe*, we are well aſſured that his end in Preaching them is anſwered, and ſo is ours in publiſhing them. *Pſal* 109. 1.

Thine in the Lord,

EDW. VEEL.

RI. ADAMS.

The

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1. & 47. THE *Exiſtence of God, and practical Atheiſm; from* Pſal. 14. 1. *The Fool hath ſaid in his heart there is no God,* &c.

109. & 129. *God a Spirit, and Spiritual Worſhip; from* John 4. 24. *God is a Spirit, and they that worſhip him muſt worſhip him in ſpirit truth.*

179. *The Eternity of God; from* Pſal. 90. 2. *Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadſt formed the Earth and the World: even from everlaſting to everlaſting thou art God.*

203. *The Immutability of God; from* Pſal. 102. 26, 27. *They ſhall periſh, but thou ſhalt endure: Yea, all of them ſhall wax old, like a Garment; as a Veſture ſhalt thou change them, and they ſhall be changed. But thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall have no end,*

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271. *God's Infinite Knowledg; from* Pſal. 147. 5. *Great is our Lord, and of great power: His underſtanding is infinite.*

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443. *God's Infinite Power; from* Job. 26. 14. *Lo, theſe are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him; But the Thunder of his Power who can underſtand?*

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780. *God's Infinite Patience; from* Nahum 1. 3. *The Lord is ſlow to Anger, and great in Power, and will not at all acquit the Wicked: The Lord hath his way in the Whirlwind, and in the Storm, and the Clouds are the Duſt of his feet.*

A DISCOURSE UPON THE Existence of God.

Psalm 14. 1.

The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God; they are corrupt, they have done abominable Works: there is none that doth good.

THIS *Psalm* is a description of the deplorable corruption by Nature of every Son of *Adam*, since the withering of that Common Root. Some restrain it to the *Gentiles*, as a Wilderness full of Bryars and Thorns, as not concerning the *Jews*, the Garden of God, planted by his Grace, and watered by the Dew of Heaven. But the Apostle, the best Interpreter, rectifies this in extending it by name to *Jews*, as well as *Gentiles*, *Rom.* 3. 9. [*We have before proved both* Jews *and* Gentiles, *that they are all under sin.*] And *v.* 10. 11, 12. Cites part of this Psalm, and other passages of Scripture, for the further evidence of it; concluding by *Jews* and *Gentiles*, every person in the world naturally in this State of Corruption.

The Psalmist first declares the Corruption of the faculties of the Soul, *the fool hath said in his heart.* Secondly, The streams issuing from thence, *they are corrupt*, &c. The first in Atheistical principles, the other in unworthy practices; and lays all the Evil, Tyranny, Lust and Persecutions by men, (as if the World were only for their sake) upon the neglects of God, and the Atheism cherished in their hearts.

The fool, a term in Scripture signifying a wicked man, used also by the Heathen Philosophers to signifie a vicious person, נבל as coming from נבל signifies the extinction of life in Men, Animals and Plants, so the word נבל is taken *, a plant that hath lost all that juyce that made it lovely and useful. So a fool is one that hath lost his Wisdom, and right notion of God and Divine things, which were communicated to man by Creation; one dead in sin, yet one not so much void of rational faculties, as of Grace in those faculties; not one that wants reason, but abuses his reason: In Scripture the word signifies foolish. ‖

* Isa. 40. 7. נבל צץ *the flower fadeth* Isa. 28. 1.

Said in his heart, that is, he thinks, or he doubts, or he wishes. The thoughts of the heart are in the nature of Words to God, though not to men. Tis used in the like case of the Atheistical person, Psal. 10. 11. 13. *He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten*, he hath said in his heart *thou wilt not require it*. He doth not form a *Syllogism*, as *Calvin* speaks, that there is no God: He dares not openly publish it, though he dares secretly think it. He cannot rase out the thoughts of a Deity, though he endeavours to blot those Characters of God in his Soul. He hath some doubts whether there be a God or no: He wishes there were not any, and sometimes hopes there is none at all. He could not so ascertain himself by convincing arguments to produce to the World, but he tampered with his own heart to bring it to that perswasion, and smothered in himself those notices of a Deity; which is so plain against the light of nature, that such a Man may well be called a fool for it.

‖ *Mais* נכל *and* לא כחם *put together* Deut. 32. 6. *Oh foolish people and unwise.*

* אין אלהים No God * Muis

There is no God *] לית שולטנא *non poteſtas Domini, Chaldæ.* Tis not *Jehovah*, which name ſignifies the Eſſence of God, as the Prime and Supream being; but *Eloahia*, which name ſignifies the Providence of God, God as a Rector and Judge. Not that he denyes the Exiſtence of a Supream being that Created the World, but his regarding the Creatures, his Government of the world, and conſequently his reward of the Righteous or puniſhments of the Wicked.

* Cocceius.

* There is a threefold denial of God, 1. *Quoad Exiſtentiam*; this is abſolute Atheiſm, 2. *Quoad Providentiam*, or his inſpection into, or care of the things of the World, bounding him in the Heavens. 3. *Quoad Naturam*, in regard of one or other of the perfections due to his nature.

Not owning him as the Egyptians called, θεὸν ἐνεδρεύοντα * *Fugubin in eloc.*

Of the denial of the Providence of God moſt underſtand this * not excluding the abſolute Atheiſt, as *Diogaras* is reported to be, nor the Sceptical Atheiſt, as *Protagoras*, who doubted whether there were a God. Thoſe that deny the Providence of God, do in effect deny the being of a God; for they ſtrip him of that Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Tenderneſs, Mercy, Juſtice, Righteouſneſs, which are the Glory of the Deity. And that principle, of a greedy deſire to be uncontroul'd in their Luſts, which induceth men to a denial of Providence, that thereby they might ſtifle thoſe ſeeds of fear which infect and embitter their ſinful pleaſures, may as well lead them to deny that there is any ſuch being as a God.

That at one blow, their fears may be daſht all in peeces and diſſolved by the removal of the Foundation: As men, who deſire liberty to commit works of darkneſs, would not have the lights in the Houſe dimm'd, but extinguiſhed. What men ſay againſt Providence, becauſe they would have no check in their Luſts, they may ſay in their hearts againſt the Exiſtence of God upon the ſame account; little difference between the diſſenting from the one, and diſowning the other.

They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doth good.

He ſpeaks of the Atheiſt in the *ſingular*, *the Fool*; of the corruption iſſuing in the life in the *plural*; Intimating that though ſome few may choak in their hearts the ſentiments of God and his Providence, and poſitively deny them, yet there is ſomething of a ſecret Atheiſm in all, which is the fountain of the evil practices in their lives, not an utter diſowning of the Being of a God, but a denial or doubting of ſome of the rights of his nature: * When men deny the God of purity, they muſt needs be polluted in Soul and Body, and grow brutiſh in their actions: When the ſenſe of Religion is ſhaken off, all kind of wickedneſs is eagerly ruſht into, whereby they become as loathſome to God as putrified Carcaſes are to men *: Not one or two evil actions is the product of ſuch a principle, but the whole ſcene of a mans life is corrupted and becomes execrable.

* *Atheiſm abſolute is not in all mens Judgements, but practical is in all mens actions.*
* *The Apoſtle in the* Romans *applying the later part of it to all mankind, but not the former.*
As the word tranſlated corrupt ſignifies.

No man is exempted from ſome ſpice of Atheiſm by the depravation of his nature, which the Pſalmiſt intimates, *there is none that doth good*: Though there are indelible convictions of the being of a God, that they cannot abſolutely deny it; yet there are ſome Atheiſtical bublings in the hearts of men, which evidence themſelves in their actions: As the Apoſtle, *Tit.* 1. 16. *They profeſs that they know God, but in works they deny him.* Evil works are a duſt ſtirred up by an Atheiſtical breath. He that habituates himſelf in ſome ſordid luſt, can ſcarcely be ſaid ſeriouſly and firmly to believe that there is a God in being, and the *Apoſtle* doth not ſay that they know God, *but they profeſs to know him*: True knowledge and profeſſion of knowledge are diſtinct. It intimates alſo to us, the unreaſonableneſs of *Atheiſm* in the Conſequence; when men ſhut their eyes againſt the Beams of ſo clear a Sun, God revengeth himſelf upon them for their impiety, by leaving them to their own wills, lets them fall into the deepeſt ſink and dregs of iniquity; and ſince they doubt of him in their hearts, ſuffers them above others to deny him in their works, this the *Apoſtle* diſcourſeth at large *.

* Rom. 1. 24.

The Text then is a deſcription of mans Corruption.

1. *Of his mind. The fool hath ſaid in his heart.* No better title than that of a fool is afforded to the Atheiſt.

2. *Of the other faculties*, 1. *In ſins of Commiſſion*, expreſt by the loathſomneſs [*corrupt, abominable*] 2. *In ſins of Omiſſion* [*there is none that doth good*] he lays down the Corruption of the mind as the cauſe, the corruption of the other faculties as the effect.

1. *Tis*

I. *'Tis a great Folly to deny or doubt of the Exiſtence or Being of God:* Or, *An Atheiſt is a great Fool.*

II. *Practical Atheiſm is natural to Man in his corrupt State.* 'Tis againſt Nature as conſtituted by God; but natural, as Nature is depraved by Man: The abſolute diſowning of the Being of a God is not natural to men, but the contrary is natural; but an inconſideration of God, or miſ-repreſentation of his Nature, is natural to Man as corrupt.

III. *A ſecret Atheiſm, or a partial Atheiſm is the Spring of all the wicked Practices in the world:* The diſorders of the Life ſpring from the ill diſpoſitions of the Heart.

For the firſt, *Every Atheiſt is a Grand Fool.* If he were not a Fool, he would not imagine a thing ſo contrary to the ſtream of the Univerſal Reaſon in the world, contrary to the rational Dictates of his own Soul, and contrary to the Teſtimony of every Creature, and Link in the Chain of Creation? If he were not a Fool, he would not ſtrip himſelf of Humanity, and degrade himſelf lower than the moſt deſpicable Brute.

'Tis a Folly, for tho God be ſo inacceſſible, that we cannot know him perfectly, yet he is ſo much in the light, that we cannot be totally ignorant of him: As he cannot be comprehended in his Eſſence, he cannot be unknown in his Exiſtence; 'tis as eaſie by Reaſon to underſtand that he is, as it is difficult to know what he is.

The demonſtrations Reaſon furniſheth us with for the Exiſtence of God, will be Evidences of the Atheiſt's Folly. One would think there were little need of ſpending time in evidencing this Truth, ſince in the Principle of it, it ſeems to be ſo univerſally own'd, and at the firſt propoſal and demand, gains the aſſent of moſt men.

But 1. *Doth not the growth of Atheiſm among us render this Neceſſary?* May it not juſtly be ſuſpected, that the ſwarms of Atheiſts are more numerous in our times, than Hiſtory Records to have been in any Age: When Men will not only ſay it in their hearts, but publiſh it with their lips, and boaſt that they have ſhaken off thoſe Shackles which bind other mens Conſciences? Doth not the bare-fac'd Debauchery of men evidence ſuch a ſettled Sentiment, or at leaſt a careleſs Beleif of the Truth, which lies at the root, and ſprouts up in ſuch venemous branches in the world? Can mens hearts be free from that Principle wherewith their Practices are ſo openly depraved? 'Tis true, the light of Nature ſhines too vigorouſly for the Power of Man totally to put it out; yet loathſome Actions impair and weaken the actual thoughts and conſiderations of a Deity, and are like Miſts, that darken the light of the Sun, though they cannot extinguiſh it: their Conſciences, as a Candleſtick, muſt hold it, though their unrighteouſneſs obſcure it, *Rom.* 1. 18. [*Who hold the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs.*] The ingraved Characters of the Law of Nature remain, though they daub them with their muddy Luſts to make them illegible: So that ſince the inconſideration of a Deity is the cauſe of all the wickedneſs and extravagances of Men; and as *Auſtin* ſaith, the Propoſition is alwaies true, *The Fool hath ſaid in his heart*, &c. And more evidently true in this Age than any; it will not be unneceſſary to diſcourſe of the Demonſtrations of this firſt Principle,

The Apoſtles ſpent little time in urging this Truth, it was taken for granted all over the world, and they were generally devout in the *Worſhip* of thoſe Idols, they thought to be Gods: That Age run from one God to many, and our Age is running from one God to none at all.

2. *The Exiſtence of God is the Foundation of all Religion.* The whole Building totters if the Foundation be out of courſe: If we have not deliberate and right Notions of it, we ſhall perform no Worſhip, no Service, yeild no affection to him. If there be not a God, 'tis impoſſible there can be one; for Eternity is Eſſential to the notion of a God; ſo all Religion would be vain, and unreaſonable to pay Homage to that which is not in being, nor can ever be. We muſt *firſt believe that he is*, and that he is what he declares himſelf to be, before we can *ſeek* him, adore him, and devote our Affections to him: * We cannot pay God a due and regular Homage, unleſs we underſtand him in his Perfections, what he is; and we can pay him no Homage at all, unleſs we believe that he is. * *Heb.* 11. 6.

3. *'Tis fit we ſhould know why we believe*, that our Beleif of a God, may appear to be upon undeniable Evidence, and that we may give a better reaſon for his Exiſtence, than that we have heard our Parents and Teachers tell us ſo, and our

acquaintance think ſo. 'Tis as much as to ſay there is no God, when we know not why we believe there is, and would not conſider the Arguments for his Exiſtence.

4. *It is neceſſary to depreſs that ſecret Atheiſm which is in the heart of every man by nature.* Though every viſible object, which offers it ſelf to our ſenſe, preſents a Deity to our minds, and exhorts us to ſubſcribe to the truth of it, yet there is a Root of *Atheiſm* ſpringing up ſometimes in wavering thoughts, and fooliſh imaginations, inordinate actions, and ſecret wiſhes. Certain it is, that every man, that doth not love God, denyes God; now can he, that diſaffects him, and hath a ſlaviſh fear of him, wiſh his Exiſtence, and ſay to his own heart with any chearfulneſs, there is a God, and make it his cheif care to perſwade himſelf of it? He would perſwade himſelf there is no God, and ſtifle the ſeeds of it in his Reaſon and Conſcience, that he might have the greateſt liberty to entertain the allurements of the Fleſh.

'Tis neceſſary to Excite men to daily and actual conſiderations of God and his nature, which would be a bar to much of that wickedneſs which overflows in the lives of men,

5. *Nor is it unuſeful to thoſe that effectually believe and love him*; * for thoſe who have had a converſe with God, and felt his powerful influences in the ſecrets of their hearts, to take a proſpect of thoſe ſatisfactory accounts which reaſon gives of that God they adore and love; to ſee every Creature juſtifie them in their owning of him, and affections to him: Indeed the Evidences of a God, ſtriking upon the Conſcience of thoſe who reſolve to cleave to ſin as their cheifeſt darling, will daſh their pleaſures with unwelcome mixtures.

* Coccei Sum. Theol. c. 8. § 1.

I ſhall further premiſe this;

That the Folly of Atheiſm is evidenced by the light of Reaſon. Men that will not liſten to Scripture, as having no counterpart of it in their Souls, cannot eaſily deny natural Reaſon, which riſeth up on all ſides for the juſtification of this Truth: There is a natural as well as a revealed Knowledge, and the Book of the Creatures is legible in declaring the Being of a God, as well as the Scriptures are in declaring the Nature of a God; there are outward objects in the World, and common Principles in the Conſcience, whence it may be inferr'd:

For, 1. *God in regard of his Exiſtence is not only the diſcovery of Faith, but of Reaſon.* God hath revealed not only his Being, but ſome ſparks of his eternal Power and Godhead in his Works, as well as in his Word. *Rom.* 1. 19, 20. *God hath ſhewed it unto them.* How? * in his works; by the things that are made, tis a diſcovery to our Reaſon, as ſhining in the Creatures; and an object of our Faith as breaking out upon us in the Scriptures: 'tis an Article of our Faith, and an Article of our Reaſon. Faith ſuppoſeth natural knowledge, as Grace ſuppoſeth nature. Faith indeed is properly of things above Reaſon, purely depending upon Revelation: What can be demonſtrated by natural light, is not ſo properly the object of Faith; though in regard of the addition of a certainty by Revelation, it is ſo.

* Aquin.

The belief that God is, which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, * is not ſo much of the bare Exiſtence of God, as what *God is* in Relation to them that ſeek to him, *viz. a Rewarder.* The Apoſtle ſpeaks of the Faith of *Abel*, the Faith of *Enoch*, ſuch a Faith that pleaſes God: But the Faith of *Abel* teſtified in his ſacrifice, and the Faith of *Enoch* teſtified in his walking with God, was not ſimply a Faith of the Exiſtence of God. *Cain* in the time of *Abel*, other men in the World in the time of *Enoch*, believed this as well as they: But it was a Faith joyned with the Worſhip of God, and deſirous to pleaſe him in the way of his own appointment; ſo that they believed that God was ſuch as he had declared himſelf to be in his promiſe to *Adam*, ſuch an one as would be as good as his word, and bruiſe the Serpents head: He that ſeeks to God according to the mind of God, muſt believe that he is ſuch a God that will pardon ſin, and Juſtifie a ſeeker of him; that he is a God of that ability and will, to Juſtifie a ſinner in that way he hath appointed for the clearing the Holineſs of his Nature, and vindicating the Honour of his Law violated by man.

* *Heb.* 11. 6.

No man can ſeek God, or love God, unleſs he believe him to *be thus*, and he cannot ſeek God without a diſcovery of his own mind how he would be ſought.

For

For it is not a seeking God in any way of mans Invention, that renders him capable of this desired fruit of a Reward: He that believes God as a Rewarder, must believe the promise of God concerning the *Messiah*. Men, under the Conscience of sin, cannot tell, without a divine discovery, whether God will reward, or how he will reward the Seekers of him; and therefore cannot act towards him as an object of Faith: Would any man seek God meerly because he is, or love him because he is, if he did not know that he should be acceptable to him? The bare Existence of a thing is not the ground of affection to it, but those qualities of it, and our interest in it, which render it amiable and delightful. How can men whose Consciences fly in their faces, seek God or love him, without this knowledge that he is a Rewarder? Nature doth not shew any way to a Sinner, how to reconcile Gods provoked Justice with his Tenderness. The Faith the Apostles speaks of here, is a Faith that eyes the reward as an encouragement, and the Will of God as the Rule of its acting, he doth not speak simply of the Existence of God.

I have spoken the more of this place, because the *Socinians* * use this to decry any natural knowledge of God, and that the Existence of God is only to *be known* by Revelation, so that by that reason any one that lived without the Scripture hath no ground to believe the being of a God.

* Voet. *Theol. natural. cap.* 3. § 1. *p.* 22.

[The Scripture ascribes a knowledge of God to all Nations in the World, *Rom.* 1. 19. not only a faculty of knowing, if they had arguments and demonstrations; as an ignorant man in any art hath a faculty to know; but it ascribes an actual knowledge, *ver.* 19 *manifest in them*, *ver.* 21. *They knew God*, not they might know him, they knew him when they did not care for knowing him: The notices of God are as intelligible to us by reason, as any object in the World is visible, he is written in every Letter.

2. *We are often in the Scripture sent to take a prospect of the Creatures for a discovery of God.* The Apostles drew arguments from the *Topicks* of nature, when they discoursed with those that owned the Scripture, *Rom.* 1. 19. As well as when they treated with those that were ignorant of it, as *Acts* 14. 15, 16. And among the Philosophers of *Athens*, *Acts* 17. 27, 29. Such arguments the Holy Ghost in the Apostles, thought sufficient to convince men of the Existence, Unity, Spirituality, and Patience of God. * Such arguments had not been used by them and the Prophets from the visible things in the world to silence the *Gentiles* with whom they dealt, had not this Truth, and much more about God, been demonstrable by natural Reason: They knew well enough that probable arguments would not satisfie piercing and inquisitive minds.

* Voet. *Theol. natural. cap.* 3. § 1. *p.* 22.

In *Pauls* account the Testimony of the Creatures was without contradiction; God himself justifies this way of proceeding by his own example, and remits *Job* to the consideration of the Creatures, to spell out something of his Divine Perfections. * And this is so convincing an argument of the Existence of God, that God never vouchsafed any Miracle, or put forth any act of Omnipotency, besides what was evident in the Creatures for satisfaction of the Curiosity of any Atheist, or the evincing of his Being, as he hath done for the Evidencing those Truths which were not written in the Book of Nature, or for the restoring a decayed worship, or the protection or deliverance of his people: Those Miracles in publishing the Gospel, indeed did demonstrate the Existence of some supream Power; but they were not seals designedly affixt for that, but for the confirmation of that truth, which was above the ken of purblind Reason, and purely the birth of Divine Revelation: Yet what proves the Truth of any Spiritual Doctrine, proves also in that act the Existence of the Divine Author of it: The Revelation alwayes implies a Revealer, and that which manifests it to be a Revelation, manifests also the supream Revealer of it. By the same light the Sun manifests other things to us, it also manifests it self. But what Miracles could rationally be supposed to work upon an Atheist, who is not drawn to a sence of the Truth proclaimed aloud by so many wonders of the Creation?

* Job. 28. 39, 40. *&c. Tis but one truth in Philosophy and Divinity, That which is false in one, cannot be true in another; Truth in what appearance so ever doth never contradict it self.*

Let us now proceed to the demonstration of the Atheists Folly.

'Tis a Folly to deny or doubt of a Soveraign being, incomprehensible in his Nature, infinite in his Essence and Perfections, independant in his Operations, who hath given being to the whole frame of sensible and intelligible Creatures, and governs them

them according to their ſeveral natures, by an unconceivable Wiſdom; who fills the Heavens with the Glory of his Majeſty, and the Earth with the influences of his Goodneſs.

'Tis a Folly inexcuſable, to renounce in this caſe all appeal to univerſal Conſent, and the joynt aſſurances of the Creatures.

Reaſon 1. *Tis a Folly to deny or doubt of that which hath been the acknowledged Sentiment of all Nations, in all Places and Ages* There is no Nation but hath owned ſome kind of Religion, and therefore no Nation but hath conſented in the notion of a Supream Creator and Governour.

1. *This hath been univerſal.*
2. *It hath been conſtant and uninterrupted.*
3. *Natural and innate.*

Firſt, 1. *It hath been univerſally aſſented to by the Judgments and Practices of all Nations in the World.*

1. *No Nation hath been exempt from it.* All Hiſtories of former and later Ages have not produced any one Nation but fell under the force of this Truth. Though they have differed in their Religions, they have agreed in this Truth; here both *Heathen*, *Turk*, *Jew*, and *Chriſtian*, center without any Contention. No quarrel was ever commenced on this Score; though about other opinions Wars have been ſharp, and Enmities irreconcilable; The Notion of the *Exiſtence of a Deity* was the ſame in All, *Indians* as well as *Britains*; *Americans* as well as *Jews*.

It hath not been an opinion peculiar to this or that people, to this or that Sect of Philoſophers; but hath been as univerſal as the Reaſon whereby men are differenc'd from other Creatures, ſo that ſome have rather defin'd man by *animal religioſum*, than *animal rationale*. Tis ſo twiſted with Reaſon, that a man cannot be accounted rational, unleſs he own an object of Religion: Therefore he that underſtands not this renounces his humanity, when he renounceth a Divinity.

No inſtance can be given of any one People in the World that diſclaimed it. It hath been owned by the wiſe and ignorant, by the Learned and Stupid, by thoſe who had no other guide but the dimmeſt Light of Nature, as well as by thoſe whoſe Candles were ſnuft by a more polite Education, and that without any ſolemn debate and contention: Though ſome Philoſophers have been known to change their opinions in the concerns of Nature, yet none can be proved to have abſolutely changed their opinion concerning the being of a God: One died for aſſerting one God, none in the former Ages upon Record hath died for aſſerting no God. Go to the the utmoſt bounds of *America*, you may find People without ſome broken peices of the Law of Nature, but not without this ſignature and ſtamp upon them, though they wanted commerce with other Nations, except as ſavage as themſelves; in whom the Light of Nature was as it were ſunk into the Socket, who are but one remove from Brutes, who cloath not their bodies, cover not their ſhame, yet were they as ſoon known to own a God, as they were known to be a people: They were poſſeſſed with the Notion of a Supream Being, the Author of the World, had an object of Religious adoration, put up Prayers to the Deity, they owned for the good things they wanted, and the diverting the evils they feared: No people ſo untamed, where abſolute perfect Atheiſm hath gained a footing.

Not one Nation of the World known in the time of the *Romans*, that were without their Ceremonies, whereby they ſignified their devotion to a Deity. They had their places of Worſhip, where they made their Vows, preſented their Prayers, offered their Sacrifices, and implored the Aſſiſtance of what they thought to be a God, and in their diſtreſſes run immediately, without any deliberation, to their Gods; ſo that the notion of a Deity was as inward and ſetled in them as their own Souls, and indeed runs in the blood of mankind: The diſtempers of the underſtanding, cannot utterly deface it; you ſhall ſcarce find the moſt diſtracted Bedlam in his raving fits to deny a God, though he may blaſpheme and fancy himſelf one.

2. *Nor doth the Idolatry and multiplicity of Gods in the World weaken, but confirm this univerſal conſent.* Whatſoever unworthy conceits men have had of God in all Nations, or whatſoever degrading repreſentations they have made of him; yet

they

they all concur in this, that there is a Supream Power to be ador'd. Tho one People worshipped the Sun, others the Fire; and the *Egyptians*, Gods out of their Rivers, Gardens, and Fields; yet the Notion of a Deity existent, who created and governed the World, and conferred daily benefits upon them, was maintained by all, tho applyed to the Stars, and in part to those sordid Creatures. All the *Dagons* of the World establish this truth, and fall down before it. Had not the Nations owned the being of a God, they had never offered Incense to an Idol: Had there not been a deep impression of the *Existence of a Deity*, they had never exalted Creatures below themselves to the honour of Altars: Men could not so easily have been deceived by forged Deities, if thy had not had a Notion of a real one. Their fondness to set up others in the place of God, evidenced a natural knowledge that there was One, who had a right to be Worshipped. If there were not this sentiment of a Deity, no man would ever have made an Image of a peice of Wood, Worshipp'd it, pray'd to it, and said *deliver me for thou art my God**. They applyed a general Notion to a perticular Image. The difference is in the manner, and immediate object of worship, not in the formal ground of worship. The worship sprung from a true Principle, though it was not applyed to a right object: While they were rational Creatures, they could not deface the Notion; yet while they were corrupt Creatures it was not difficult to apply themselves to a wrong object from a true principle. A blind man knows he hath a way to go as well as one of the clearest sight, but because of his blindness he may miss the way and stumble into a Ditch. No man would be impos'd upon to take a *Bristol* Stone instead of a Diamond, if he did not know that there were such things as Diamonds in the World: nor any man spread forth his hands to an Idol, if he were altogether without the sense of a Deity. Whether it be a false or a true God men apply to, yet in both, the natural sentiment of a God is evidenc'd; all their mistakes were grafts inserted in this Stock, since they would multiply gods rather than deny a Deity.

* *Isa.* 44. 17

* *How should such a general submission be entered into by all the world, so as to adore things of a base alloy*, if the force of Religion were not such, that in any fashion a man would seek the satsfaction of his natural instinct to some object of worship? This great diversity confirms this consent to be a good argument, for it evidenceth it not to be a Cheat, combination, or conspiracy to deceive, or a mutual intelligence, but every one finds it in his climate, yea in himself. People would never have given the Title of a God to men or Brutes, had there not been a pre-existing, and unquestioned perswasion, that there was such a being, how else should the Notion of a God come into their minds, the Notion that there is a God must be more ancient.

* *Charron de la Sagesse Livr.* 1. *Cha.*7. *p.* 43,44.

* *Gassend. Phys.* § 1. *lib.*4. *Ca.*2. *p.* 291.

3. *Whatsoever disputes there have been in the World, this of the existence of God was never the subject of contention.* All other things have been questioned. What Jarrings were there among Philosophers about natural things, into how many parties were they split, with what animosities did they maintain their several judgements? But we hear of no solemn Controversies about the Existence of a Supream Being: This never met with any considerable contradiction: No Nation, that hath put other things to question, would ever suffer this to be disparaged, so much as by a publick doubt, *We find among the Heathen contentions about the Nature of God, and the number of gods; some asserted an innumerable multitude of gods, some affirmed him to be subject to birth and death, some affirmed the intire World was God; others fancied him to be a circle of a bright Fire; others that he was a Spirit diffused through the whole World: Yet they unanimously concurr'd in this, as the Judgement of Universal Reason, that there was such a Sovereign Being: And those that were sceptical in every thing else, and asserted that the greatest certainty was that there was nothing certain, profest a certainty in this. The question was not whether there was a *First Cause*, but what it was. *'Tis much the same thing, as the disputes about the nature and matter of the Heavens, the Sun and Planets, tho there be great diversity of Judgements, yet all agree that there are Heavens, Sun, Planets? so all the Contentions among men about the Nature of God, weaken not, but rather confirm, that there is a God, since there was never a publick formal debate about his Existence. Those that have been ready to pull out one anothers

* *Amyrant des. Religion p.* 501

* *Gassend. Phys.* § 1. *lib.* 4. *Ca.*2. *p.* 291.

eyes

eyes for their diſſent from their Judgments, ſharply cenſured one anothers ſentiments, envied the births of one anothers wits, alwayes ſhook hands with an unanimous conſent in this; never cenſured one another for being of this perſwaſion, never called it into queſtion; as what was never controverted among men profeſſing Chriſtianity, but acknowledged by all, though contending about other things, has reaſon to be judged a certain truth belonging to the Chriſtian Religion; ſo what was never ſubjected to any Controverſie, but acknowledged by the whole World, hath reaſon to be imbraced as a truth without any doubt.

4. *This Univerſal Conſent is not prejudiced by ſome few Diſſenters.* Hiſtory doth not reckon *twenty profeſt Atheiſts* in all Ages in the compaſs of the whole World: And we have not the name of any one abſolute Atheiſt upon Record in Scripture: Yet it is queſtioned, whether any of them, noted in Hiſtory with that infamous name, were down-right denyers of the Exiſtence of God, but rather becauſe they diſparaged the Deities commonly worſhipped by the Nations where they lived, as being of a clearer reaſon to diſcern, that thoſe qualities, vulgarly attributed to their Gods, as luſt and Luxury, wantonneſs and quarrels, were unworthy of the nature of a God. But ſuppoſe they were really what they are termed to be, what are they to the multitude of Men, that have ſprung out of the loyns of *Adam*? not ſo much as one grain of aſhes is to all that were ever turned into that form by any fires in your Chimnies. And many more were not ſufficient to weigh down the contrary conſent of the whole World, and bear down an univerſal impreſſion. Should the Laws of a Country, agreed univerſally to by the whole Body of the People, be accounted vain, becauſe *a hundred Men* of thoſe millions diſapprove of them, when not their reaſon, but their folly and baſe intereſt, perſwades them to diſlike them, and diſpute againſt them? What if ſome Men be blind, ſhall any conclude from thence that eyes are not natural to men? ſhall we ſay that the notion of the *Exiſtence of God* is not natural to men, becauſe a very ſmall number have been of a contrary opinion? ſhall a man in a dungeon, that never ſaw the Sun, deny that there is a Sun, becauſe one or two blind men tell him there is none, when thouſands aſſure him there is? Why ſhould then the exceptions of a few, not one to millions, diſcredit that which is voted certainly true by the joynt conſent of the World? Add this too, that if thoſe that are reported to be Atheiſts had had any conſiderable reaſon to ſtep aſide from the common perſwaſion of the whole world, 'tis a wonder it met not with entertainment by great numbers of thoſe, who, by reaſon of their notorious wickedneſs, and inward diſquiets, might reaſonably be thought to wiſh in their hearts that there were no God. 'Tis ſtrange if there were any reaſon on their ſide, that in ſo long a ſpace of time, as hath run out from the Creation of the World, there could not be engaged a conſiderable number to frame a Society for the profeſſion of it. It hath died with the Perſon that ſtarted it, and vaniſh'd as ſoon as it appeared.

Gaſſend. Phyſ. § 1. lib. 4. cap. 7. p. 282.

** Gaſſend. ibid. p. 290.*

To conclude this, is it not folly for any man to deny or doubt of the being of a God, to diſſent from all Mankind, and ſtand in contradiction to humane Nature? What is *the general dictate of Nature is a certain Truth.* 'Tis impoſſible, that Nature can naturally and univerſally lie. And therefore thoſe that aſcribe all to Nature, and ſet it in the Place of God, contradict themſelves, if they give not credit to it in that which it univerſally affirms. || A general conſent of all Nations is to be eſteemed as a Law of Nature. Nature cannot plant in the minds of all men an aſſent to a falſity, for then the Laws of Nature would be deſtructive to the reaſon and minds of men. How is it poſſible, that a falſity ſhould be a perſwaſion ſpread through all Nations, engraven upon the minds of all men, men of the moſt towring, and men of the moſt creeping underſtanding; that they ſhould conſent to it in all places, and in thoſe places, where the Nations have not had any known Commerce with the reſt of the known World? A Conſent not ſettled by any Law of Man to conſtrain People to a belief of it: And indeed 'tis impoſſible, that any Law of man can conſtrain the belief of the mind. Would not he deſervedly be accounted a fool, that ſhould deny that to be gold, which hath been tryed and examined by a great number of knowing Goldſmiths, and hath paſt the teſt of all their touch-ſtones? What exceſs of folly would it be for him to deny it to be true gold, if it had been tryed by all that had skill in that metal in all Nations in the World?

|| Cicero.

Secondly,

Secondly, 2. *It hath been a conſtant and uninterrupted conſent.* It hath been as Ancient as the firſt Age of the World; no man is able to mention any time, from the beginning of the World, wherein this Notion hath not been univerſally owned; tis as old as man-kind, and hath run along with the courſe of the Sun, nor can the date be fixed lower than that.

1. Firſt, *In all the changes of the World, this hath been maintained.* In the overturnings of the Government of States, the alteration of Modes of Worſhip, this hath ſtood unſhaken. The reaſons upon which it was founded were in all Revolutions of time accounted ſatisfactory and convincing, nor could abſolute Atheiſm in the changes of any Laws ever gain the favour of any one Body of people to be eſtabliſhed by a Law. When the Honour of the Heathen Idols was laid in the duſt, this ſuffered no impair. The being of one God was more vigorouſly owned, when the unreaſonableneſs of multiplicity of Gods was manifeſt; and grew taller by the detection of counterfeits. When other parts of the Law of nature have been violated by ſome Nations, this hath maintained its ſtanding. The long ſeries of Ages hath been ſo far from blotting it out, that it hath more ſtrongly confirmed it, and maketh further progreſs in the confirmation of it. Time which hath eaten out the ſtrength of other things and blaſted meer inventions, hath not been able to conſume this. The diſcovery of all other Impoſtures, never made this by any Society of men to be ſuſpected as one. It will not be eaſie to name any Impoſture that hath walked perpetually in the world without being diſcovered, and whipped out by ſome Nation or other. Falſities have never been ſo univerſally and conſtantly owned without publick controul and queſtion. And ſince the world hath detected many errors of the former Age, and learning been increaſed, this hath been ſo far from being dimm'd, that it hath ſhone out clearer with the increaſe of natural knowledge, and received freſh and more vigorous confirmations.

2. *The fears and anxieties in the Conſciences of men, have given men ſufficient occaſion to root it out, had it been poſſible for them to do it.* If the Notion of the Exiſtence of God, had been poſſible to have been daſht out of the minds of men, they would have done it rather than have ſuffered ſo many troubles in their Souls upon the Commiſſion of ſin; ſince there did want wickedneſs and wit in ſo many corrupt Ages to have attempted it and proſpered in it, had it been poſſible. How comes it therefore to paſs that ſuch a multitude of proffligate perſons, that have been in the World ſince the fall of man, ſhould not have rooted out this principle, and diſpoſſeſt the minds of men of that which gave birth to their tormenting fears? How is it poſſible that all ſhould agree together in a thing which Created fear, and an obligation againſt the Intereſt of the Fleſh, if it had been free for men to diſcharge themſelves of it? No man, as far as corrupt nature bears ſway in him, is willing to live contrould.

The *firſt Man* would rather be *a God* himſelf than under one: * Why ſhould men continue this Notion in them, which ſhackled them in their vile inclinations, if it had been in their power utterly to deface it? If it were an Impoſture, how comes it to paſs that all the wicked Ages of the world could never diſcover that to be a cheat, which kept them in continual alarms? Men wanted not will to ſhake off ſuch apprehenſions; As *Adam*, ſo all his poſterity are deſirous to hide themſelves from God upon the Commiſſion of ſin, * and by the ſame reaſon they would hide God from their Souls. What is the reaſon they could never attain their will, and their wiſh by all their endeavours? Could they poſſibly have ſatisfied themſelves that there were no God, they had diſcarded their fears, the diſturbers of the repoſe of their lives, and been unbridled in their pleaſures. The wickedneſs of the world would never have preſerved that which was a perpetual moleſtation to it, had it been poſſible to be raſed out.

* Gen. 3. 5.

* Gen. 3. 9.

But ſince men, under the turmoils and laſhes of their own Conſciences, could never bring their hearts to a ſettled diſſent from this Truth; it evidenceth, that as it took its birth at the beginning of the world, it cannot expire, no not in the aſhes of it, nor in any thing, but the reduction of the Soul to that nothing from whence it ſprung. This conception is ſo perpetual, that the nature of the Soul muſt be diſſolved before it be rooted out, nor can it be extinct whilſt the Soul endures.

3. Let it be conſidered alſo by us that own the Scripture, *that the Devil deems it*

impoſſible to root out this ſentiment. It ſeems to be ſo perpetually fixed, that the Devil did not think fit to tempt Man to the denial of the Exiſtence of a Deity, but perſwaded him to believe, he might aſcend to that dignity, and become a God himſelf, *Gen.* 31. *Hath God ſaid?* and he there owns him, *ver.* 5. *Ye ſhall become as Gods.* He owns God in the queſtion he asks the Woman, and perſwades our firſt Parents to be Gods themſelves. And in all Stories both Ancient and Modern, the Devil was never able to tincture Mens minds with a profeſſed denial of the Deity, which would have opened a door to a world of more wickedneſs than hath been acted, and took away the bar, to the breaking out of that evil, which is naturally in the hearts of men, to the greater prejudice of humane Societies. He wanted not malice to raſe out all the Notions of God, but power: He knew it was impoſſible to effect it, and therefore in vain to attempt it. He ſet up himſelf in ſeveral places of the ignorant world as a God, but never was able to overthrow the opinion of the being of a God: The impreſſions of a Deity were ſo ſtrong, as not to be ſtruck out by the malice and power of Hell.

What a folly is it then in any to contradict or doubt of this Truth, which all the periods of time have not been able to wear out; which all the Wars and Quarrels of men with their own Conſciences, have not been able to deſtroy; which Ignorance and Debauchery, its two greateſt Enemies, cannot weaken; which all the falſhoods and errors, which have reigned in one or other part of the World, have not been able to baniſh; which lives in the conſents of men in ſpight of all their wiſhes to the contrary, and hath grown ſtronger and ſhone clearer by the improvements of natural reaſon?

3. *Natural and innate*; which pleads ſtrongly for the perpetuity of it. Tis natural, tho ſome think it not a Principle writ in the heart of Man; * tis ſo natural that every man is born with a reſtleſs inſtinct to be of ſome kind of Religion or other, which implies ſome object of Religion. The Impreſſion of a Deity is as common as Reaſon, and of the ſame age with Reaſon. * Tis a Relique of knowledge after the fall of *Adam*, like fire under aſhes, which ſparkles as ſoon as ever the heap of aſhes is opened. A notion ſealed up in the Soul of every man; * elſe how could thoſe people, who were unknown to one another, ſeparate by Seas and Mounts, differing in various Cuſtoms and manner of living, had no mutual intelligence one with another, light upon this as a common Sentiment, if they had not been guided by one uniform reaſon in all their minds, by one nature common to them all; tho their Climates be different, their tempers and conſtitutions various, their imaginations in ſome things as diſtant from one another as Heaven is from Earth, the Ceremonies of their Religion not all of the ſame kind; Yet where ever you find humane Nature, you find this ſettled perſwaſion. So that the Notion of a God ſeems to be twiſted with the Nature of Man, and is the firſt natural branch of Common Reaſon, or upon either the firſt inſpection of a man into himſelf and his own ſtate and conſtitution, or upon the firſt ſight of any external viſible Object. Nature within Man, and Nature without Man agree upon the firſt meeting together to form this Sentiment, that there is a God. Tis as natural as any thing we call a common Principle. One thing which is called a Common Principle and Natural, is, that the whole is greater than the parts. If this be not born with us, yet the exerciſe of Reaſon, eſſential to man, ſettles it as a certain Maxim; upon the dividing any thing into ſeveral parts, he finds every part leſs than when they were altogether. By the ſame exerciſe of Reaſon, we cannot caſt our eyes upon any thing in the world, or exerciſe our underſtandings upon our ſelves, but we muſt preſently imagine, there was ſome cauſe of thoſe things, ſome cauſe of my ſelf and my own being; ſo that this Truth is as natural to man, as any thing he can call moſt natural or a Common Principle.

* Pink. Eph. 6. *pag.* 10, 11.

* King *on* Jonah, *pag.* 16.

* Amyrant *des Religious*, p. 6, 7, 8, 9.

It muſt be confeſt by all, that there is a Law of Nature writ upon the hearts of men, which will direct them to commendable actions, if they will attend to the writing in their own Conſciences. This Law cannot be conſidered without the notice of a Law-giver. For 'tis but a natural and obvious concluſion, that ſome ſuperiour hand engrafted thoſe principles in man, ſince he finds ſomething in him twitching him upon the purſuit of uncomely actions, tho his heart be mightily inclined to them; man knows he never planted this principle of Reluctancy in his own Soul; he can never be the cauſe of that, which he cannot be friends with. If he were the cauſe of it, why doth he not rid himſelf of it? No man would endure a thing that doth frequently moleſt and diſquiet him, if he could aſſheir it. Tis therefore ſown in Man by ſome hand more powerful than man, which riſeth ſo high and is rooted ſo ſtrong, that all the force that

that man can use cannot pull it up. If therefore this principle be natural in man, and the Law of Nature be natural, the Notion of a Law-giver must be as natural as the Notion of a Printer, or that there is a Printer is obvious upon the sight of a stampt impress: After this the multitude of effects in the World step in to strengthen this beam of natural light, and the direct Conclusion from thence is, that that power, which made those outward objects, implanted this inward principle: This is sown in us, born with us, and sprouts up with our growth; or as one saith, * tis like Letters carved upon the bark of a young plant, which grows up together with us and the longer it grows the Letters are more legible. * Charleton

This is the ground of this universal consent, and why it may well be termed natural.

This will more evidently appear to be natural because,

1. *This consent could not be by meer Tradition.*
2. *Nor by any mutual intelligence of Governors to keep people in awe*, which are two things the Atheist pleads: The first hath no strong foundation, and that other is as absurd and foolish, as it is wicked and abominable.
3. *Nor was it Fear first introduced it.*

1. *It could not be by meer Tradition.* Many things indeed are entertained by posterity, which their Ancestors delivered to them, and that out of a common reverence to their Fore-fathers, and an opinion, that they had a better prospect of things than the increase of the corruption of succeeding Ages would permit them to have.

But if this be a Tradition handled from our Ancestors, they also must receive it from theirs, we must then ascend to the first man, we cannot else escape a confounding our selves with running into infinite; was it then the only Tradition he left to them, is it not probable he acquainted them with other things in conjunction with this, the Nature of God, the way to Worship him, the manner of the Worlds Existence, his own state? We may reasonably suppose him to have a good stock of knowledge, what is become of it? It cannot be supposed, that the first man should acquaint his posterity with an object of worship, and leave them ignorant of a Mode of worship, and of the end of worship, we find in Scripture his immediate posterity did the first in Sacrifices, and without doubt they were not ignorant of the other: How come Men to be so uncertain in all other things, and so confident of this, if it were only a Tradition? How did debates and irreconcilable questions start up concerning other things, and this remain untouch'd, but by a small number? whatsoever Tradition the first Man left besides this, is lost, and no way recoverable, but by the Revelation God hath made in his Word.

How comes it to pass, this of a God is longer liv'd than all the rest, which we may suppose Man left to his immediate descendents? How come men to retain the one, and forget the other? What was the reason this surviv'd the ruin of the rest, and surmounted the uncertainties into which the other sunk? Was it likely it should be handed down alone without other attendants on it at first? VVhy did it not expire among the *Americans*, who have lost the account of their own descent, and the Stock from whence they sprung, and cannot reckon above eight hundred or a thousand years at most? VVhy was not the manner of the worship of a God transmitted as well as that of his Existence? How came men to dissent in their Opinions concerning his Nature, whether he was corporeal or incorporeal, finite or infinite, omnipresent or limited? VVhy were not men as negligent to transmit this of his Existence as that of his Nature? No reason can be rendred for the security of this above the other, but that there is so clear a tincture of a Deity upon the minds of men, such traces and shadows of him in the creatures, such indelible instincts within, and invincible arguments without to keep up this universal consent. The Characters are so deep that they cannot possibly be rased out, which would have been one time or other, in one Nation or other, had it depended only upon Tradition, since one Age shakes off frequently the Sentiments of the former.

I cannot think of above one which may be called a Tradition, which indeed was kept up among all Nations, *viz.* Sacrifices, which could not be natural but instituted: VVhat ground could they have in Nature, to imagine that the blood of Beasts could expiate and wash off the guilt and stains of a rational Creature? Yet they had

had in all places (but among the *Jews*, and ſome of them only) loſt the knowledg of the reaſon and end of the Inſtitution, which the *Scripture* acquaints us was to typifie and ſignifie the Redemption by the Promiſed Seed. This tradition hath been ſuperannuated and laid aſide in moſt parts of the World, while this Notion of the Exiſtence of a God hath ſtood firm.

But ſuppoſe it were a Tradition, was it likely to be a meer intention and figment of the firſt Man? Had there been no reaſon for it, his Poſterity would ſoon have found out the weakneſs of its Fouudation: What advantage had it been to him to tranſmit ſo great a falſhood to kindle the fears or raiſe the hopes of his Poſterity, if there were no God? It cannot be ſuppoſed he ſhould be ſo void of that natural affection, men in all ages bear to their Deſcendents, as ſo groſly to deceive them, and be ſo contrary to the ſimplicity and plainneſs which appears in all things neareſt their Original.

2. Neither was it *by any mutual Intelligence of Governours among themſelves to keep people in ſubjection to them.* If it were a political deſign at firſt, it ſeems it met with the general nature of Mankind very ready to give it entertainment.

1. *It is unaccountable how this ſhould come to paſs.* It muſt be either by a joynt Aſſembly of them, or a mutual Correſpondence. If by any Aſſembly, who were the perſons? Let the Name of any one be mentioned; when was the time? Where was the place of this appearance? By what Authority did they meet together? VVho made the firſt motion, and firſt ſtarted this great Principle of Policy? By what means could they aſſemble from ſuch diſtant parts of the VVorld? Humane Hiſtories are utterly ſilent in it, and the Scripture, the antienteſt Hiſtory, gives an account of the attempt of *Babel*, but not a word of any deſign of this nature.

VVhat mutual Correſpondence could ſuch have, whoſe Intereſts are for the moſt part different, and their deſigns contrary to one another? How could they, who were divided by ſuch vaſt Seas, have this mutual Converſe? How could thoſe, who were different in their Cuſtoms and manners, agree ſo unanimouſly together in one thing to gull the People? If there had been ſuch a Correſpondence between the Governours of all Nations, what is the reaſon ſome Nations ſhould be unknown to the world till of late times? How could the buſineſs be ſo ſecretly managed, as not to take Vent, and iſſue in a diſcovery to the World? Can reaſon ſuppoſe ſo many in a joynt Conſpiracy, and no mans Conſcience in this life under ſharp Afflictions, or on his death bed, when Conſcience is moſt awakened, conſtrain him to reveal openly the cheat that beguil'd the World? How came they to be ſo unanimous in this Notion, and to differ in their Rites almoſt in every Country? Why could they not agree in one Mode of Worſhip throughout all the VVorld, as well as in this univerſal Notion? If there were not a mutual intelligence, it cannot be conceived how in every Nation ſuch a ſtate Engineer ſhould riſe up with the ſame trick to keep people in aw. VVhat is the reaſon we cannot find any Law in any one Nation, to conſtrain men to the belief of the Exiſtence of a God, ſince politick Stratagems have been often fortified by Laws? Beſides, ſuch men make uſe of Principles received to effect their Contrivances, and are not ſo impolitick as to build deſigns upon Principles that have no Foundation in nature: Some Heathen Law-givers have pretended a converſe with their Gods to make their Laws be received by the people with a greater veneration, and fix with ſtronger obligation the obſervance and perpetuity of them; but this was not the introducing of a new Principle, but the ſuppoſition of an old receiv'd Notion, that there was a God, and an application of that Principle to their preſent deſign. The pretence had been vain had not the notion of a God been ingrafted: Politicians are ſo little poſſeſſed with a Reverence of God, that the firſt mighty one in the Scripture, (which may reaſonably gain with the Atheiſt the credit of the Antienteſt Hiſtory in the VVord) is repreſented without any fear of God. * An Invader and Oppreſſor of his Neighbors, and reputed the Introducer of a new VVorſhip, and being the firſt that built Cities after the flood, (as *Cain* was the firſt Builder of them before the flood,) built alſo Idolatry with them. And erected a new VVorſhip, and was ſo far from ſtrengthning that Notion the people had of *God*, that he endeavoured to corrupt it; The firſt Idolatry in common Hiſtories being noted to proceed from that part of the VVorld; the Antienteſt Idol being at *Babylon*, and ſuppoſed to be firſt invented by this Perſon: VVhence by the way perhaps

* Gen. 10. 9. Nimrod *was a mighty hunter before the Lord.*

haps *Rome* is in the *Revelations* called *Babylon*, with respect to that similitude of their Saint-Worship, to the Idolatry first set up in that place. * Tis evident *Politicians* have often changed the Worship of a Nation, but it is not upon record, that the first thoughts of an object of Worship ever entred into the minds of people by any trick of theirs.

* *Or if we understand it, as some think, that he defended his invasions under a pretext of the preserving Religion, it assures us that there was a notion of an object of Religion before, since no Religion can be without an object of Worship.*

But to return to the present Argument, the Being of a God is owned by some Nations, that have scarce any form of pollicy among them. Tis as wonderful how any wit should hit upon such an Invention, as it is absurd to ascribe it to any humane device, if there were not prevailing Arguments to constrain the consent. Besides, how is it possible they should deceive themselves? What is the reason the greatest Politicians have their fears of a Deity upon their unjust practices, as well as other men, they intended to befool? How many of them have had forlorn Consciences upon a Death Bed, upon the consideration of a God to answer an account to in another World? Is it credible they should be frighted by that wherewith they knew they beguiled others? No man satisfying his pleasures would impose such a deceit upon himself, or render and make himself more miserable than the Creatures he hath dominion over.

2. *It is unaccountable how it should indure so long a time.* That this Policy should be so fortunate as to gain ground in the Consciences of men, and exercise an Empire over them, and meet with such an universal success. If the Notion of a God were a a State-Engine, and introduced by some Politick Grandees for the ease of Government, and preserving people with more felicity in order? How comes it to pass the first broachers of it were never upon record? There is scarce a false opinion vented in the World, but may as a stream be traced to the first head and fountain. The Inventors of perticular forms of Worship are known, and the reasons why they prescribed them known; but what Grandee was the Author of this? who can pitch a time and person that sprung up this Notion? If any be so insolent as to impose a cheat, he can hardly be supposed to be so successful as to deceive the whole world for many Ages: Impostures pass not free through the whole world without Examination and discovery; Falsities have not been universally and constantly owned without controul and question. If a cheat imposeth upon some Towns and Countries, he will be found out by the more piercing enquiries of other places; and it is not easie to name any Imposture that hath walked so long in its disguise in the World, without being unmasked and whipped out by some Nation or other: If this had been a meer trick, there would have been as much craft in some to discern it as there was in others to contrive it. No Man can be imagined so wise in a Kingdom, but others may be found as wise as himself: And it is not conceivable, that so many clear sighted men in all Ages, should be ignorant of it, and not endeavour to free the world from so great a falsity. * It cannot be found that a trick of State should always beguile men of the most piercing insights, as well as the most credulous: That a few crafty men should befool all the wise men in the world; and the world lie in a belief of it, and never like to be freed from it. What is the reason the succeeding Politicians never knew this Stratagem, since their Maxims are usually handed to their Successors?

* Fotherby *a Theomastrix*, p. 64.

And there is not a Richlieu, *but leave s his Axioms to a* Mazerine.

This perswasion of the Existence of God, ows not it self to any Imposture or subtilty of Men: If it had not been agreeable to common Nature and Reason, it could not so long have born sway. The imposed yoke would have been cast off by Multitudes; Men would not have charged themselves with that which was attended with consequences displeasing to the Flesh, and hindred them from a full swing of their rebellious Passions; such a shackle would have mouldred of it self, or been broke by the extravagances humane nature is inclin'd unto: The wickedness of men without question, hath prompted them to endeavour to unmask it, if it were a Cosenage; but could never yet be so successful as to free the world from a perswasion, or their own Consciences from the tincture of the Existence of a Deity. It must be therefore of an ancienter Date than the Craft of States men, and descend into the World with the first appearance of humane nature. Time, which hath rectified many Errors, improves this Notion, makes it shock down its roots deeper, and spread its branches larger.

It must be a natural Truth that shines clear by the detection of those Errors that have befooled the World, and the wit of Man is never able to name any humane

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Author that firſt inſinuated it into the beliefs of men.

3. *Nor was it Fear firſt introduced it.* Fear is the Conſequent of wickedneſs. As Man was not created with any inherent ſin, ſo he was not created with any terrifying fears, the one had been againſt the Holineſs of the Creator, the other againſt his goodneſs: Fear did not make this Opinion, but the Opinion of the Being of a Deity was the cauſe of this Fear, after his ſenſe of angring the Deity by his wickedneſs. The Object of Fear is before the Act of Fear; there could not be an Act of Fear exerciſed about the Deity, till it was believed to be exiſtent, and not only ſo, but Offended: For God, as exiſtent only, is not the Object of Fear or Love; 'tis not the Exiſtence of a thing that excites any of thoſe Affections, but the Relation a thing bears to us in particular. God is good, and ſo the object of love, as well as juſt, and thereby the object of Fear. He was as much called *Love*, * and *Mens*, or *Mind*, in regard of his Goodneſs and Underſtanding, by the Heathens, as much as by any other Name. Neither of thoſe names were proper to inſinuate Fear; neither was fear the firſt Principle that made the Heathens worſhip a God; they offered Sacrifices out of Gratitude to ſome, as well as to others out of Fear: the fear of Evils in the world, and the hopes of Belief and Aſſiſtance from their Gods, and not a terrifying Fear of God, was the principal Spring of their worſhip: VVhen Calamities from the hands of Men, or Judgements by the influences of Heaven were upon them, they implored that which they thought a Deity; It was not their Fear of him, but a hope in his Goodneſs, and Perſwaſion of Remedy from him, for the averting thoſe Evils that rendred them Adorers of a God: If they had not had preexiſtent Notions of his Being and Goodneſs, they would never have made addreſſes to him, or ſo frequently ſought to that they only apprehended as a terrifying Object: * VVhen you hear men calling upon God in a time of affrighting thunder, you cannot imagin that the fear of thunder did firſt introduce the Notion of a God, but implies, that it was before apprehended by them, or ſtampt upon them, though their Fear doth at preſent actuate that Belief, and engage them in a preſent Exerciſe of Piety: and whereas the Scripture ſaith, *the fear of God is the beginning of Wiſdom*, or of all Religion; *'tis not underſtood of a diſtracted and terrifying Fear, but a reverential Fear of him, becauſe of his holineſs, or a worſhip of him, a ſubmiſſion to him, and ſincere ſeeking of him.

* Ἔρως

* *Gaſſend. Phyſ. ſect.* 1. l. 4. c. 2. *p.* 291, 292.

* *Pro.* 9. 10. *Pſal.* 111. 10.

VVell then is it not a folly for an Atheiſt to deny that which is the reaſon and common Sentiment of the whole world, to ſtrip himſelf of humanity, run counter to his own Conſcience, prefer a private before a univerſal Judgment, give the lie to his own nature and reaſon, aſſert things impoſſible to be proved, nay impoſſible to be acted, Forge irrationalities for the ſupport of his fancy againſt the common perſwaſion of the world, and againſt himſelf, and ſo much of God as is manifeſt in him and every man *?

* Rom. 1. 19.

II. *It is a folly to deny that which all Creatures, or all things in the World manifeſt.* Let us view this in Scripture ſince we acknowledge it, and after conſider the arguments from natural reaſon.

Jupiter eſt quodcunque vides, &c.

The Apoſtle reſolves it, Rom. 1. 19, 20. *The inviſible things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his Eternal power and Godhead, ſo that they are without excuſe:* They know or might know, by the things that were made, the Eternity and power of God; their ſenſe might take Circuit about every object, and their minds collect the being and ſomething of the perfections of the Deity: The firſt diſcourſe of the mind upon the ſight of a delicate peice of workman-ſhip, is the Concluſion of the being of an Artificer and the admiration of his skill and induſtry. The Apoſtle doth not ſay, the inviſible things of God are *believed*, or they have an opinion of them, but they are *ſeen* and *clearly ſeen*: They are like Chryſtal glaſſes which give a clear repreſentation of the Exiſtence of a Deity, like that Mirrour reported to be in a Temple in *Arcadia*, which repreſented to the Spectator, not his own face, but the Image of that Deity which he worſhipped.

The whole world is like a Looking-glaſs, which whole and entire repreſents the Image of God, and every broken piece of it, every little ſhred of a Creature doth the like, not only the great ones, *Elephants* and the *Leviathan*, but *Ants*, *Flies*, *Worms*, whoſe bodies rather then names we know: The greater *Cattle* and the *Creeping things* *Gen.* 1. 24. Not naming there any intermediate Creature, to direct us to view him in the

the ſmaller Letters, as well as the greater Characters of the World. His name is *Glorious*, and his Attributes are excellent *in all the Earth*, * in every Creature, as the glory of the Sun is in every beam and ſmaller flaſh; he is ſeen in every Inſect, in every Spire of graſs: The voice of the Creator is in the moſt contemptible Creature: * The *Apoſtle* adds that they are ſo clearly ſeen, that men are inexcuſable if they have not ſome knowledge of God by them; if they might not certainly know them, they might have ſome excuſe: So that his *Exiſtence* is not only probably but demonſtratively proved from the things of the world.

* Pſal. 8. 1.

* Banes in Aquin. *Par.* 2. *Qu.* 2. *Artic.* 2. *pa.* 78. *Col.* 2.

Eſpecially the Heavens declare him, which God *ſtretches out like a Curtain*, * or as ſome render the word, a *Skin*, whereby is ſignified, that Heaven is as an open book, which was Anciently made of the skins of beaſts, that by the knowledge of them we may be taught the knowledge of God. Where Scripture was not revealed the world ſerved for a witneſs of a God; what ever arguments the Scripture uſes to prove it, are drawn from nature, (though indeed it doth not ſo much prove as ſuppoſe the Exiſtence of a God) but what Arguments it uſes are from the Creatures, and particularly the Heavens, which are the publick Preachers of this Doctrine: The breath of God ſounds to all the World through thoſe Organ-pipes. His Being is viſible in their Exiſtence, his Wiſdom in their frame, his Power in their motion, his Goodneſs in their uſefulneſs: * They have a voice, and their voice is as intelligible as any common Language. And thoſe are ſo plain Heralds of a Deity, that the Heathen miſtook them for Deities, and gave them a particular adoration which was due to that God they declared. The firſt Idotatry ſeems to be of thoſe Heavenly bodies, which began probably in the time of *Nimrod*. In *Jobs* time it is certain they admired the Glory of the *Sun*, and the brightneſs of the *Moon*, not without *kiſſing their hands*, a ſign of Adoration*. Tis evident a man may as well doubt whether there be a Sun when he ſees his beams guilding the Earth, as doubt whether there be a God when he ſees his works ſpread in the World.

* Pſal. 104. 2.

* *For their voice goeth to the end of the Earth*, Pſal. 19. 1, 2.

* Job. 31. 26, 27.

The things in the world declare the Exiſtence of a God.

1. *In their Production*, 2. *Harmony*, 3. *Preſervation*, 4. *Anſwering their ſeveral ends.*

First, 1. *In their production.* The declaration of the Exiſtence of God was the chief end for which they were Created, that the Notion of a Supream and Independent Eternal Being, might eaſier incur into the active underſtanding of man from the objects of ſenſe diſperſed in every corner of the World, that he might pay a homage and devotion to the Lord of all, Iſa. 40. 12, 13, 18, 19. *&c. Have you not underſtood from the foundation of the Earth, tis he that ſits upon the Circle of the Heaven*, &c. How could this great heap be brought into being unleſs a God had framed it? Every plant, every Atome, as well as every Star, at the firſt meeting whiſpers this in our Ears, *I have a Creator*, *I am witneſs to a Deity*? who ever ſaw Statues or Pictures, but preſently thinks of a Statuary and Limner? Who beholds Garments, Ships or Houſes, but underſtands there was a Weaver, a Carpenter, an Architect? * Who can caſt his eyes about the world, but muſt think of that power that formed it, and that the goodneſs which appears in the formation of it hath a perfect Reſidence in ſome Being? [thoſe things that are good muſt flow from ſomething perfectly good: that which is chief in any kind is the cauſe of all of that kind. Fire which is moſt hot is the cauſe of all things which are hot. There is ſome Being therefore which is the cauſe of all that Perfection, which is in the Creature; and this is God. *Aquin. 1. qu. 2. Artic.* 3.] All things that are, demonſtrate ſomething from whence they are. All things have a contracted perfection, and what they have is Communicated to them. Perfections are parcelled out among ſeveral Creatures. Any thing that is imperfect cannot exiſt of it ſelf. We are led therefore by them to conſider a fountain which bubbles up in all perfection; a hand which diſtributes thoſe ſeveral degrees of Being and Perfection to what we ſee; we ſee that which is imperfect, our minds conclude ſomething perfect to exiſt before it; our eye ſees the ſtreams, but our underſtanding riſeth to the head: as the eye ſees the ſhadow, but the underſtanding informs us whether it be the ſhadow of a man, or of a beaſt.

* Philo. ex Petav. Theolo. *Dog. Tom. 1. li. 1. cap. 1. pa. 4.* *ſomewhat changed.*

God hath given us Senſe to behold the objects in the World, and Underſtanding to reaſon his *Exiſtence* from them; the underſtanding cannot conceive a thing to have made it ſelf; that is againſt all reaſon. * As they are made they ſpeak out a Maker; and cannot

* Rom. 1. 20.

not be a trick of chance, ſince they are made with ſuch an immenſe Wiſdom, that is too big for the graſp of all humane underſtanding. Thoſe that doubt whether the Exiſtence of God be an implanted Principle, yet agree that the effects in the world lead to a ſupream and univerſal cauſe: And that if we have not the knowledge of it rooted in our Natures, yet we have it by diſcourſe, ſince by all Maſters of reaſon a *Proceſſus in Infinitum* muſt be accounted impoſſible in ſubordinate cauſes.

This will appear in ſeveral things.

First, 1. *The World and every Creature had a beginning.* The Scripture Aſcertains this to us* ; *David*, who was not the firſt man, gives the praiſe to God of his being *curiouſly wrought, &c.* Pſal. 139. 14, 15. God gave being to Men, and Plants, and Beaſts, before they being to one another. He gives being to them now as the Fountain of all being, though the ſeveral Modes of being are from the ſeveral natures of ſecond cauſes.

* *Gen.* 1.

Tis true indeed we are aſcertained that they were made by the true God, that they were made by his word*, that they were made of nothing, and not only this lower world wherein we live, but according to the *Jewiſh* diviſion, the world of *Men*, the world of *Stars*, and the world of *Spirits*, and *Souls*: We do not waver in it, or doubt of it, as the Heathen did in their diſputes ; he know they are the workmanſhip of the true God, of that God we adore, not of falſe Gods: *By his Word*, without any inſtrument or engine, as in earthly Structures ; *of things which do not appear*, without any preexiſtent matter, as all Artificial works of men are framed.

* *By Faith we underſtand that the worlds were framed by the word of God,&c.* * Heb. 11. 3.

Yet the proof of the beginning of the world is affirmed with good reaſon ; and if it had a beginning, it had alſo ſome higher cauſe than it ſelf: Every effect hath a cauſe.

* *The World was not Eternal or from Eternity.* The matter of the world cannot be Eternal: Matter cannot ſubſiſt without form, nor put on any form without the action of ſome cauſe, this cauſe muſt be in being before it acted ; that which is not cannot act. The cauſe of the world muſt neceſſarily exiſt before any matter was endued with any form ; that therefore cannot be Eternal before which another did ſubſiſt ; if it were from Eternity it would not be ſubject to mutation: If the whole was from Eternity why not alſo the parts, what makes the changes ſo viſible then, if Eternity would exempt it from mutability ?

* Daile 20. Serm. Pſa. 102. 26. *pa.* 13,14.

1. *Time cannot be infinite, and therefore the World not Eternal* ; * All motion hath its beginning, if it were otherewiſe, we muſt ſay the number of Heavenly revolutions of days and nights, which are paſt to this inſtant, is actually infinite, which cannot be in nature: If it were ſo, it muſt needs be granted, that apart is equal to the whole ; becauſe infinite being equal to infinite, the number of days paſt in all Ages to the beginning of one year being Infinite (as they would be, ſuppoſing the world had no beginning) would by conſequence be equal to the number of days, which ſhall paſs to the end of the next ; whereas that number of days paſt is indeed but a part, and ſo a part would be equal to the whole.

* Daile ut Supra.

2. *Generations of Men, Animals and Plants could not be from Eternity,* * If any Man ſay the world was from Eternity, then there muſt be propagations of living Creatures in the ſame manner as are at this day: For without this the World could not conſiſt ; what we ſee now done muſt have been perpetually done, if it be done by a neceſſity of nature: But we ſee nothing now that doth ariſe but by a mutual propagation from another: If the world were Eternal therefore, it muſt be ſo in all Eternity: Take any particular ſpecies, ſuppoſe a man, if men were from Eternity, then there were perpetual generations, ſome were born into the World and ſome died: Now the natural condition of generation is, that a man doth not generate a man, nor a Sheep a Lamb, as ſoon as ever it ſelf is brought into the World, but gets ſtrength and vigour by degrees, and muſt arrive to a certain ſtated age before they can produce the like, for whilſt any thing is little and below the due age, it cannot increaſe its kind ; Men therefore and other Creatures did propagate their kind, by the ſame Law, not as ſoon as ever they were born, but in the interval of ſome time, and Children grew up by degrees in the Mothers Womb till they were fit to be brought forth: If this be ſo, then there could not be an Eternal ſucceſſion of propagating: For there is no Eternal continuation of time: Time is always to be conceived as having one part before another: But that perpetuity of Nativities is always

* Petav. Theo. *Dogmat. Tom.* 1. *lib.* 1. *cap.* 2. *pag.* 15.

always after some time, wherein it could not be for the weakness of age: If no man then can conceive a propagation from Eternity, there must be then a beginning of Generation in time, and consequently the Creatures were made in time.

*[If the World were Eternal, it must have been in the same posture as it is now, in a state of Generation and Corruption; and so Corruption must have been as Eternal as Generation, and then things that do generate and corrupt must have Eternally been and Eternally not have been: There must be some first way to set Generation on work.] We must lose our selves in our conceptions; we cannot conceive a Father before a Child, as well as we cannot conceive a Child before a Father: And reason is quite bewildred, and cannot return into a right way of Conception till it conceive one first of every kind: One first Man, one first Animal, one first Plant, from whence others do proceed. The Argument is unanswerable, and the wisest Atheist (if any Atheist can be called wise) cannot unlose the knot. We must come to something that is first in every kind, and this first must have a Cause, not of the same kind, but Infinite and Independent; otherwise Men run into unconceivable Labyrinths and contradictions.

* *To express it in the words of one of our own.* Wolseley *of Atheism*, pa. 47.

Man, the noblest Creature upon Earth, hath a beginning. No Man in the World but was some years ago no man. If every man we see had a beginning: then the first Man had also a beginning, then the World had a beginning: For the Earth which was made for the use of man, had wanted that end for which it was made. We must pitch upon some one man that was unborn, that first man must either be Eternal, that cannot be, for he that hath no beginning hath no end; or must spring out of the Earth, as Plants and Trees do, that cannot be, why should not the Earth produce men to this day, as it doth Plants and Trees? He was therefore made; and whatsoever is made hath some cause that made it, which is God. *If the World were uncreated it were then immutable, but every Creature upon the Earth is in a continual flux, always changing: If things be mutable, they were created; if created, they were made by some Author; whatsoever hath a beginning must have a maker, if the World hath a beginning, there was then a time when it was not; it must have some cause to produce it. That which makes is before that which is made, and this is God.

* Petav. *ut supra*, p. 10.

* Damason.

Secondly, II. Which will appear further in this proposition, *No Creature can make it self*: The World could not make it self.

If every man had a beginning, every man than was once nothing; he could not then make himself, because nothing cannot be the cause of something, *Psal.* 100. 3. *The Lord he is God, he hath made us, and not we our selves*, [whatsoever begun in time, was not; and when it was nothing, it had nothing, and could do nothing: And therefore could never give to it self nor to any other to be, or to be able to do: For then it gave what it had not, and did what it could not. * Since Reason must acknowledge a *first* of every kind, a first Man, *&c.* it must acknowledge him created and made, not by himself: Why have not other men since rise up by themselves? not by Chance; why hath not Chance produced the like in that long time the World hath stood? If we never knew any thing give being to it self, how can we imagine any thing ever could? If the cheifest part of this lower World cannot, nor any part of it hath been known to give being to it self, then the whole cannot be supposed to give any being to it self: Man did not form himself: His body is not from himself, it would then have the power of moving it self, but that is not able to live or act without the presence of the Soul: Whilst the Soul is present the body moves, when that is absent the body lies as a senseless log, not having the least action or motion. His Soul could not form it self, can that which cannot form the least mote, the least grain of dust, form it self, a nobler substance than any upon the earth?

* Petav. *Theol. Dog. Tom.* 1. *lib.* 1. *cap.* 2. *pa.* 14.

This will be evident to every mans reason, if we consider,

1. *Nothing can act before it be.* The first Man was not, and therefore could not make himself to be: For any thing to produce it self is to act; if it acted before it was, it was then something and nothing at the same time; it had then a being before it had a being; it acted when it brought it self into being. How could it act without a being, without it was? So that if it were the cause of it self, it must be before it self as well as after it self; it was before it was; it was as a cause before it was as an effect. Action always supposes a principle from whence it flows; as nothing hath no Existence, so it

hath no operation; there muſt be therefore ſomething of real Exiſtence to give a Being to thoſe things that are, and every cauſe muſt be an effect of ſome other before it be a cauſe: To be and not be at the ſame time, is a manifeſt contradiction, which would be, if any thing made it ſelf: That which makes is always before that which is made: Who will ſay the Houſe is before the Carpenter, or the Picture before the Limner? The world as a Creator, muſt be before it ſelf as a Creature.

2. *That which doth not underſtand it ſelf, and order it ſelf, could not make it ſelf.* If the firſt Man fully underſtood his own nature, the excellency of his own Soul, the manner of its operations, why was not that underſtanding conveyed to his poſterity? Are not many of them found, who underſtand their own nature, almoſt as little as a Beaſt underſtands it ſelf; or a Roſe underſtands its own ſweetneſs; or a Tulip its own Colours? The Scripture indeed gives us an account how this came about, *viz.* by the deplorable Rebellion of Man, whereby Death was brought upon them (a Spiritual Death, which includes ignorance as well as an inability to Spiritual action *). Thus he fell from his Honour and became like the Beaſts that periſh, and not retaining God in his knowledge, retained not himſelf in his own knowledge.

* Gen. 2. 17. Pſal. 49. 8.

But what reply can an Atheiſt make to it, who acknowledges no higher cauſe than nature? If the Soul made it ſelf, how comes it to be ſo muddy, ſo wanting in its knowledge of it ſelf, and of other things? If the Soul made its own underſtanding whence did the defect ariſe? If ſome firſt principle was ſetled by the firſt man in himſelf, where was the ſtop that he did not implant all in his own mind, and conſequently in the minds of all his deſcendants? Our Souls know little of themſelves, little of the World, are every day upon new enquiries, have little ſatisfaction in themſelves, meet with many an invincible rub in their way; and when they ſeem to come to ſome reſolution in ſome caſes, ſtagger again, and like a ſtone roll'd up to the top of the Hill, quickly find themſelves again at the foot. How come they to be ſo purblind in Truth? So ſhort of that which they judge true goodneſs? How comes it to paſs they cannot order their own rebellious affections, and ſuffer the reins they have to hold over their affections to be taken out of their hands by the unruly fancy and fleſh?

This no man that denies the being of a God, and the Revelation in Scripture, can give an account of. Bleſſed be God that we have the Scripture, which gives us an account of thoſe things, that all the wit of men could never inform us of; and that when they are diſcovered and known by Revelation, they appear not contrary to reaſon.

3. *If the firſt Man made himſelf, how came he to limit himſelf?* If he gave himſelf being, why did he not give himſelf all the perfections and Ornaments of being? Nothing that made it ſelf could ſit down contented with a little, but would have had as much power to give it ſelf that which is leſs, as to give it ſelf being, when it was nothing. The excellencies it wanted had not been more difficult to gain than the other which it poſſeſſed, as belonging to its nature. If the firſt man had been independent upon another, and had his perfection from himſelf, he might have acquired that perfection he wanted, as well as have beſtowed upon himſelf that perfection he had; and then there would have been no bounds ſet to him. He would have been Omniſcient and immutable. He might have given himſelf what he would; if he had had the ſetting his own bounds, he would have ſet none at all; For what ſhould reſtrain him? No man now wants Ambition to be what he is not; and if the firſt man had not been determined by another, but had given himſelf being, he would not have remained in that determinate being, no more than a Toad would remain a Toad, if it had power to make it ſelf a man, and that power it would have had, if it had given it ſelf a being. Whatſoever gives it ſelf being, would give it ſelf all degrees of being, and ſo would have no imperfection, becauſe every imperfection, is a want of ſome degree of being. * He that could give himſelf matter and life, might give himſelf every thing. The giving of life is an act of Omnipotence, and what is Omnipotent in one thing, may be in all. Beſides, if the firſt man had made himſelf, he would have conveyed himſelf to all his poſterity in the ſame manner, every man would have had all the perfections of the firſt man, as every Creature hath the perfections of the ſame kind, from whence it naturally Iſſues, all are deſirous to communicate what they can to their poſterity. Communicative goodneſs belongs to every nature. Every Plant propagates its kind in the ſame perfection it hath it ſelf; and

* *Therefore the Heathens called God τὸ ὄν, the only being: Other things were not beings, becauſe they had not all degrees of being.*

and the nearer any thing comes to a rational nature, the greater affection it hath to that which descends from it; therefore this affection belongs to a rational nature much more. The first man therefore, if he had had power to give himself being, and consequently all perfection, he would have had as much power to convey it down to his posterity; no impediment could have stopt his way; then all Souls proceeding from that first man would have been equally intellectual. What should hinder them from inheriting the same perfections? whence should they have divers qualifications and differences in their understandings? No man then would have been subject to those weaknesses, doubtings, and unsatisfied desires of knowledge and perfection. But being all Souls are not alike, 'tis certain they depend upon some other cause for the communication of that excellency they have. If the perfections of Man be so contracted and kept within certain bounds, 'tis certain that they were not in his own power, and so were not from himself. Whatsoever hath a determinate being must be limited by some superior cause. There is therefore some superior power, that hath thus determined the Creature by set bounds and distinct measures, and hath assigned to every one its proper nature, that it should not be greater or less than it is; who hath said of every one as of the waves of the Sea, * *Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further*; and this is God. Man could not have reserved any perfection from his Posterity. For since he doth propagate not by choice but nature, he could no more have kept back any perfection from them, than he could, as he pleased, have given any perfection belonging to his nature to them. * Job 38. 11.

4. *That which hath power to give it self being, cannot want power to preserve that being.* Preservation is not more difficult than Creation. If the first man made himself, why did he not preserve himself? He is not now among the living in the world. How came he to be so feeble as to sink into the Grave? Why did he not inspire himself with new heat and moisture, and fill his languishing limbs and declining body with new strength? Why did he not chase away Diseases and Death at the first approach? What creature can find the dust of the first Man? All his posterity traverse the Stage and retire again; in a short space their Age departs, and is *removed* from them *as a Shepherds Tent*, and is *cut off with pining Sickness*. * The life of Man is as a wind, and like a cloud that is consumed and vanishes away, * *The Eye that sees him shall see him no more, he returns not to his house, neither doth his place know him any more.* The Scripture gives us the reason of this, and layes it upon the score of sin against his Creator; which no Man without revelation can give any satisfactory account of. * Isa. 38. 12. * Job 7. 6, 7, 8, 9.

Had the first Man made himself, he had been sufficient for himself, able to support himself without the assistance of any creature. He would not have needed animals and plants, and other helps to nourish and refresh him, nor Medicines to cure him. He could not be beholding to other things for his support, which he is certain he never made for himself. His own nature would have continued that vigour, which once he had conferred upon himself. He would not have needed the heat and light of the Sun; he would have wanted nothing sufficient for himself in himself; he needed not have sought without himself for his own preservation and comfort. What depends upon another is not of it self, and what depends upon things inferior to it self is less of it self. Since nothing can subsist of it self, since we see those things upon which Man depends for his nourishment and subsistence, growing and decaying, starting into the world and retiring from it, as well as man himself; some preserving cause must be concluded upon which all depends.

5. *If the first Man did produce himself, why did he not produce himself before?*

It hath been already proved, that he had a beginning, and could not be from Eternity. Why then did he not make himself before? Not because he would not. For having no being, he could have no will; he could neither be willing nor not willing. If he could not then, how could he afterwards? if it were in his own power he could have done it, he would have done it; if it were not in his own power, then it was in the power of some other cause, and that is God. How came he by that power to produce himself? If the power of producing himself were communicated by another, then Man could not be the cause of himself. That is the cause of it which communicated that power to it. But if the power of being was in and

from himſelf and in no other, nor communicated to him, man would always have been in act, and always have Exiſted; no hinderance can be conceived. For that which had the power of being in it ſelf was invincible by any thing that ſhould ſtand in the way of its own being.

We may conclude from hence, the excellency of the Scripture; that it is a Word not to be refuſed credit. It gives us the moſt rational account of things in the 1. and 2. of *Geneſis*, which nothing in the world elſe is able to do.

Thirdly, III. Propoſition, *No Creature could make the World.* No Creature can create another. If it creates of nothing, tis then Omnipotent and ſo not a creature. If it makes ſomething of matter unfit for that which is produced out of it, then the inquiry will be, who was the cauſe of the matter? and ſo we muſt arrive to ſome uncreated being, the cauſe of all. Whatſoever gives being to any other muſt be the higheſt being, and muſt poſſeſs all the perfections of that which it gives being to. what viſible Creature is there which poſſeſſes the perfections of the whole world? If therefore an inviſible Creature made the world, the ſame enquiries will return whence that Creature had its being? For he could not make himſelf. If any Creature did Create the World, he muſt do it by the ſtrength and vertue of another, which firſt gave him being; and this is God. For whatſoever hath its Exiſtence and vertue of acting from another, is not God. If it hath its vertue from another tis then a ſecond cauſe, and ſo ſuppoſeth a firſt cauſe. It muſt have ſome cauſe of it ſelf, or be Eternally Exiſtent. If Eternally Exiſtent, tis not a ſecond cauſe, but God; if not Eternally Exiſtent, we muſt come to ſomething at length which was the cauſe of it, or elſe be bewildred without being able to give an account of any thing. VVe muſt come at laſt to an Infinite Eternal Independent Being, that was the firſt cauſe of this Structure and Fabrick wherein we and all Creatures dwell. The Scripture proclaims this aloud, * *I am the Lord and there is none elſe : I Form the light and I Create darkneſs.* Man the Nobleſt Creature cannot of himſelf make a man, the chiefeſt part of the World. If our Parents only without a Superior power made our Bodies or Souls, they would know the frame of them; as he that makes a Lock knows the VVards of it; he that makes any curious peice of Arras, knows how he ſets the various colours together, and how many threads went to each diviſion in the VVeb; he that makes a VVatch, having the Idea of the whole work in his mind, knows the motions of it, and the reaſon of thoſe motions. But both Parents and Children are equally ignorant of the nature of their Souls and Bodies, and of the reaſon of their motions. God only that had the Supream hand in informing us, in whoſe *Book all our members are written, which in continuance were faſhioned*, knows what we all are ignorant of. If man hath in an ordinary courſe of generation his being chiefly from an higher cauſe than his Parents, the World then certainly had its being from ſome infinitely wiſe intelligent Being, which is God. If it were, as ſome fancy, made by an aſſembly of Atomes, there muſt be ſome infinite intelligent cauſe that made them, ſome cauſe that ſeparated them, ſome cauſe that mingled them together for the piling up ſo comely a ſtructure as the world. Tis the moſt abſurd thing to think they ſhould meet together by hazard, and rank themſelves in that order we ſee without a higher and a wiſe Agent. So that no Creature could make the world. For ſuppoſing any Creature was formed before this viſible world, and might have a hand in diſpoſing things, yet he muſt have a cauſe of himſelf, and muſt act by the virtue and ſtrength of another; and this is God.

* Iſa. 45. 6, 7. Deut. 4. 35.

Pſal. 139. 16.

Fourthly, IV. Propoſition. From hence it follows, *that there is a firſt cauſe of things, which we call God.* There muſt be ſomething ſupream in the order of nature, ſomething which is greater than all, which hath nothing beyond it or above it; otherwiſe we muſt run *in Infinitum.* We ſee not a River but we conclude a Fountain; a VVatch but we conclude an Artificer. As all number begins from unity, ſo all the multitude of things in the VVorld begins from ſome Unity, Oneneſs, as the principle of it. Tis natural to ariſe from a view of thoſe things, to the conception of a nature more perfect than any. As from heat mixed with cold, and light mixed with darkneſs, men conceive and ariſe in their underſtanding to an intenſe heat and a pure light: And from a corporeal or bodily ſubſtance joyned with an incorporeal, (as man is an earthly body, and a Spiritual Soul,) we aſcend to a conception of a ſubſtance purely incorporeal

corporeal and Spiritual. So from a multitude of things in the world, Reaſon leads us to one choice being above all. And ſince in all Natures in the World, we ſtill find a ſuperiour nature; the nature of one Beaſt, above the nature of another; the nature of Man above the nature of Beaſts; and ſome inviſible nature, the worker of ſtrange effects in the Air and Earth, which cannot be aſcribed to any viſible cauſe, we muſt ſuppoſe ſome nature above all thoſe of unconceivable perfection.

* Every *Sceptick*, one that doubts whether there be any thing real or no in the World, that counts every thing an appearance, muſt neceſſarily own a firſt Cauſe. They cannot reaſonably doubt, but that there is ſome firſt Cauſe, which makes the things appear ſo to them. They cannot be the cauſe of their own appearance. For as nothing can have a Being from it ſelf, ſo nothing can appear by it ſelf and its own force. Nothing can be and not be, at the ſame time. But that which is not, and yet ſeems to be; if it be the cauſe why it ſeems to be what it is not, it may be ſaid to be and not to be. But certainly ſuch Perſons muſt think themſelves to exiſt. If they do not, they cannot think; and if they do exiſt, they muſt have ſome cauſe of that Exiſtence. So that which way ſoever we turn our ſelves, we muſt in reaſon own a firſt Cauſe of the World. * Coccei *ſum. Theol. cap.* 8. § 33. *&c.*

Well then might the *Pſalmiſt* term an *Atheiſt a Fool*, that diſowns a God, againſt his own Reaſon. Without owning a God as the firſt cauſe of the world, no man can give any tolerable or ſatisfactory account of the world to his own reaſon.

And this firſt Cauſe,

1. *Muſt neceſſarily exiſt.* * Tis neceſſary that he by whom all things are, ſhould be before all things, and nothing before him. And if nothing be before him, he comes not from any other; and then he alwayes was, and without beginning. He is from himſelf; not that he once was not, but becauſe he hath not his Exiſtence from another, and therefore of neceſſity he did exiſt from all Eternity. Nothing can make it ſelf, or bring it ſelf into being; therefore there muſt be ſome being which hath no cauſe, that depends upon no other, never was produced by any other, but was what he is from Eternity, and cannot be otherwiſe; and is not what he is by will, but nature, neceſſarily exiſting, and alwayes exiſting without any capacity or poſſibility ever not to be. * Petav. *Theol. Dog. Tom.* 1. *lib.* 1. *cap.* 2. *pa.* 10, 11.

2. *Muſt be infinitely perfect.* Since man knows he is an imperfect being, he muſt ſuppoſe the imperfections he wants, are ſeated in ſome other being, which hath limited him, and upon which he depends. VVhatſoever we conceive of excellency or perfection muſt be in God. For we can conceive no perfection but what God hath given us a power to conceive. And he that gave us a power to conceive a tranſcendent perfection above whatſoever we ſaw or heard of, hath much more in himſelf; or elſe he could not give us ſuch a conception.

Secondly, II. As the production of the World, *ſo the harmony of all the parts of it declare the being and wiſdom of a God.* VVithout the acknowledging God the Atheiſt can give no account of thoſe things. The multitude, elegancy, variety, and beauty of all things are ſteps whereby to aſcend to one fountain and original of them.

Is it not a folly to deny the being of a wiſe Agent, who ſparkles in the beauty and motions of the Heavens; rides upon the wings of the VVind, and is writ upon the flowers and fruits of Plants. As the cauſe is known by the effects, ſo the wiſdom of the Cauſe is known by the elegancy of the VVork, the proportion of the parts to one another. VVho can imagine the VVorld could be raſhly made, and without conſultation, which in every part of it is ſo artificially framed? * No work of Art ſprings up of its own accord. The world is framed by an excellent Art, and therefore made by ſome skilful Artiſt. As we hear not a melodious inſtrument, but we conclude there is a Muſician that touches it, as well as ſome skilful hand that framed and diſpoſed it for thoſe Leſſons. And no man that hears the pleaſant ſound of a Lute but will fix his thoughts not upon the Inſtrument itſelf, but upon the skill of the Artiſt, that made it, and the art of the Muſician that ſtrikes it, though he ſhould not ſee the firſt, when he ſaw the Lute, nor ſees the other, when he hears the harmony. So a rational Creature confines not his thoughts to his Senſe, when he ſees the Sun in its Glory, and the Moon walking in its brightneſs; but riſeth up in a contemplation and admiration of that infinite Spirit that compoſed, and filled them with ſuch ſweetneſs. * Philo. Judæ. Petav. Theol. *Dogmat. Tom.* 1. *lib.* 1. *cap.* 1. *pag.* 9.

This appears,

1. *It,*

1. *In the linking contrary qualities together.* All things are compounded of the Elements. Thoſe are indued with contrary qualities, dryneſs and moiſture, heat and cold. Theſe would alwayes be contending with and infeſting one anothers rights, till the conteſt ended in the deſtruction of one or both. Where fire is predominant, it would ſuck up the water; where water is prevalent, it would quench the fire. The heat would wholly expel the cold, or the cold over-power the heat. Yet we ſee them chained and linkt one within another in every body upon the Earth, and rendring mutual offices for the benefit of that body wherein they are ſeated, and all conſpiring together in their particular quartels for the publick intereſt of the body. How could thoſe contraries, that of themſelves obſerve no order, that are alwayes preying upon one another, joyntly accord together of themſelves, for one common end, if they were not linkt in a common band, and reduced to that order by ſome incomprehenſible wiſdom and power, which keeps a hand upon them, orders their motions, and directs their events, and makes them friendly paſs into one anothers Natures? Confuſion had been the reſult of the diſcord and diverſity of their Natures. No compoſition could have been of thoſe conflicting qualities for the frame of any body, nor any harmony aroſe from ſo many jarring ſtrings, if they had not been reduced into concord by one that is ſupream Lord over them, and knows how to diſpoſe their varieties and enmities for the publick good. * If a Man ſhould ſee a large City or Country conſiſting of great multitudes of men of different tempers, full of Frauds and Factions and Animoſities in their natures againſt one another, yet living together in good order and peace, without oppreſſing and invading one another, and joyning together for the publick good; he would preſently conclude, there were ſome excellent Governor, who tempered them by his Wiſdom, and preſerved the publick Peace, though he had never yet beheld him with his eye. Tis as neceſſary to conclude a God, who moderates the contrarieties in the world; as to conclude a wiſe Prince, who over-rules the contrary diſpoſitions in a ſtate, making every one to keep his own bounds and confines. Things that are contrary to one another ſubſiſt in an admirable order.

* Athanaſius Petav. Theol. *Dog. Tom. 1. li. 1. cap. 1. pa. 4,5.*

2. *In the ſubſerviency of one thing to another.* All the Members of living Creatures are curiouſly fitted for the ſervice of one another, deſtin'd to a particular end, and endued with a vertue to attain that end, and ſo diſtinctly placed, that one is no hinderance to the other in its operations. Is not this more admirable than to be the work of chance, which is uncapable to ſettle ſuch an order and fix particular and general ends, cauſing an exact correſpondency of all the parts with one another, and every part to conſpire together for one common end? One thing is fitted for another. The Eye is fitted for the Sun, and the Sun fitted for the Eye. Several ſorts of food are fitted for Several Creatures, and thoſe Creatures fitted with Organs for the partaking of that food.

* Gaſſend. *Phyſic. ſect. 1. lib. 4. cap. 2. pag. 315.*

* Leſſius.

1. *Subſerviency of Heavenly bodies.* * The Sun, the heart of the world, is not for it ſelf but for the good of the World, as the heart of man is for the good of the body. How conveniently is the Sun placed, at a diſtance from the Earth, and the upper Heavens to enlighten the Stars above and enliven the Earth below? If it were either higher or lower, one part would want its influences. Tis not in the higher parts of the Heavens; the Earth then which lives and fructifies by its influence would have been expoſed to a perpetual Winter and chilneſs, unable to have produced any thing for the ſuſtenance of man or beaſt. If ſeated lower, the Earth had been parch'd up, the world made uninhabitable and long ſince had been conſumed to Aſhes by the ſtrength of its heat. Conſider the motion as well as the Scituation of the Sun. Had it ſtood ſtill, one part of the World had been cheriſhed by its beams, and the other left in a deſolate Widow-hood, in a diſconſolate darkneſs. Beſides, the Earth would have had no ſhelter from its perpendicular beams ſtriking perpetually and without any remiſſion upon it. The ſame incommodities would have followed upon its fixedneſs as upon its too great nearneſs. By a conſtant day the beauty of the Stars had been obſcured, the knowledge of their motions been prevented, and a conſiderable part of the Glorious wiſdom of the Creator in thoſe choice *works of his fingers* * had been vail'd from our eyes. It moves in a fixed line, viſits all parts of the Earth, ſcatters in the day its refreſhing bleſſings in every creek of the Earth, and removes the maſk from the other beauties of Heaven in the night, which ſparkle out to the glory

* Pſal. 8. 3.

of

of the Creator. It spreads its Light, warms the Earth, cherisheth the Seeds, excites the Spirit in the Earth, and brings Fruit to maturity. View also the Air, the vast extent between Heaven and Earth, which serves for a Water-course, a Cistern for water, to bedew the face of the Sun-burnt Earth, to satisfie the desolate ground, and to cause the *bud of the tender herb to spring forth* * : Could Chance appoint the Clouds of the Air to interpose as fans before the scorching heat of the Sun, and the faint bodies of the Creatures? Can that be the *Father of the Rain* or *begat the drops of dew* * ? Could any thing so blind settle those ordinances of Heaven for the preservation of Creatures on the Earth? Can this either bring or stay the bottles of Heaven, when the *dust grows into hardness, and the Clods cleave fast together* * ?

* Job. 38. 25, 27.

* Job. 38. 28.

* Job. 38. 37, 38.

2. *Subserviency of the lower World, the Earth, and Sea*, which was Created to be inhabited, *Isa.* 45. 18. The Sea affords water to the Rivers, the Rivers like so many veins are spread through the whole body of the Earth to refresh and enable it to bring forth fruit for the sustenance of man and beast, Psal. 104. 10, 11. *He sends the Springs into the Vallies, which run among the Hills, they give drink to every Beast of the Field, the wild Asses quench their thirst. He causes the Grass to grow for the Cattle, and the herb for the service of man, that he may bring forth food out of the Earth*, v. 14. The Trees are provided for shades against the extremity of heat, a refuge for the panting beasts, *an habitation for Birds* wherein to make their nests. *ver.* 17. and a Basket for their provision. How are the Vallies and Mountains of the Earth disposed for the pleasure and profit of man? Every year are the Fields covered with Harvests, for the nourishing the Creatures, no part is Barren but beneficial to man. The Mountains that are not cloathed with grass for his food are set with stones to make him an Habitation; they have their peculiar services of metals and minerals for the conveniency and comfort and benefit of man. Things which are not fit for his food are medicines for his cure under some painful sickness. Where the Earth brings not forth Corn, it brings forth Roots, for the service of other Creatures. Wood abounds more in those Countries where the cold is stronger than in others. Can this be the result of chance, or not rather of an infinite Wisdom?

Consider the usefulness of the Sea, for the supply of Rivers to refresh the Earth, *Which go up by the Mountains and down by the Vallies into the place God hath founded for them*, Psal. 104. 8. A store-house for fish for the nourishment of other Creatures, a shop of Medicines for cure, and Pearls for ornament. The band that ties remote Nations together, by giving opportunity of passage to, and commerce with one another. How should that natural inclination of the Sea to cover the Earth submit to this subserviency to the Creatures? Who hath pounded in this fluid mass of water in certain limits, and confin'd it to its own Channel, for the accommodation of such Creatures, who by its common Law can only be upon the Earth? Naturally the Earth was covered with the deep as with a Garment, the waters stood above the Mountains, *Who set a bound that they might not pass over*, that they return not again to cover the Earth? * Was it blind Chance, or an Infinite Power, that shut up the Sea *with doors, and made thick darkness a swadling band for it, and said hitherto shalt thou come and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be staid* * ?

* Psa. 104. 6, 9.

* Job. 38. 8, 9, 11.

All things are so ordered that they are not *propter se* but *propter aliud*. What advantage acrues to the *Sun* by its unwearied rolling about the world? Doth it increase the perfection of its nature by all its Circuits? No, but it serves the inferior world, it impregnates things by its heat. Not the most abject thing, but hath its end and use. There is a strait connexion, the Earth could not bring forth fruit without the Heavens, the Heavens could not water the Earth without vapours from it.

3. *All this subserviency of Creatures centers in man.* Other Creatures are served by those things as well as our selves, and they are provided for their nourishment and refreshment as well as ours; * yet both they and all Creatures meet in man as lines in their Centers: Things that have no life or sense are made for those that have both life and sense, and those that have life and sense are made for those that are endued with reason. When the *Psalmist* admiringly considers the Heavens, Moon, and Stars, he intimats man to be the end for which they were Created, Psal. 8. 3, 4. *What is man that thou art mindful of him?* He expresseth more particularly the Dominion

* Amirald. *de Trinitate* pa. 13. *and* Pag. 18.

Dominion that Man hath *over the beaſts of the fields, the fowl of the Air, and whatſoever paſſes through the paths of the Sea*, ver. 6, 7, 8. and concludes from thence the *excellency of Gods Name in all the Earth.* All things in the World one way or other Center in an uſefulneſs for man, ſome to feed him, ſome to cloath him, ſome to delight him, others to inſtruct him, ſome to exerciſe his wit, and others his ſtrength. Since man did not make them, he did not alſo order them for his own uſe. If they conſpire to ſerve him who never made them, they direct man to acknowledg another, who is the joynt Creator both of the Lord, and the Servants under his Dominion. And therefore as the inferior natures are ordered by an inviſible hand for the good of man; ſo the nature of man is by the ſame hand ordered to acknowledge the Exiſtence and the glory of the Creator of him. This viſible order man knows he did not conſtitute, he did not ſettle thoſe Creatures in ſubſerviency to himſelf; they were placed in that order before he had any acquaintance with them, or Exiſtence of himſelf, which is a queſtion God puts to *Job*, to conſider of, Job 38. 4. *Where waſt thou when I laid the foundation of the Earth, declare if thou haſt underſtanding?* All is ordered for Mans uſe, the Heavens anſwer to the Earth as a roof to a floor, both compoſing a delightful habitation for man; *vapours aſcend from the Earth*, and the Heavens concocts them, and returns them back in welcom ſhowers for the ſupplying of the Earth. * The light of the Sun deſcends to beautifie the Earth, and imploys its heat to midwife its fruits, and this for the good of the community, whereof Man is the head; and though all Creatures have diſtinct natures, and muſt act for particular ends, according to the Law of their Creation; yet there is a joynt combination for the good of the whole, as the common end; juſt as all the Rivers in the world, from what part ſoever they come, whether *North* or *South*, fall into the Sea for the ſupply of that maſs of waters; which loudly proclaims ſome infinitely wiſe nature, who made thoſe things in ſo exact an harmony. * [As in a Clock, the hammer which ſtrikes the bell, leads us to the next Wheel, that to another, the little wheel to a greater, whence it derives its motion, this at laſt to the ſpring, which acquaints us that there was ſome Artiſt that framed them in this ſubordination to one another for this orderly motion.]

* Jer. 10. 13.

* Morn. *de verit. cap.* 1. pag. 7.

4. *This order or Subſerviency is regular and uniforme.* Every thing is determined to its peculiar nature. * The *Sun* and *Moon* make day and night, months and years, determine the ſeaſons, never are defective in coming back to their ſtation and place, they wander not from their Roads, ſhock not againſt one another, nor hinder one another in the functions aſſigned them. From a ſmall grain or ſeed a Tree ſprings, with body, root, bark, leaves, fruit of the ſame ſhape, figure, ſmell, taſt; that there ſhould be as many parts in one as in all of the ſame kind, and no more, and that in the Womb of a ſenſitive Creature, ſhould be formed one of the ſame kind, with all the due members and no more, and the Creature that produceth it knows not how it is formed or how tis perfected. If we ſay this is nature; this nature is an intelligent being; if not, how can it direct all cauſes to ſuch uniforme ends. If it be intelligent, this nature muſt be the ſame we call God; *Who ordered every herb to yeild ſeed, and every fruit-Tree to yeild fruit after its kind, and alſo every Beaſt and every creeping thing after its kind*, Gen. 11, 12, 24.

* Amirant.

And every thing is determined to its particular ſeaſon. The ſap riſeth from the Root at its appointed time, enlivening and cloathing the branches with a new Garment at ſuch a time of the Suns returning, not wholly hindered by any accidental coldneſs of the weather, it being often colder at its return, than it was at the Suns departure. All things have their Seaſons of flouriſhing, budding, bloſſoming, bringing forth fruit; they ripen in their ſeaſons, caſt their leaves at the ſame time; throw off their old cloaths, and in the ſpring appear with new Garments, but ſtill in the ſame faſhion.

* The Winds and the Rain have their ſeaſons, and ſeem to be adminiſtred by Laws for the profit of man: No ſatisfactory cauſe of thoſe things can be aſcribed to the Earth, the Sea, to the Air or Stars. *Can any underſtand the ſpreading of his clouds or the noiſe of his Tabernacle?* Job 38. 29. The natural reaſon of thoſe things cannot be demonſtrated without recourſe to an infinite and intelligent being: Nothing can be rendred capable of the direction of thoſe things but a God.

* Coccei *ſum. Theol. cap.* 8. §77.

This regularity in Plants and Animals is in all Nations. The Heavens have the

ſame

same motion in all parts of the world? all men have the same Law of nature in their mind; all Creatures are stampt with the same law of Creation: In all parts the same Creatures serve for the same use; and though there be different Creatures in *India* and *Europe*, yet they have the same subordination, the same subserviency to one another, and ultimately to man; which shews that there is a God, and but one God, who tunes all those different strings to the same notes in all places. Is it nature meerly conducts these natural causes in due measures to their proper effects, without interfering with one another? Can meer nature be the cause of those musical proportions of time? You may as well conceive a *Lute* to sound its own strings without the hand of an *Artist*; a City well Governed without a Governor; an Army keep its Stations without a General, as imagine so exact an order, without an Orderer: Would any Man, when he hears a Clock strike, by fit intervals, the hour of the day, imagine this regularity in it, without the direction of one that had understanding to manage it? He would not only regard the motion of the Clock, but commend the diligence of the Clock-Keeper.

5. *This order and Subserviency is constant.* Children change the customs and manners of their Fathers: Magistrates change the Laws they have received from their Ancestors, and enact new ones in their room: But in the world all things consist as they were created at the beginning; the Law of nature in the Creatures hath met with no change. * Who can behold the Sun rising in the morning; the Moon shining in the night; increasing and decreasing in its due spaces; the Stars in their regular motions night after night, for all ages, and yet deny a President over them? And this motion of the Heavenly bodies, being contrary to the nature of other Creatures, who move in order to rest; must be from some higher cause. But those ever since the setling in their places, have been perpetually rounding the world: * What nature, but one powerful and intelligent, could give that perpetual motion to the *Sun*, which being bigger than the Earth a *hundred sixty six times*, runs many thousand miles with a mighty swiftness in the space of an hour, with an unwearied diligence, performing its daily task, and as a strong man, rejoycing to run its race, for above *five thousand years* together, without intermission, but in the time of *Joshuah*? * Tis not natures Sun, but *Gods Sun*, which he *makes to rise upon the just and unjust*. *

So a *Plant* receives its nourishment from the Earth, sends forth its juyce to every branch, forms a bud which spreads it into a blossom and flower, the leaves of this drop off, and leave a fruit of the same colour and taste, every year; which being ripened by the Sun, leaves seeds behind it for the propagation of its like, which contains in the nature of it, the same kind of buds, blossoms, fruit which were before, and being nourished in the Womb of the Earth, and quickened by the power of the Sun, discovers it self at length, in all the progresses, and motions which its predecessor did: Thus in all ages, in all places, every year it performs the same task, spinns out fruit of the same colour, taste, vertue, to refresh the several Creatures, for which they are provided.

This setled state of things comes from that God who laid the *foundations of the Earth*, that it should *not be removed* for ever; * and set *ordinances for them* to act by a stated law; * according to which they move as if they understood themselves to have made a Covenant with their Creator. *

3. Add to this union of contrary qualities, and the subserviency of one thing to another, *the admirable variety and diversity of things in the World.* What variety of *Metals*, living *Creatures*, *Plants* what variety and distinction in the *shape* of their leaves, flowers, *smell*, resulting from them? Who can number up the several sorts of *Beasts* on the Earth, *Birds* in the Air, *Fish* in the Sea? How various are their motions? Some *Creep*, some *Go*, some *Fly*, some *Swim*; and in all this variety each Creature hath Organs or members, fitted for their peculiar motion. If you consider the multitude of *Stars*, which shine like Jewels in the Heavens, their different magnitudes; Or the variety of colours in the Flowers and Tapestry of the Earth, you could no more conclude they made themselves, or were made by chance, than you can imagine a piece of Arras, with a diversity of figures and colours, either wove it self, or were knit together by hazzard.

*Petav. ex Athanas. Theol. Dog. Tom. 1. lib. 1. cap. 1. § 4.

* (*Whether it be the Sun, or the Earth that moves, it is all one: Whence have either of them this constant and uniform motion?*)

* Josh. 10. 13.

* Mat. 5. 45.

* Psal. 104. 5.

* Job. 38. 33.

* Jer. 33. 20.

How delicious is the ſap of the Vine, when turned into Wine, above that of a Crab? Both have the ſame Womb of Earth to conceive them, both agree in the nature of Wood and Twigs, as Channels to convey it into fruit: What is that which makes the one ſo ſweet, the other ſo ſowre, or makes that ſweet, which was a few weeks before unpleaſantly ſharp? Is it the Earth? No: They both have the ſame ſoil; the branches may touch each other; the ſtrings of their Roots may under ground entwine about one another. Is it the Sun? Both have the ſame beams: Why is not the taſt and colour of the one as gratifying as the other? Is it the root? The taſt of that is far different from that of the fruit it bears. VVhy do they not when they have the ſame Soil, the ſame Sun, and ſtand near one another, borrow ſomething from one anothers natures? No reaſon can be rendred, but that there is a God of infinite wiſdom hath determin'd this variety, and bound up the nature of each Creature within it ſelf. * [Every thing follows the Law of its Creation, and it is worthy obſervation, that the Creator of them hath not given that power to Animals, which ariſe from different ſpecies, to propagate the like to themſelves; as Mules that ariſe from different ſpecies: No reaſon can be rendred of this, but the fixt determination of the Creator, that thoſe ſpecies which were Created by him ſhould not be loſt in thoſe mixtures, which are contrary to the Law of the Creation.] This cannot poſſibly be aſcribed to that which is commonly called nature, but unto the God of nature, who will not have his Creatures exceed their bounds or come ſhort of them.

* Amirald. *de Trinitate* pa. 21.

Now ſince among thoſe varieties, there are ſome things better than other, yet *all are good in their kind*, and partake of Goodneſs, * there muſt be ſomething better, and more excellent than all thoſe, from whom they derive that goodneſs, which inheres in their nature and is communicated by them to others: And this excellent being muſt inherit in an eminent way in his own nature, the goodneſs of all thoſe varieties, ſince they made not themſelves, but were made by another. All that Goodneſs which is ſcattered in thoſe varieties muſt be infinitely concentred in that nature, which diſtributed thoſe various perfections to them, Pſal. 94. 9. *He that planted the Ear ſhall not he hear; he that formed the Eye, ſhall not he ſee; he that teacheth Man knowledge ſhall not he know?* The Creator is greater than the Creature, and whatſoever is in his effects, is but an Impreſſion of ſome excellency in himſelf; there is therefore ſome chief fountain of goodneſs, whence all thoſe various goodneſſes in the world do flow.

* Gen. 1. 31.

From all this it follows, if there be an Order, and Harmony, there muſt be an Orderer, one that *made the Earth by his Power, eſtabliſhed the world by his Wiſdom, and ſtretched out the Heavens by his diſcretion*, Jer. 10. 12. Order being the effect, cannot be the cauſe of it ſelf: Order is the diſpoſition of things to an end, and is not intelligent, but implies an intelligent Orderer: And therefore it is as certain that there is a God, as it is certain there is order in the world: Order is an effect of Reaſon and Counſel; this reaſon and Counſel muſt have its reſidence in ſome being, before this order was fixed: The things ordered are always diſtinct from that Reaſon and Counſel whereby they are ordered, and alſo after it as the effect is after the cauſe. No Man begins a piece of work, but he hath the Model of it in his own mind: No Man builds an Houſe, or makes a Watch, but he hath the *Idea* or Copy of it in his own head: This beautiful world beſpeaks an Idea of it, or a model: Since there is ſuch a magnificent wiſdom in the make of each Creature, and the proportion of one Creature to another, this model muſt be before the VVorld, as the pattern is always before the thing that is wrought by it. This therefore muſt be in ſome intelligent and wiſe agent, and this is God: Since the reaſon of thoſe things exceed the reaſon and all the art of Man, who can aſcribe them to any inferior cauſe? Chance it could not be; the motions of Chance are not conſtant, and at ſeaſons, as the motions of Creatures are: That which is by Chance is contingent, this is neceſſary; Uniformity can never be the birth of Chance: VVho can imagine that all the parts of a watch can meet together and put themſelves in order and motion by Chance? [* Nor can it be nature only which indeed is a diſpoſition of ſecond cauſes: If nature hath not an underſtanding, it cannot work ſuch effects: If nature therefore uſes Councel to begin a thing, reaſon to diſpoſe it, art to effect it, vertue to compleat it and power to govern it, why ſhould it be called nature rather than God?] Nothing ſo ſure as that which hath an end to which it tends, hath a cauſe by which it is ordered to that end:

* Lactant.

Since

Since therefore all things are ordered in subserviency to the good of man, they are so ordered by him that made both man and them; And man must acknowledge the wisdom and goodness of his Creator, and act in subserviency to his Glory, as other Creatures act in subserviency to his good: Sensible objects were not made only to gratifie the sense of man, but to hand something to his mind as he is a rational Creature; to discover God to him as an object of love and desire to be enjoyed: * If this be not the effect of it, the order of the Creature, as to such an one, is in vain and falls short of its true end.

* Coccei. *sum. Theol. cap.* 8, § 63, 64.

To conclude this; As when a Man comes into a Palace, built according to the exactest rule of art, and with an unexceptionable conveniency for the Inhabitants, he would acknowledge both the being and skill of the Builder: So whosoever shall observe the disposition of all the parts of the World, their connexion, comelinesse, the variety of seasons, the swarms of different Creatures, and the mutual offices they render to one another, cannot conclude less, than that it was contrived by an *Infinite Skill*, effected by *Infinite Power*, and governed by *Infinite Wisdom*. None can imagine a Ship to be orderly conducted without a Pilot; Nor the parts of the World to perform their several functions without a wise guide; considering the Members of the Body, cannot perform theirs, without the active presence of the Soul. The *Atheist then is a fool*, to deny that which every Creature in his constitution asserts, and thereby renders himself, unable to give a satisfactory account of that constant uniformity in the motions of the Creatures.

Thirdly, III. As the production and harmony, so *particular Creatures, pursuing and attaining their ends, manifest that there is a God.* All particular Creatures have natural instincts, which move them for some end: The intending of an end, is a property of a rational Creature; since the lower Creatures cannot challenge that title, they must act by the understanding and direction of another: And since man cannot challenge the honor of inspiring the Creatures with such instincts, it must be ascribed to some nature infinitely above any Creature in understanding. No Creature doth determine it self. Why do the fruits and grain of the Earth nourish us, when the Earth which instrumentally gives them that fitness, cannot nourish us, but because their several ends are determined by one higher than the world?

1. *Several Creatures have several Natures.* How soon will all Creatures, as soon as they see the light, move to that whereby they must live, and make use of the natural arms God hath given their kind, for their defence, before they are grown to any maturity to afford them that defence? The Scripture makes the appetite of Infants to their milk a foundation of the divine Glory, Psal. 8. 3. *Out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings, hast thou ordained strength*; that is, matter of Praise and acknowledgment of God, in the natural appetite they have to their milk, and their relish of it. All Creatures have a natural affection to their young ones; all young ones by a natural instinct, move to, and receive the nourishment that is proper for them: Some are their own Physitians as well as their own Caterers, and naturally discern what preserves them in life, and what restores them when sick. The *Swallow* flies to its *Celendine*, and the *Toad* hastens to its *Plantain*.

Can we behold the Spiders Nets, or Silkworms Web, the Bees Closets, or the Ants Granaries, without acknowledging a higher being than a Creature, who hath planted that Genius in them? The consideration of the nature of several Creatures God commended to *Job*, (*Chap.* 39. where he discourseth to *Job* of the natural instincts, of the *Goat*, the *Ostrich*, *Horse* and *Eagle*, *&c.*) to perswade him to the acknowledgment and admiration of God and humiliation of himself.

The Spider, as if it understood the art of weaving, fits its web both for its own Habitation, and a Net to catch its prey. The Bee builds a Cell which serves for Chambers to reside in and a repository for its provision. Birds are observed to build their Nests with a clammy matter without, for the firmer duration of it, and with a soft moss and down within for the conveniency and warmth of their young: *The Stork knows his appointed time.* Jer. 8. 7. And the Swallows observe the time of their coming; they go and return according to the seasons of the year: This they gain not by consideration, it descends to them with their nature: They neither gain nor increase it by rational deductions. Tis not in vain to speak of these. How little do we improve by Meditation those objects, which daily offer themselves

to our view, full of inſtruction for us? And our *Saviour* ſends his diſciples to ſpell God in the *Lillies*. * Tis obſerved alſo that the Creatures offenſive to man go ſingle: If they went by troops, they would bring deſtruction upon man and beaſt. This is the nature of them for the preſervation of others.

* Mat. 6. 28.

2. *They know not their end.* They have a Law in their natures, but have no rational underſtanding, either of the end to which they are appointed, or the means fit to attain it: They naturally do what they do, and move by no Counſel of their own, but by a Law impreſt by ſome higher hand upon their natures.

What Plant knows why it ſtrikes its root into the earth? Doth it underſtand what ſtorms it is to conteſt with, or why it ſhoots up its branches towards Heaven? Doth it know it needs the droppings of the clouds to preſerve it ſelf, and make it fruitful? Theſe are acts of underſtanding: The root is downward to preſerve its own ſtanding, the branches upwards to preſerve other Creatures: This underſtanding is not in the Creature it ſelf, but originally in another. Thunders and Tempeſts know not why they are ſent, yet by the direction of a mighty hand they are inſtruments of Juſtice upon a wicked world.

* Coccei. *ſum. Theolog. cap.* 8. § 67. *&c.*

*Rational Creatures that act for ſome end, and know the end they aim at, yet know not the manner of the natural motion of the members to it. When we intend to look upon a thing, we take no counſel about the natural motion of our eyes, we know not all the principles of their operations; or how that dull matter whereof our bodies are compoſed, is ſubject to the order of our minds. * We are not of Counſel with our ſtomachs about the concoction of our meat, or the diſtribution of the nouriſhing juyce to the ſeveral parts of the body. Neither the Mother nor the *Fœtus* ſit in Council how the formation ſhould be made in the Womb. We know no more than a plant knows what Stature it is of, and what medicinal vertue its fruit hath for the good of man; yet all thoſe natural operations are perfectly directed to their proper end, by an higher wiſdom than any humane underſtanding is able to conceive, ſince thy exceed the ability of an inanimate or fleſhly nature, yea and the wiſdom of a man. Do we not often ſee reaſonable Creatures acting for one end, and perfecting a higher than what they aimed at, or could ſuſpect? When *Joſephs* Brethren ſold him for a Slave, their end was to be rid of an Informer: * But the action iſſued in preparing him to be the preſerver of them and their Families. *Cyrus* his end was to be a Conqueror, but the action ended in being the *Jews* deliverer, Prov. 16. 9. *A mans heart deviſeth his way, but the Lord directs his ſteps.*

* Peirſon, *on the Creed*, p. 35.

* Gen. 37. 12.

3. Therefore there is ſome Superior underſtanding and nature which ſo acts them. That which acts for an end unknown to its ſelf, depends upon ſome over-ruling wiſdom that knows that end. Who ſhould direct them in all thoſe ends, but he that beſtowed a being upon them for thoſe ends,* who knows what is convenient for their life, ſecurity and propagation of their natures? An exact knowledge is neceſſary, both of what is agreable to them, and the means whereby they muſt attain it; which ſince it is not inherent in them, is in that wiſe God, who puts thoſe inſtincts into them, and governs them in the exerciſe of them to ſuch ends. Any man that ſees a dart flung, knows it cannot hit the mark without the skill and ſtrength of an Archer. Or he that ſees the hand of a Dial pointing to the hours ſucceſſively, knows that the Dial is ignorant of its own end, and is diſpoſed and directed in that motion by an other. All Creatures ignorant of their own natures could not univerſally in the whole kind, and in every Climate and Country, without any difference in the whole world, tend to a certain end, if ſome over-ruling wiſdom did not preſide over the world and guide them: And if the Creatures have a Conductor, they have a Creator: All things are turned round *about by his Council, that they may do whatſoever he commands them upon the face of the world in the Earth.* *

* Leſſius *de proviſen. lib.* 1. *pag.* 652.

* Job 37. 12.

So that in this reſpect the folly of Atheiſm appears. Without the owning a God no account can be given of thoſe actions of Creatures, that are an imitation of Reaſon: To ſay the Bees, *&c.* are rational, is to equal them to man; nay make them his ſuperiors, ſince they do more by nature than the wiſeſt man can do by art: Tis their own counſel whereby they act, or anothers; If it be their own, they are reaſonable Creatures; If by anothers, tis not meer nature that is neceſſary; Then other Creatures would not be without the ſame skill: There would be no difference among them: If nature be reſtrained by another, it hath a ſuperior; if not tis a free agent:

agent: Tis an underſtanding being that directs them: And then it is ſomething ſuperior to all Creatures in the world, and by this therefore we may aſcend to the acknowledgment of the neceſſity of a God.

Fourthly, IV. Add to the production and order of the World and the Creatures acting for their end, *the preſervation of them.* Nothing can depend upon it ſelf in its preſervation, no more than it could in its being. If the order of the world was not fixed by it ſelf, the preſervation of that order cannot be continued by it ſelf.

Tho the matter of the world after Creation, cannot return to that nothing whence it was fetched, without the power of God that made it, (becauſe the ſame power is as requiſite to reduce a thing to nothing as to raiſe a thing from nothing,) yet without the actual exerting of a power that made the Creatures, they would fall into confuſion. Thoſe conteſting qualities, which are in every part of it, could not have preſerved, but would have conſumed, and extinguiſh one another, and reduced the world to that confuſed Chaos, wherein it was before the Spirit moved upon the waters: As contrary parts could not have met together in one form, unleſs there had been one that had conjoyned them: So they could not have kept together after their conjunction unleſs the ſame hand had preſerved them. Natural contrarieties cannot be reconciled. Tis as great power to keep diſcords knit, as at firſt to link them. Who would doubt, but that an Army made up of ſeveral Nations and humors, would fall into a Civil War, and ſheath their Swords in one anothers bowels, if they were not under the management of ſome wiſe General, or a Ship daſh againſt the Rocks without the skill of a Pilot? * As the body hath neither life nor motion, without the active preſence of the Soul, which diſtributes to every part the vertue of acting; ſets every one in the exerciſe of its proper function, and reſides in every part: So there is ſome powerful cauſe which doth the like in the world, that rules and tempers it. There is need of the ſame power and action, to preſerve a thing, as there was at firſt to make it. When we conſider that we are preſerved, and know that we could not preſerve our ſelves; we muſt neceſſarily run to ſome firſt cauſe which doth preſerve us. All works of art depend upon nature, and are preſerved while they are kept by the force of nature: As a Statue depends upon the matter whereof it is made, whether ſtone or braſs; this nature therefore muſt have ſome Superior by whoſe influx it is preſerved. Since therefore we ſee a ſtable order in the things of the world, that they conſpire together for the good and beauty of the Univerſe; that they depend upon one another: There muſt be ſome principle upon which they do depend; ſomething to which the firſt link of the chain is faſtened, which himſelf depends upon no ſuperior, but wholly reſts in his own eſſence and being: Tis the title of God to be the *preſerver of man and beaſt.* * The Pſalmiſt elegantly deſcribeth it, Pſal. 104. 24. &c. *The Earth is full of his riches, all wait upon him,* that he may *give them their meat in due ſeaſon*; when he *opens* his *hand* he *fills them with good*; when he *hides his face they are troubled, if he take away their breath they die and return to duſt*; *he ſends forth his Spirit, and they are Created, and renews the face of the Earth, the Glory of the Lord ſhall endure for ever, and the Lord ſhall rejoyce in his works*: Upon the conſideration of all which the *Pſalmiſt v.*34. takes a pleaſure in the *Meditation* of God, as the cauſe and manager of all thoſe things; which iſſues into a joy in God and a praiſing of him. And why ſhould not the conſideration of the power and wiſdom of God in the Creatures produce the ſame effect in the hearts of us, if he be our God? Or as ſome render it, *my Meditation ſhall be ſweet*, or acceptable *to* him, whereby I find matter of praiſe in the things of the world, and offer it to the Creator of it.

* Gaſſend. *Phyſ. ſect. 6. lib. 4. cap. 2. pa. 101.*

* Pſa. 36. 6.

Thirdly, III. Reaſon, *Tis a folly to deny that which a mans own nature witneſſeth to him.* The whole frame of bodies and Souls bears the impreſs of the infinite power and wiſdom of the Creator. A body framed with an admirable Architecture, a Soul endowed with Underſtanding, Will, Judgement, Memory, Imagination. Man is the Epitome of the World, contains in himſelf the ſubſtance of all natures, and the fulneſs of the whole univerſe; not only in regard of the univerſalneſs of his knowledge, whereby he comprehends the reaſons of many things; but as all the perfections of the ſeveral natures of the world are gathered and united in man, for the perfection of his own, in a ſmaller volum. In his Soul he partakes of Heaven, in his body of the earth. There is the life of *Plants*, the ſenſe of *beaſts*, and the intellectual

The third Reaſon.

tellectual nature of *Angels.* * *The Lord breathed into his Noſtril the breath of life, and man,* &c. חיים *of lifes.* Not one ſort of, *lifes*; but ſeveral, not only an *Animal,* but a *Rational* life; a Soul of a Nobler extract and nature, than what was given to other Creatures.

* Gen. 2. 7.

So that we need not ſtep out of doors, or caſt our eyes any further than our ſelves, to behold a God. He ſhines in the capacity of our Souls and the vigour of our Members. We muſt flie from our ſelves and be ſtript of our own humanity, before we can put off the Notion of a Deity: He that is ignorant of the Exiſtence of God, muſt be poſſeſſed with ſo much folly, as to be ignorant of his own make and frame.

1. *In the parts whereof he doth conſiſt,* Body and Soul.

Firſt, I. *Take a proſpect of the Body.* The *Pſalmiſt* counts it a matter of praiſe and admiration, Pſal. 139. 15, 16. *I will praiſe thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; when I was made in ſecret and curiouſly wrought in the loweſt parts of the Earth, in thy book all my Members were written.* The Scheme of man and every Member was drawn in his book: All the Sinews, Veins, Arteries, Bones, like a peice of Embroidery or Tapeſtry, were wrought by God, as it were with deliberation; like an Artificer that draws out the model of what he is to do in writing, and ſets it before him when he begins his work.

And indeed the *Fabrick* of mans body, as well as his Soul, is an argument for a Divinity. The artificial ſtructure of it, the Elegancy of every part, the proper Situation of them, their proportion one to another, the fitneſs for their ſeveral functions, drew from *Galen,* * (a Heathen and one that had no raiſed ſentiments of a Deity,) a confeſſion of the admirable Wiſdom and power of the Creator, and that none but God could frame it.

* *Lib.* 3, *de uſu partium.* Petav. *Theol. Dog. Tom.* 1. *lib.* 1. *cap.* 1. *pa.* 6.

1. *In the order, fitneſs and uſefulneſs of every part.* The whole model of the body is grounded upon reaſon. Every member hath its exact proportion, diſtinct office, regular motion. Every part hath a particular comlineſs, and convenient temperament beſtowed upon it, according to its place in the Body. The *Heart* is hot to enliven the whole. The Eye clear to take in objects to preſent them to the Soul: Every member is fitted for its peculiar ſervice and action: Some are for ſenſe, ſome for motion, ſome for preparing, and others for diſpenſing nouriſhment to the ſeveral parts: They mutually depend upon, and ſerve one another. What ſmall ſtrings faſten the particular members together, *as the Earth that hangs upon nothing?* * Take but one part away, and you either deſtroy the whole, or ſtamp upon it ſome Mark of deformity. All are knit together by an admirable ſymmetry; all orderly perform their functions, as acting by a ſetled Law; none ſwerving from their rule, but in caſe of ſome predominant humor: And none of thoſe in ſo great a multitude of parts, ſtifled in ſo little a Room, or juſtling againſt one another to hinder their mutual actions; none can be better diſpoſed. And the greateſt wiſdom of man could not imagine it, till his eyes preſent them with the ſight and connexion of one part and member with another.

* Job. 26. 7.

1. *The Heart.* * How ſtrongly it is guarded with ribs like a Wall, that it might not be eaſily hurt! It draws blood from the Liver, through a channel made for that purpoſe: Rarifies it and makes it fit to paſs through the Arteries and Veins and to carry heat and life to every part of the body: And by a perpetual motion, it ſucks in the blood and ſpouts it out again; which motion depends not upon the command of the ſoul, but is pure natural.

* Theod. *de providentiâ. Orat.* 3.

2. *The Mouth,* takes in the meat, the teeth grind it for the ſtomack, the ſtomack prepares it, nature ſtrains it through the milky veins, the liver refines it and mints it into blood, ſeparates the purer from the droſſy parts, which go to the heart, circuites through the whole body, running through the Veins like Rivers through ſo many channels of the world, for the watering of the ſeveral parts: Which are framed of a thin skin for the ſtraining the blood through, for the ſupply of the members of the body, and framed with ſeveral valves or doors, for the thruſting the blood forwards to perform its circular motion.

3. *The Brain,* fortified by a ſtrong skul to hinder outward accidents, a tough membrane or skin to hinder any oppreſſion by the skull; the ſeat of ſenſe; that which coins the animal ſpirits by purifying and refining thoſe which are ſent to

it,

it, and ſeems like a curious piece of Needlework.

4. *The Ear*, framed with windings and turnings, to keep any thing from entring to offend the Brain; ſo diſpoſed as to admit *ſounds* with the greateſt ſafety and delight; * filled with an air within, by the motion whereof the ſound is tranſmitted to the Brain: As ſounds are made in the Air by diffuſing themſelves, as you ſee Circles made in the water by the flinging in a ſtone, This is the Gate of knowledge, whereby we hear the Oracles of God, and the inſtruction of men for arts: 'Tis by this they are expoſed to the mind, and the mind of another Man framed in our underſtandings. * Eccleſ. 12. 4.

5. *What a curious Workmanſhip is that of the Eye*, which is in the body, as the Sun in the World; ſet in the head as in a Watch-Tower, having the ſofteſt nerves for the receiving the greater multitude of Spirits neceſſary for the act of Viſion? How is it provided with defence, by the variety of Coats to ſecure and accommodate the little humor and part whereby the viſion is made? Made of a round figure and convex, as moſt commodious to receive the ſpecies of objects; ſhaded by the eye-brows and eye-lids, ſecured by the eye-lids which are its ornament and ſafety; which refreſh it when it is too much dried by heat, hinder too much light from inſinuating it ſelf into it to offend it, cleanſe it from impurities, by their quick motion preſerve it from any invaſion, and by contraction confer to the more evident diſcerning of things: Both the eyes ſeated in the hollow of the bone for ſecurity; yet ſtanding out that things may be perceived more eaſily on both ſides: And this little Member can behold the earth: and in a moment view things as high as Heaven.

6. * *The Tongue* for ſpeech framed like a Muſical inſtrument; the Teeth ſerving for variety of ſounds; the Lungs ſerving for Billows to blow the Organs as it were, to cool the Heart; by a continual motion tranſmitting a pure Air to the Heart, expelling that which was ſmoky and ſuperfluous. 'Tis by the Tongue that communication of Truth hath a paſſage among men; it opens the ſenſe of the mind; there would be no converſe and commerce without it: Speech among all Nations hath an elegancy and attractive force, maſtering the affections of men. * Coccei. ſum. Theolg. cap. 8. § 49.

Not to ſpeak of other parts, or of the multitude of Spirits that act every part; the quick flight of them where there is a neceſſity of their preſence. *Solomon* 12. *Eccleſiaſt.* Makes an elegant deſcription of them, in his Speech of old age: And *Job* ſpeaks of this formation of the body, *Job* 10. 9, 10, 11. *&c.* Not the leaſt part of the body is made in vain. The hairs of the head have their uſe, as well as are an ornament. The whole Symmetry of the body is a raviſhing object. Every Member hath a ſignature and mark of God and his Wiſdom: He is viſible in the formation of the members, the beauty of the parts, and the vigor of the body: This ſtructure could not be from the body, that only hath a paſſive Power, and cannot act in the abſence of the Soul: Nor can it be from the Soul. How comes it then to be ſo ignorant of the manner of its formation? The Soul knows not the internal parts of its own body, but by information from others, or inſpection into other bodies: It knows leſs of the inward frame of the body than it doth of it ſelf: But he that makes the Clock can tell the number and motions of the wheels within, as well as what figures are without.

This ſhort diſcourſe is *uſeful* to raiſe our admirations of the Wiſdom of God, as well as to demonſtrate, that there is an Infinite, Wiſe Creator: And the conſideration of our ſelves every day, and the wiſdom of God in our frame would maintain Religion much in the world; ſince all are ſo framed that no man can tell any error in the conſtitution of him. If thus the body of man is fitted for the ſervice of his Soul by an infinite God, the body ought to be ordered for the ſervice of this God, and in obedience to him.

2. *In the admirable difference of the features of Men.* Which is a great argument that the world was made by a wiſe Being: This could not be wrought by Chance or be the work of meer nature, ſince we find never or very rarely two perſons exactly alike. This diſtinction is a part of infinite wiſdom; otherwiſe what confuſion would be introduced into the World? Without this, Parents could not know their Children, nor Children their Parents, nor a Brother his Siſter, nor a Subject his Magiſtrate: Without it there had been no comfort of Relations, no Govern-

Government, no commerce: Debtors would not have been known from ſtrangers, nor good men from bad: Propriety could not have been preſerved, nor juſtice executed; the innocent might have been apprehended for the nocent; wickedneſs could not have been ſtopt by any Law.

The Faces of men are the ſame for parts, *not for features*: A diſſimilitude in a likeneſs. Man, like to all the reſt in the World, yet unlike to any, and differenced by ſome mark from all, which is not to be obſerved in any other ſpecies of Creatures. This ſpeaks ſome wiſe Agent which framed man; ſince for the preſervation of human ſociety and order in the world, this diſtinction was neceſſary.

Secondly, II. As mans own nature witneſſeth a God to him in the ſtructure of his body, ſo alſo *in the nature of his Soul.* * We know that we have an *underſtanding* in us; a ſubſtance we cannot ſee, but we know it by its operations; as thinking, reaſoning, willing, remembring; and as operating about things that are inviſible and remote from ſenſe: This muſt needs be diſtinct from the body, for that being but duſt and Earth in its original, hath not the power of reaſoning, and thinking; for then it would have that power, when the Soul were abſent, as well as when it is preſent. Beſides, if it had that power of thinking, it could think only of thoſe things which are ſenſible and made up of matter, as it ſelf is. This Soul hath a greater excellency, it can know it ſelf, rejoyce in it ſelf, which other Creatures in this world are not capable of: The Soul is the greateſt glory of this lower world, and as one ſaith; * there ſeems to be no more difference between the *Soul* and an *Angel*, than between a *Sword in* the Scabbard and when it is *Out* of the Scabbard.

* Coccei. *Sum. Theolog. cap.* 8. § 50. 51.

* More.

Firſt, I. *Conſider the vaſtneſs of its capacity.* The underſtanding can conceive the whole world, and paint in it ſelf the inviſible Pictures of all things. 'Tis capable of apprehending and diſcourſing of things ſuperior to its own nature [* 'Tis ſuted to all objects, as the Eye to all Colours, or the Ear to all ſounds.] How great is the Memory to retain ſuch varieties, ſuch diverſities? The Will alſo can accommodate other things to it ſelf. It invents Arts for the uſe of Man; preſcribes rules for the Government of States; ranſacks the bowels of nature; makes endleſs concluſions, and ſteps in reaſoning from one thing to another, for the knowledge of Truth; it can contemplate and form notions of things higher than the world.

* Calverwel.

2. *The quickneſs of its motions.* [* Nothing is more quick in the whole courſe of nature; the Sun runs through the World in a day this can do it in a moment. It can with one flight of fancy aſcend to the battlements of Heaven.] The miſts of the Air that hinder the ſight of the Eye, cannot hinder the flights of the Soul; it can paſs in a moment from one end of the World to the other, and think of things a thouſand miles diſtant. It can think of ſome mean thing in the World, and preſently by one caſt in the twinkling of an Eye, mount up as high as Heaven. As its deſires are not bounded by ſenſual objects, ſo neither are the motions of it reſtrained by them. It will break forth with the greateſt vigour, and conceive things infinitely above it; though it be in the body, it acts as if it were aſhamed to be Cloyſtered in it. This could not be the reſult of any material cauſe: Who ever knew meer matter underſtand, think, will? And what it hath not, it cannot give. That which is deſtitute of Reaſon and Will, could never confer Reaſon and Will.

* Theodoret.

* Coccei. *Sum. Theolog. cap.* 8. § 51. 52.

* 'Tis not the effect of the Body, for the Body is fitted with members to be ſubject to it: 'Tis in part ruled by the activity of the Soul, and in part by the Counſel of the Soul; 'Tis uſed by the Soul and knows not how it is uſed. Nor could it be from the Parents, ſince the ſouls of the Children often tranſcend thoſe of the Parents in vivacity, acuteneſs and comprehenſiveneſs: One man is ſtupid and begets a ſon with a capacious underſtanding; one is debauched and beaſtly in morals, and begets a ſon who from his Infancy teſtifies ſome vertuous inclinations, which ſprout forth in delightful fruit with the ripeneſs of his age. Whence ſhould this difference ariſe, a fool begat the wiſe man, and a debauched the vertuous man? the wiſdom of the one could not deſcend from the fooliſh ſoul of the other; nor the vertues of the ſon, from the deformed and polluted ſoul of the Parent; it lies not in the Organs of the Body; For if the folly of the Parent proceeded not from their ſouls, but the ill diſpoſition of the Organs of their bodies, how comes it to paſs that the bodies of the Children, are better Organiz'd beyond the goodneſs of their immediate cauſe? We muſt recur to ſome inviſible hand, that makes the difference,

I do not diſpute whether the Soul were generated or no; Suppoſe the ſubſtance of it was generated by the Parents, yet thoſe more excellent qualities were not the reſult of them.

ference, who bestows upon one at his pleasure richer qualities, than upon another: You can see nothing in the World endowed with some excellent quality, but you must imagine some bountiful hand did inrich it with that dowry: None can be so foolish as to think that a Vessel ever inricht it self with that spritely Liquor, wherewith it is filled; or that any thing worse than the Soul should indow it with that knowledge and activity which sparkles in it. Nature could not produce it: That nature is intelligent, or not; if it be not, then it produceth an effect more excellent than it self, in as much as an understanding Being surmounts a Being that hath no understanding; If the supream Cause of the Soul be intelligent, why do we not call it God as well as Nature? We must arise from hence to the notion of a God; a Spiritual nature cannot proceed but from a Spirit higher than it self, and of a transcendent perfection above it self: If we believe we have Souls and understand the state of our own faculties, we must be assured that there was some invisible hand which bestowed those faculties and the riches of them upon us: A Man must be ignorant of himself before he can be ignorant of the Existence of God: By considering the nature of our Souls, we may as well be assured that there is a God, as that there is a Sun by the shining of the beams in at our Windows: And indeed the Soul is a Statue and representation of God, as the Land-Skip of a Country or Map represents all the parts of it, but in a far less proportion than the Country it self is. The Soul fills the body, and God the world; the Soul sustains the body, and God the World; the Soul sees, but is not seen; God sees all things, but is himself invisible. How base are they then that prostitute their Souls an image of God to base things unexpressibly below their own nature?

3. I might add *the union of Soul and Body.* Man is a kind of compound of Angel and beast, of Soul and body; if he were only a Soul, he were a kind of Angel; if only a body, he were another kind of brute: Now that a body as vile and dull as earth, and a Soul that can mount up to Heaven, and rove about the world with so quick a motion, should be linkt in so strait an acquaintance; that so noble a Being as the Soul should be an Inhabitant in such a Tabernacle of Clay, must be owned to some infinite power that hath so chained it.

3. Man witnesseth to a God in the *operations and reflections of Conscience*, Rom. 2. 15. *Their thoughts are accusing or excusing.* An inward comfort attends good actions, and an inward torment follows bad ones; for there is in every mans Conscience, fear of punishment and hope of reward: There is therefore a sense of some superior Judge, which hath the power both of rewarding, and punishing: If man were his supream rule, what need he fear punishment, since no man would inflict any evil or torment on himself; nor can any man be said to reward himself, for all rewards refer to another, to whom the action is pleasing, and is a conferring some good a man had not before: If an action be done by a Subject or Servant, with hopes of reward, it can not be imagined, that he expects a reward from himself, but from the Prince or person whom he eyes in that action, and for whose sake he doth it.

1. *There is a Law in the minds of Men, which is a rule of good and evil.* There is a Notion of Good and Evil in the Consciences of men, which is evident by those Laws which are common in all Countries, for the preserving human societies, the encouragement of vertue, and discouragement of Vice; What Standard should they have for those Laws, but a common reason? The design of those Laws was to keep men within the bounds of Goodness, for mutual commerce; whence the *Apostle* calls the Heathen Magistrate *a Minister of God for Good*, Rom. 13. 4. and *the Gentiles do by nature the things contain'd in the Law*, Rom. 2. 14.

Man in the first instant of the use of reason, finds natural principles within himself, directing and choosing them; he finds a distinction between good and evil; how could this be, if there were not some rule in him to try and distinguish good and evil? If there were not such a law and rule in man, he could not sin; for where there is no Law there is no transgression. If man were a Law to himself and his own will his Law, there could be no such thing as evil; whatsoever he willed would be good and agreeable to the Law; and no action could be accounted sinful: The worst act would be as commendable as the best. Every thing at mans appointment would be good or evil. If there were no such Law, how should men that are naturally inclined to evil, disapprove of that which is unlovely, and approve of that good which

they practiſe not. No man but inwardly thinks well of that which is good, while he neglects it; and thinks ill of that which is evil, while he commits it. Thoſe that are vitious, do praiſe thoſe that practiſe the contrary vertues. Thoſe that are evil would ſeem to be good, and thoſe that are blameworthy, yet will rebuke evil in others. This is really to diſtinguiſh between good and evil; whence doth this ariſe, by what rule do we meaſure this, but by ſome innate principle?

And this is univerſal, the ſame in one man as in another, the ſame in one Nation as in another, they are born with every man, and inſeparable from his nature, Prov. 27. 19. *As in water face anſwers to face, ſo the heart of man to man.* Common reaſon ſuppoſeth, that there is ſome hand which hath fixed this diſtinction in man: How could it elſe be univerſally impreſt? No Law can be without a Law-giver; no ſparks but muſt be kindled, by ſome other: Whence ſhould this Law then derive its original? Not from man; he would fain blot it out, and cannot alter it when he pleaſes: Natural generation never intended it; 'tis ſettled therefore by ſome higher hand, which as it imprinted it, ſo it maintains it againſt the violences of men; who, were it not for this Law, would make the world more than it is, an *Aceldema* and field of blood: For had there not been ſome ſupream good, the meaſure of all other goodneſs in the world, we could not have had ſuch a thing as good, The *Scripture* gives us an account that this good was diſtinguiſht from evil before man fell, they were *objecta ſcibilia*; good was commanded and evil prohibited, and did not depend upon man: From this a man may rationally be inſtructed that there is a God: For he may thus argue; I find my ſelf naturally obliged to do this thing and avoid that, I have therefore a ſuperior that doth oblige me; I find ſomething within me that directs me to ſuch actions, *contrary to my ſenſitive appetite, there muſt* be ſomething above me therefore that put this principle into mans nature: If there were no ſuperior, I ſhould be the ſupream Judge of good and evil: Were I the Lord of that Law which doth oblige me, I ſhould find no contradiction within my ſelf between reaſon and appetite,

2. *From the Tranſgreſſion of this law of nature, fears do ariſe in the Conſciences of men.* Have we not known or heard of men ſtruck by ſo deep a dart, that could not be drawn out by the ſtrength of men, or appeaſed by the pleaſure of the world, and men crying out with horrour upon a death-bed of their paſt life, when *their fear hath come as a deſolation, and deſtruction as a whirlwind*, Prov. 1. 27. And often in ſome ſharp affliction, the duſt hath been blown off from mens Conſciences, which for a while hath obſcured the writing of the law. If men ſtand in awe of puniſhment, there is then ſome ſuperior to whom they are accountable: If there were no God, there were no puniſhment to fear. What reaſon of any fear, upon the diſſolution of the knot between the Soul and body, if there were not a God to puniſh, and the Soul remained not in being to be puniſhed?

How ſuddenly will Conſcience work upon the appearance of an affliction, rouze it ſelf from ſleep like an armed man, and fly in a mans face before he is aware of it? It will *ſurprize the Hypocrites.* Iſa. 38. 14. It will bring to mind actions committed long ago, and ſet them in order before the face, as Gods deputy acting by his authority and Omniſcience, As God hath not left himſelf without a witneſs among the Creatures, *Acts* 14. 17. So he hath not left himſelf without a witneſs in a mans own breaſt.

1. *This operation of Conſcience hath been univerſal.* No Nation hath been any more exempt from it, than from reaſon: Not a man but hath one time or other more or leſs ſmarted under the ſting of it. All over the world Conſcience hath ſhot its darts. It hath torn the hearts of Princes in the midſt of their pleaſures: It hath not flattered them whom moſt men flatter, nor feared to diſturb their reſt, whom no man dares to provoke. Judges have trembled on a Tribunal, when Innocents have rejoyced in their condemnation: The Iron bars upon *Pharaohs* Conſcience, were at laſt broke up, and he acknowledged the Juſtice of God in all that he did, *Exod.* 9. 27. *I have ſinned, the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.* Had they been like Childiſh frights at the apprehenſion of bug-bears, why hath not reaſon ſhaken them off? But on the contrary the ſtronger reaſon grows, the ſmarter thoſe laſhes are: Groundleſs fears had been ſhort liv'd: Age and Judgment would have worn them off, but they grow ſharper with the growth of perſons. The Scripture informs us they have been of as ancient a date as the revolt of the firſt man, *Gen.* 3. 10. *I was afraid*, ſaith *Adam, becauſe I was naked*; which was an expectation of the Judgement of God. All his

poſterity

posterity inherit his fears, when God expresseth himself in any tokens of his Majesty and Providence in the world. Every mans Conscience testifies that he is unlike what he ought to be according to that law engraven upon his heart. In some indeed Conscience may be seared, or dimmer; or suppose some men may be devoid of Conscience, shall it be denyed to be a thing belonging to the nature of man? Some men have not their eyes, yet the power of seeing the light is natural to man, and belongs to the integrity of the body: Who would argue, that because some men are mad and have lost their reason by a distemper of the brain, that therefore reason hath no reality, but is an imaginary thing? But I think it is a standing truth, that every man hath been under the scourge of it, one time or other, in a less or greater degree: For since every man is an offender, it cannot be imagined, Conscience which is natural to man and an active faculty, should always lie idle, without doing this part of its office? The *Apostle* tells us of the thoughts, accusing or excusing one another, (or by turns) according as the actions were. Nor is this truth weakned by the corruptions in the world, whereby many have thought themselves bound in Conscience to adhere to a false and superstitious worship and Idolatry, as much as any have thought themselves bound to adhere to a worship commanded by God. This very thing infers that all men have a reflecting principle in them; it is no argument against the being of Conscience, but only infers that it may Err in the application of what it naturally owns. We can no more say, that because some men walk by a false rule, there is no such thing as Conscience, than we can say that because men have errors in their minds, therefore they have no such faculty as an Understanding; or because men will that which is evil, they have no such faculty as a will in them.

2. *These operations of Conscience, are when the wickedness is most secret.* These tormenting fears of Vengeance, have been frequent in men, who have had no reason to fear man, since their wickedness being unknown to any but themselves, they could have no accuser but themselves. They have been in many acts which their companions have justified them in: Persons above the stroak of human laws, yea such as the people have honoured as Gods, have been haunted by them. Conscience hath not been frighted by the power of Princes, or brib'd by the pleasures of Courts: *David* was pursued by his horrors, when he was by reason of his dignity above the punishment by the Law, or at least was not reacht by the Law; since though the Murder of *Uriah* was intended by him, it was not acted by him. Such examples are frequent in human Records: When the crime hath been above any punishment by man, they have had an Accuser, Judge and Executioner in their own breasts: Can this be originally from a mans self? He who loves and cherishes himself, would fly from any thing that disturbs him: Tis a greater Power and Majesty from whom man cannot hide himself, that holds him in those fetters. What should affect their minds for that which can never bring them shame or punishment in this World, if there were not some Supream Judge, to whom they were to give an account, whose instrument Conscience is? Doth it do this of it self; hath it received an Authority from the man himself to sting him? It is some supream power, that doth direct and commission it against our Wills.

3. *These operations of Conscience cannot be totally shaken off by Man.* If there be no God, why do not men silence the clamors of their Consciences, and scatter those fears that disturb their rest and pleasures? How inquisitive are men after some remedy against those convulsions? Sometimes they would render the charge insignificant and sing a rest to themselves, though they *walk in the wickedness of their own hearts*: * How often do men attempt to drown it by sensual pleasures, and perhaps over-power it for a time; but it revives, reinforceth it self and Acts a revenge for its former stop. It holds sin to a mans view, and fixes his eyes upon it, whether he will or no: *The wicked are like a troubled Sea, and cannot rest*, Isa. 57. 20. They would wallow in sin without controul, but this inward principle will not suffer it; nothing can shelter men from those blows. What is the reason it could never be cried down? Man is an Enemy to his own disquiet; what man would continue upon the rack, if it were in his power to deliver himself? VVhy have all human remedies been without success; and not able to extinguish those operations, though all the wickedness of the heart hath been ready to assist and second the attempt? It hath pursued men notwithstanding all the violence

* Deut. 29. 19.

uſed againſt it, and renewed its ſcourges with more ſeverity, as men deal with their reſiſting Slaves. Man can as little ſilence thoſe Thunders in his Soul, as he can the Thunders in the Heavens: He muſt ſtrip himſelf of his humanity before he can be ſtript of an accuſing and affrighting Conſcience; It ſticks as cloſe to him as his nature: Since man cannot throw out the Proceſs it makes againſt him, 'tis an evidence that ſome higher power ſecures its Throne and ſtanding: Who ſhould put this ſcourge into the hand of Conſcience, which no Man in the world is able to wreſt out?

4. We may add, *the comfortable reflections of Conſcience.* There are excuſing as well as accuſing reflections of Conſcience, when things are done as works of the *law of nature*, Rom. 2. 15. As it doth not forbear to accuſe and torture, when a wickedneſs tho unknown to others is committed; So when a man hath done well, though he be attackt with all the calumnies the wit of Man can forge, yet his Conſcience juſtifies the action, and fills him with a ſingular contentment. As there is torture in ſinning, ſo there is peace and joy in well doing: Neither of thoſe it could do, if it did not underſtand a Soveraign Judge, who puniſhes the Rebels and rewards the well-doer. *Conſcience* is the foundation of all Religion; and the two Pillars upon which it is built, are the *being* of God and the *bounty* of God to thoſe that *diligently ſeek him.* *

* Heb. 11. 6.

This proves the *Exiſtence of God*: If there were no God, Conſcience were uſeleſs; the operations of it would have no foundation, if there were not an eye to take notice, and a hand to puniſh or reward the action. The accuſations of Conſcience evidence the Omniſcience and the *Holineſs* of God; The terrors of Conſcience, the *juſtice* of God; The approbations of Conſcience, the *Goodneſs* of God: All the order in the world owes it ſelf, next to the Providence of God, to Conſcience; Without it the world would be a *Golgotha.* As the Creatures witneſs, there was a firſt cauſe that produced them, ſo this principle in Man evidenceth it ſelf to be ſet by the ſame hand, for the good of that which it had ſo framed: There could be no Conſcience if there were no God, and man could not be a rational Creature, if there were no Conſcience. As there is a *Rule* in us, there muſt be a *Judge* whether our actions be according to the Rule. And ſince Conſcience in our corrupted ſtate is in ſome particular miſled, there muſt be a power ſuperior to Conſcience to judge how it hath behaved it ſelf, in its deputed office: We muſt come to ſome ſupream Judge, who can Judge Conſcience it ſelf. As a man can have no ſurer evidence, that he is a Being, than becauſe he thinks; he is a thinking being: So there is no ſurer evidence in nature, that there is a God, than that every man hath a natural principle in him, which continually cites him before God, and puts him in mind of him, and makes him one way or other fear him, and reflects upon him whether he will or no: A man hath leſs power over his Conſcience, than over any other faculty: He may chooſe whether he will exerciſe his underſtanding about, or move his will to ſuch an object, but he hath no ſuch Authority over his Conſcience; he cannot limit it, or cauſe it to ceaſe from acting and reflecting; and therefore both that, and the law about which it acts, are ſettled by ſome ſupream Authority in the mind of man, and this is God.

Fourthly, IV. The evidence of a *God* reſults from *the vaſtneſs of deſires in man*, and the real diſſatisfaction he hath in every thing below himſelf. Man hath a boundleſs appetite after ſome Soveraign Good: As his underſtanding is more capacious, than any thing below, ſo is his Appetite larger. This affection of *deſire* exceeds all other affections. Love is determined, to ſomething known. Fear to ſomething apprehended; but deſires approach nearer to Infiniteneſs, and purſue, not only what we know, or what we have a glimps of, but what we find wanting in what we already enjoy. That which the deſire of man is moſt naturally carryed after, is *Bonum*; ſome fully ſatisfying good. We deſire knowledge by the ſole impulſe of reaſon; but we deſire Good before the excitement of reaſon, and the deſire is always after good, but not always after Knowledge.

Now the Soul of man finds an imperfection in every thing here, and cannot ſcrape up a perfect ſatisfaction and felicity. In the higheſt fruitions of worldly things, 'tis ſtill purſuing ſomething elſe, which ſpeaks a defect in what it already hath. The world may afford a felicity for our duſt, the body, but not for the inhabitant in it; 'tis too mean for that. Is there any one Soul among the Sons of men, that

that can upon a due enquiry ſay, it was at reſt and wanted no more, that hath not ſometimes had deſires after an immaterial Good? The Soul *follows hard* after ſuch a thing, and hath frequent looks after it, *Pſal.* 63. 8. Man deſires a ſtable Good, but no ſublunary thing is ſo: And he that doth not deſire ſuch a Good, wants the rational nature of a man: This is as natural as Underſtanding, Will and Conſcience: Whence ſhould the Soul of man have thoſe deſires? How came it to underſtand that ſomething is ſtill wanting to make its nature more perfect; if there were not in it ſome notion of a more perfect being, which can give it reſt?

Can ſuch a *capacity* be ſuppoſed to be in it without ſomething in being able to ſatisfie it? If ſo, the nobleſt Creature in the world is miſerableſt, and in a worſe condition than any other: Other Creatures obtain their ultimate deſires, *they are filled with good*, Pſal. 104. 28. And ſhall man only have a vaſt deſire without any poſſibility of enjoyment? Nothing in man is in vain: He hath objects for his affections, as well as affections for objects. Every Member of his body hath its end, and doth attain it. Every affection of his Soul hath an object, and that in this World, and ſhall there be none for his deſire, which comes neareſt to infinite of any affection planted in him? This boundleſs deſire had not its original from man himſelf: Nothing would render it ſelf reſtleſs; ſomething above the bounds of this world implanted thoſe deſires after a higher Good, and made him reſtleſs in every thing elſe. And ſince the Soul can only reſt in that which is infinite, there is ſomething infinite for it to reſt in: Since nothing in the world, though a man had the whole, can give it a ſatisfaction, there is ſomething above the world only capable to do it, otherwiſe the Soul would be always without it, and be more in vain than any other Creature.

There is therefore ſome infinite being that can only give a contentment to the Soul, and *this is God.* And that goodneſs which implanted ſuch deſires in the Soul, would not do it to no purpoſe, and mock it in giving it an infinite deſire of ſatisfaction, without intending it the pleaſure of enjoyment, if it doth not by its own folly deprive it ſelf of it. The felicity of human nature muſt needs exceed that which is allotted to other Creatures.

4. And *laſt Reaſon.* As 'tis a folly to deny that which all Nations in the World have conſented to, which the frame of the world evidenceth, which man in his Body, Soul, Operations of Conſcience witneſſeth to: So *'tis a folly to deny the Being of God, which is witneſſed unto by extraordinary occurrences in the World.* *Fourth Reaſon.*

1. *In extraordinary Judgments.* When a juſt revenge follows abominable crimes, eſpecially when the Judgment is ſuted to the ſin, by a ſtrange Concatenation and ſucceſſion of Providences, methodized to bring ſuch a particular puniſhment; when the ſin of a Nation or perſon is made legible in the inflicted Judgment, which teſtifies that it cannot be a caſual thing. The Scripture gives us an account of the neceſſity of ſuch Judgments, to keep up the reverential thoughts of God in the World. Pſal. 9. 16. *The Lord is known by the judgment which he executes, the wicked is ſnared in the work of his own hand.* And Jealouſy is the name of God, *Exod.* 34. 14. *Whoſe name is Jealous:* He is diſtinguiſht from falſe Gods by the Judgments which he ſends, as men are by their names.

Extraordinary Prodigies in many Nations have been the Heralds of extraordinary Judgments, and preſages of the particular Judgments which afterwards they have felt, of which the *Roman* Hiſtories, and others are full. That there are ſuch things is undeniable, and that the events have been anſwerable to the threatning, unleſs we will throw away all human Teſtimonies, and count all the Hiſtories of the World Forgeries. Such things are evidences of ſome inviſible Power which orders thoſe affairs. And if there be inviſible Powers, there is alſo an efficacious cauſe which moves them: A Government certainly there is among them, as well as in the world, and then we muſt come to ſome ſupream Governour which preſides over them.

Judgments upon notorious offenders have been evident in all ages; the Scripture gives many inſtances. I ſhall only mention that of *Herod Agrippa*, which *Joſephus* mentions. * He receives the flattering applauſe of the people, and thought himſelf a God. But by the ſudden ſtroak upon him, was forced by his torture to confeſs another. *I am God* ſaith he *in your account, but a higher calls me away! The Will*

* *Lib.* 19. *Antiq.* Act. 12. 21, 22, 23.

will of the Heavenly Deity is to be endured. The Angel of the Lord ſmote him. The Judgment here was ſuted to the ſin; he that would be a God is eaten up of Worms, the vileſt Creatures. *Tully Hoſtilius a Roman* King, who counted it the moſt unroyal thing to be Religious, or own any other God but his Sword, was conſumed himſelf and his whole Houſe by lightning from Heaven.

Many things are unaccountable unleſs we have recourſe to God: The ſtrange Revelations of Murderers, that have moſt ſecretly committed their crimes: The making good ſome dreadful imprecations, which ſome wretches have uſed to confirm a lie, and immediately have been ſtruck with that Judgement they wiſhed: The raiſing often unexpected perſons to be inſtruments of Vengeance on a ſinful and perfidious Nation: The overturning the deepeſt and ſureſt Counſels of men, when they have had a ſucceſsful progreſs, and came to the very point of Execution; the whole deſign of mens preſervation hath been beaten in pieces by ſome unforeſeen circumſtance, ſo that Judgments have broken in upon them without controul, and all their ſubtilties been out-witted. The ſtrange croſſing of ſome in their Eſtates, though the moſt wiſe, induſtrious and frugal perſons, and that by ſtrange and unexpected ways: And it is obſervable how often every thing contributes to carry on a Judgment intended, as if they rationally deſigned it. All thoſe loudly proclaim a God in the world: If there were no God, there would be no ſin; if no ſin, there would be no puniſhment.

2. *In Miracles.* The courſe of nature is uniform; and when it is put out of its courſe, it muſt be by ſome ſuperior power inviſible to the world; and by whatſoever inviſible inſtruments they are wrought, the efficacy of them muſt depend upon ſome firſt cauſe above nature. Pſal. 72. 18. *Bleſſed be the Lord God of* Iſrael, *who only doth wondrous things*, by himſelf and his ſole power.

That which cannot be the reſult of a natural cauſe, muſt be the reſult of ſomething ſupernatural: What is beyond the reach of nature, is the effect of a power ſuperior to nature. For it is quite againſt the order of nature, and is the elevation of ſomething to ſuch a pitch, which all nature could not advance it to. Nature cannot go beyond its own limits: If it be determined by another, as hath been formerly proved, it cannot lift it ſelf above it ſelf, without that power, that ſo determined it. Natural agents act neceſſarily: The Sun doth neceſſarily ſhine, fire doth neceſſarily burn. That cannot be the reſult of nature, which is above the Ability of nature. That cannot be the work of nature, which is againſt the order of nature: Nature cannot do any thing againſt it ſelf, or invert its own courſe.

We muſt own that ſuch things have been, or we muſt accuſe all the Records of former ages to be a pack of lies; which whoſoever doth, deſtroys the greateſt and beſt part of human knowledge. The Miracles mentioned in the Scripture, wrought by our Saviour, are acknowledged by the *Heathen*, by the *Jews* at this day, though his greateſt enemies. There is no diſpute whether ſuch things were wrought, the *dead raiſed*, the *blind reſtored to ſight*. The Heathens have acknowledged the Miraculous Eclipſe of the Sun, at the Paſſion of Chriſt, quite againſt the rule of nature, the Moon being then in oppoſition to the Sun. The propagation of Chriſtianity contrary to the Methods whereby other Religions have been propagated, that in a few years the Nations of the world ſhould be ſprinkled with this Doctrine, and give in a greater Catalogue of Martyrs courting the devouring flames, than all the Religions of the world.

To this might be added, the ſtrange hand that was over the *Jews*, the only people in the world profeſſing the true God, that ſhould ſo often be befriended by their Conquerors, ſo as to rebuild their Temple, though they were looked upon as a people apt to rebel. *Dion* and *Seneca* obſerve, that wherever they were tranſplanted, they proſpered and gave laws to the Victors: So that this proves alſo the Authority of the Scripture, the truth of Chriſtian Religion, as well as the being of a God, and a ſuperior power over the world.

To this might be added, the bridling the tumultuous paſſions of men for the preſervation of human ſocieties, which elſe would run the world into unconceivable confuſions, *Pſal.* 65. 7. *Which ſtilleth the noiſe of the Sea, and the tumults of the people.* As alſo the Miraculous deliverance of a perſon or Nation,

when

when upon the very brink of ruin; the ſudden anſwer of Prayer when God hath been ſought to, and the turning away a Judgment, which in reaſon could not be expected to be averted, and the raiſing a ſunk people from a ruin which ſeemed inevitable, by unexpected ways.

3 *Accompliſhments of Prophecies.* Thoſe things which are purely contingent, and cannot be known by Natural ſigns and in their cauſes, as Eclipſes and Changes in Nations, which may be diſcerned by an obſervation of the ſigns of the times; ſuch things that fall not within this compaſs, if they be foretold and come to paſs, are ſolely from ſome higher hand, and above the cauſe of Nature. This in Scripture is aſſerted to be a notice of the true God, Iſa. 41. 23. *Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are God;* and Iſa. 46. 10. *I am God declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done, ſaying, my Counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure.* And Prophecy was conſented to by all the Philoſophers to be from Divine illumination: That power which diſcovers things future, which all the foreſight of men cannot kenn and conjecture, is above nature. And to foretel them ſo certainly as if they did already exiſt, or had exiſted long ago, muſt be the reſult of a mind infinitely intelligent: Becauſe it is the higheſt way of knowing, and a higher cannot be imagined: And he that knows things future in ſuch a manner, muſt needs know things preſent and paſt. *Cyrus* was Propheſied of by *Eſay, ch.* 44. 28. & 45. 1. Long before he was born: His Victories, Spoils, all that ſhould happen in *Babylon*, his bounty to the *Jews* came to paſs, according to that Prophecy; and the ſight of that Prophecy which the *Jews* ſhewed him, as other Hiſtorians report, was that which moved him to be favourable to the *Jews.*

Alexanders ſight of *Daniels* Prophecy concerning his Victories moved him to ſpare *Jeruſalem.* And are not the four *Monarchies* plainly deciphered in that Book, before the fourth roſe up in the world? That power which foretells things beyond the reach of the wit of man, and orders all cauſes to bring about thoſe predictions, muſt be an infinite power, the ſame that made the world, ſuſtains it and governs all things in it according to his pleaſure, and to bring about his own ends: And this Being is God.

Uſe 1. 1: If Atheiſm be a folly; *'Tis then pernicious to the world, and to the Atheiſt himſelf.* Wiſdom is the band of human ſocieties, the glory of man. Folly is the diſturber of Families, Cities, Nations: The diſgrace of human nature.

First, I. *'Tis pernicious to the World.*

1. *It would root out the foundations of Government.* It demoliſheth all order in Nations. The being of a God is the guard of the world: The ſenſe of a God is the foundation of Civil order; without this there is no tye upon the Conſciences of men. What force would there be in Oaths for the deciſions of controverſies, what right could there be in Appeals made to one that had no being? A City of Atheiſts would be a heap of confuſion; there could be no ground of any commerce, when all the ſacred bands of it in the Conſciences of men were ſnapt aſunder, which are torn to pieces and utterly deſtroyed by denying the Exiſtence of God: What Magiſtrate could be ſecure in his ſtanding, what private perſon could be ſecure in his right? * Can that then be a truth that is deſtructive of all publick good? If the Atheiſts ſentiment, that there were no God, were a truth; and the contrary that there were a God, were a falſity; it would then follow, that falſity made men good and ſerviceable to one another: that error were the foundation of all the beauty and order, and outward felicity of the world; the fountain of all good to man. If there were no God, to *beleive there is one* would be an error, and to beleive there is none would be the greateſt wiſdom, becauſe it would be the greateſt truth. And then as it is the greateſt wiſdom to *fear God*, upon the apprehenſion of his Exiſtence; * So it would be the greateſt error to fear him, if there were none. It would unqueſtionably follow, that Error is the ſupport of the world, the ſpring of all human advantages; and that every part of the world were obliged to a falſity for being a quiet habitation, which is the moſt abſurd thing to imagine. 'Tis a thing impoſſible to be tolerated by any Prince, without laying an Axe to the root of the Government.

* Leſſius *de Provid.* pa. 663.

* Pſal. 111. 19.

2. *It would introduce all evill into the World.* If you take away God, you take away

way Conſcience, and thereby all meaſures and rules of good and evil. And how could any Laws be made when the meaſure and ſtandard of them were removed? All good Laws are founded upon the dictates of Conſcience and reaſon, upon common ſentiments in human nature, which ſpring from a ſenſe of God: So that if the foundation be demoliſht, the whole ſuperſtructure muſt tumble down: A man might be a Thief, a Murderer, an Adulterer, and could not in a ſtrict ſenſe be an offender. The worſt of actions could not be evil, if a Man were a God to himſelf, a Law to himſelf. Nothing but evil deſerves a cenſure, and nothing would be evil, if there were no God, the Rector of the world againſt whom evil is properly committed: No Man can make that morally evil that is not ſo in it ſelf. As where there is a faint ſenſe of God, the heart is more ſtrongly inclin'd to wickedneſs; ſo where there is no ſenſe of God, the bars are removed, the flood-gates ſet open for all wickedneſs to ruſh in upon Mankind. Religion pinions Men from abominable practices, and reſtrains them from being Slaves to their own paſſions: An Atheiſts arms would be looſe to do any thing. * Nothing ſo villanous and unjuſt but would be acted, if the natural fear of a Deity were extinguiſht. The firſt conſequence iſſuing from the apprehenſion of the *Exiſtence of God*, is his Government of the world. If there be no God, then the natural conſequence is, that there is no ſupream Government of the world: Such a Notion would caſhier all ſentiments of good, and be like a *Trojan* Horſe, whence all impurity, tyranny and all ſorts of miſchiefs would break out upon Mankind: Corruption and abominable works in the text are the fruit of the fools perſwaſion that there is no God. The perverting the ways of men, oppreſſion and extortion owe their riſe to a forgetfulneſs of God, Jer. 3. 21. *They have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the Lord their God.* Ezek. 22. 12. *Thou haſt greedily gained by extortion and haſt forgotten me, ſaith the Lord.* The whole Earth would be filled with violence, all fleſh would corrupt their way, as it was before the deluge, when probably Atheiſm did abound more than Idolatry; and if not a diſowning the Being, yet denying the Providence of God by the Poſterity of *Cain*: Thoſe of the Family of *Seth* only *calling upon the Name of the Lord*, Gen. 6. 11, 12. compared, with *Gen.* 4. 26.

* Leſſius *de Provid. p.* 664.

The greateſt ſenſe of a Deity in any, hath been attended with the greateſt innocence of life and uſefulneſs to others: And a weaker ſenſe hath been attended with a baſer impurity. * If there were no God, Blaſphemy would be praiſe-worthy: As the reproach of Idols is praiſe-worthy, becauſe we teſtifie that there is no Divinity in them. What can be more contemptible than that which hath no being? Sin would be only a falſe opinion of a violated Law, and an offended Deity. If ſuch apprehenſions prevail, what a wide door is opened to the worſt of villanies? If there be no God, no reſpect is due to him; all the Religion in the world is a trifle, and Error, and thus the Pillars of all human ſociety, and that which hath made Commonwealths to flouriſh, are blown away.

* Leſſius *de Provid. p.* 665.

Secondly, 2. *'Tis pernicious to the Atheiſt himſelf.* If he fear no future puniſhment, he can never expect any future reward: All his hopes muſt be confined to a Swiniſh and deſpicable manner of life, without any imaginations of ſo much as a dram of reſerved happineſs. He is in a worſe condition than the ſilleſt animal, which hath ſomething to pleaſe it in its life: Whereas an *Atheiſt* can have nothing here to give him a full content, no more than any other Man in the World, and can have leſs ſatisfaction hereafter. He depoſeth the noble end of his own being, which was to ſerve a God and have a ſatisfaction in him, to ſeek a God and be rewarded by him: And he that departs from his end, recedes from his own nature. All the content any Creature finds, is in performing its end, moving according to its natural inſtinct; As it is a *joy to the Son to run its race*: * In the ſame manner it is a ſatisfaction to every other Creature, and its delight to obſerve the Law of its Creation. What content can any man have that runs from his end, oppoſeth his own nature, denies a God by whom and for whom he was Created, whoſe Image he bears, which is the Glory of his nature; and ſinks into the very dregs of bruitiſhneſs? How elegantly is it deſcribed by *Bildad*, * *His own Counſel ſhall caſt him down, terrors ſhall make him afraid on every ſide, deſtruction ſhall be ready at his ſide, the firſt born of Death ſhall devour his ſtrength, his confidence ſhall be rooted out,*

* Pſal. 19. 5.

* Job 18. 7, 8. *&c. to the end.*

out, and it shall bring him to the King of Terrors: Brimstone shall be scattered upon his Habitation, he shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the World; they that come after him shall be astonished at his day, as they that went before were affrighted: and this is the place of him that knows not God. * If there be a future reckoning, (as his own Conscience cannot but sometimes inform him of) his condition is desperate, and his misery dreadful and unavoidable: 'Tis not righteous a Hell should entertain any else, if it refuse him. * *Ver.* 21.

2. *How lamentable is it, that in our times this folly of Atheism should be so rife?* That there should be found such Monsters in human nature, in the midst of the improvements of Reason, and shinings of the Gospel, who not only make the Scripture the matter of their Jeers, but Scoff at the Judgments and Providences of God in the World, and envy their Creator a being, without whose goodness they had had none themselves; who contradict in their carriage what they assert to be their sentiment, when they dreadfully imprecate *damnation* to themselves? Whence should that damnation they so rashly wish, be poured forth upon them, if there were not a revenging God? Formerly Atheism was as rare as prodigious, scarce *two* or *three* known in an age. * And those that are reported to be so in former ages, are rather thought to be counted so, for mocking at the senseless Deities, the common people ador'd, and laying open their impurities. A meer natural strength would easily discover that those they adored for Gods, could not deserve that title, since their original was known, their uncleanness manifest and acknowledged by their worshippers. And probably it was so, * since the Christians were termed ἄθεοι, because they acknowledged not their vain Idols. *Use* 2. * *As* Justin *informs us.*

I question whether there ever was, or can be in the world, an uninterrupted and internal denyal of the being of God, or that men, (unless we can suppose Conscience utterly dead) can arrive to such a degree of impiety: For before they can stifle such sentiments in them, (whatsoever they may assert) they must be utter strangers to the common conceptions of reason, and despoil themselves of their own humanity. He that dares to deny a God with his lips, yet sets up something or other as a God in his heart. Is it not lamentable that this sacred truth, consented to by all Nations, which is the band of civil societies, the source of all order in the world, should be denyed with a bare face, and disputed against in Companies; And the glory of a wise Creator ascribed to an unintelligent nature, to blind chance? are not such worse then Heathens? They worshipped many Gods, these none: They preserved a notion of God in the world under a disguise of Images: These would banish him both from Earth and Heaven, and demolish the Statues of him in their own Consciences: They degraded him, these would destroy him: They coupled Creatures with him; *Rom.* 1. 25. *Who worshipped the Creature with the Creator*, as it may most properly be rendred: And these would make him worse than the Creature, a meer nothing. Earth is hereby become worse than Hell. Atheism is a perswasion, which finds no footing any where else. Hell that receives such persons, in this point reforms them: They can never deny or doubt of his being, while they feel his stroaks. The Devil that rejoyces at their wickedness, knows them to be in an error; for he *believes and trembles at the belief.* * This is a fore-runner of Judgment: Boldness in sin is a presage of vengeance, especially when the honour of God is more particularly concern'd therein. It tends to the overturning human society, taking off the Bridle from the wicked inclinations of men. And God appears not in such visible Judgments against sin immediately committed against himself, as in the case of those sins that are destructive to human society. Besides, God as Governor of the world will uphold that, without which all his ordinances in the world would be useless. *Atheism* is point blank against all the Glory of God in Creation, and against all the glory of God in Redemption, and pronounceth at one breath, both the Creator, and all Acts of Religion and Divine Institutions useless and insignificant. * Jam. 2. 19.

Since most have had one time or other, some risings of doubt, whether there be a God, tho few do in expressions deny his being, it may not be unnecessary to propose some things for the further impressing this truth, and guarding themselves against such temptations.

1. *'Tis utterly impossible to demonstrate there is no God.* He can choose no *Me-*

dium, but will fall in as a proof for his Exiſtence, and a manifeſtation of his excellency, rather than againſt it. The pretences of the Atheiſt are ſo ridiculous, that they are not worth the mentioning.

They never ſaw God, and therefore know not how to believe ſuch a Being; they cannot comprehend him. He would not be God, if he could fall within the narrow Model of an humane Underſtanding: He would not be infinite, if he were comprehenſible, or to be terminated by our ſight. How ſmall a thing muſt that be which is ſeen by a bodily Eye, or graſpt by a weak Mind? If God were viſible or comprehenſible, he would be limited: Shall it be a ſufficient Demonſtration from a blind man, that there is no fire in the Room, becauſe he ſees it not, tho he feel the warmth of it? The knowledge of the effect is ſufficient to conclude the exiſtence of the cauſe. Who ever ſaw his own Life? Is it ſufficient to deny a man lives, becauſe he beholds not his Life, and only knows it by his motion? He never ſaw his own Soul, but knows he hath one by his thinking power: The Air renders it ſelf ſenſible to Men in its Operations, yet was never ſeen by the eye.

If God ſhould render himſelf viſible, they might queſtion as well as now, whether that which was ſo viſible, were God or ſome deluſion. If he ſhould appear glorious, we can as little behold him in his Majeſtick Glory, as an Owl can behold the Sun in its brightneſs; we ſhould ſtill but ſee him in his Effects, as we do the Sun by his Beams. If he ſhould ſhew a new Miracle, we ſhould ſtill ſee him but by his Works; ſo we ſee him in his Creatures, every one of which would be as great a Miracle as any can be wrought, to one that had the firſt proſpect of them. To require to ſee God, is to require that which is impoſſible, 1 *Tim.* 6. 16. *He dwells in the Light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath ſeen nor can ſee.* 'Tis viſible that he is, *for he covers himſelf with Light as with a Garment*, Pſal 104. 2. 'Tis inviſible what he is, *for he makes Darkneſs his ſecret place*, Pſal. 18. 11. Nothing more clear to the Eye than Light, and nothing more difficult to the underſtanding than the nature of it: as Light is the firſt Object obvious to the Eye, ſo is God the firſt Object obvious to the Underſtanding. The Arguments from Nature do with greater ſtrength evince his Exiſtence, than any pretences can manifeſt there is no God. No man can aſſure himſelf by any good reaſon there is none: For as for the *likeneſs of Events* to him that is *righteous* and him that is *wicked*, to him that *ſacrificeth* and to him that *ſacrificeth* not, *Eccleſ.* 9. 2. It is an Argument for a reſerve of Judgment in another State, which every mans Conſcience dictates to him; when the Juſtice of God ſhall be glorified in another world, as much as his patience is in this.

2. *Whoſoever doubts of it, makes himſelf a Mark, againſt which all the Creatures fight.* All the Stars fought againſt *Siſera* for *Iſrael*: All the Stars in Heaven, and the Duſt on Earth fight for God againſt the Atheiſt. He hath as many Arguments againſt him as there are Creatures in the whole compaſs of Heaven and Earth: He is moſt unreaſonable, that denies or doubts of that whoſe Image and Shadow he ſees round about him; he may ſooner deny the Sun that warms him, the Moon that in the Night walks in her brightneſs, deny the Fruits he enjoys from the Earth, yea and, deny that he doth exiſt. He muſt tear his own Conſcience, fly from his own thoughts, be changed into the nature of a Stone which hath neither reaſon nor ſenſe, before he can diſingage himſelf from thoſe Arguments which evince the Being of a God. He that would make the natural Religion profeſſed in the world a meer Romance, muſt give the lye to the common ſenſe of Mankind; he muſt be at an irreconcileable enmity with his own Reaſon, reſolve to hear nothing that it ſpeaks, if he will not hear what it ſpeaks in this caſe, with a greater evidence than it can aſcertain any thing elſe. God hath ſo ſetled himſelf in the reaſon of Man, that he muſt vilify the nobleſt Faculty God hath given him, and put off Nature it ſelf before he can blot out the Notion of a God.

3. No queſtion but *thoſe that have been ſo bold as to deny that there was a God, have ſometimes been much afraid they have been in an Error, and have at leaſt ſuſpected there was a God, when ſome ſuddain Prodigy hath preſented it ſelf to them and rouſed their fears.* And whatſoever Sentiments they might have in their blinding Proſperity, they have had other kind of motions in them in their ſtormy afflictions: and like *Jonah*'s Mariners have been ready to cry to him for help, whom they diſdained to own ſo much as in being, while they ſwam in their pleaſures. The thoughts of a Deity cannot be ſo extinguiſht, but they will revive and ruſh upon a Man, at leaſt under ſome ſharp

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ffliction. Amazing judgments will make them queſtion their own apprehenſions. God ſends ſome Meſſengers to keep alive the apprehenſion of him as a Judge, while men reſolve not to own or reverence him as a Governour. A man cannot but keep a ſcent of what was born with him: As a Veſſel that hath been ſeaſoned firſt with a ſtrong juice will preſerve the ſcent of it, whatſoever liquors are afterwards put into it.

4. *What is it for which ſuch men rack their wits, to form Notions, that there is no God?* Is it not that they would indulge ſome *vitious habit*, which hath gained the poſſeſſion of their Soul, which they know *cannot be favoured by that holy God*, Whoſe Notion they Would raze out * ? Is it not for ſome brutiſh affection, as degenerative of human Nature, as derogatory to the Glory of God; a luſt as unmanly as ſinful? * Pſal. 94. 6,7.

The terrours of God are the effects of guilt; and therefore men would wear out the apprehenſions of a Deity, that they might be brutiſh without controul. They would fain believe there were no God, that they might not be men, but Beaſts. How great a folly is it to take ſo much pains in vain, for a ſlavery and torment? to caſt off that which they call a yoke, for that which really is one? There is more pains and toughneſs of Soul requiſite to ſhake off the apprehenſions of God, than to believe that he is, and cleave conſtantly to him. What a madneſs is it in any to take ſo much pains to be leſs than a man, by razing out the apprehenſions of God, when with leſs pains, he may be more than an earthly man, by cheriſhing the Notions of God, and walking anſwerably thereunto.

5. *How unreaſonable is it for any man to hazard himſelf at this rate in the denial of a God?* The Atheiſt ſaith he knows not that there is a God; but may he not reaſonably think, there may be one for ought he knows? and if there be, what a deſperate confuſion will he be in, when all his bravado's ſhall prove falſe? What can they gain by ſuch an Opinion? a freedom ſay they from the burdenſom yoke of Conſcience, a liberty to do what they liſt: That doth not ſubject them to Divine Laws. 'Tis an hard matter to perſwade any that they can gain this. They can gain but a ſordid pleaſure, unworthy the Nature of man. But it were well, that ſuch would argue thus with themſelves: If there be a God, and I fear and obey him, I gain a happy Eternity; but if there be no God, I loſe nothing but my ſordid luſts by firmly believing there is one. If I be deceived at laſt, and find a God, can I think to be rewarded by him, for diſowning him? Do not I run a deſperate hazard to loſe his favour, his Kingdom and endleſs felicity, for an endleſs torment? By confeſſing a God I venture no loſs; but by denying him I run the moſt deſperate hazard, if there be one.

He is not a reaſonable Creature, that will not put himſelf upon ſuch a reaſonable arguing.

What a doleful meeting will there be between the God who is denyed, and the Atheiſt that denyes him, who ſhall meet with reproaches on Gods part, and terrors on his own? All that he gains is a liberty to defile himſelf here, and a certainty to be deſpiſed hereafter, if he be in an errour, as undoubtedly he is.

6. *Can any ſuch perſon ſay he hath done all that he can to inform himſelf of the being of God, or of other things which he denyes?* Or rather they would fain imagine there is none, that they may ſleep ſecurely in their luſts and be free (if they could) from the thunder-claps of Conſcience? Can ſuch ſay they have uſed their utmoſt indeavours to inſtruct themſelves in this, and can meet with no ſatisfaction? Were it an abſtruſe *Truth* it might not be wondred at: But not to meet with ſatisfaction in this which every thing minds us of, and helpeth, is the fruit of an extream negligence, ſtupidity, and a willingneſs to be unſatisfied, and a judicial proceſs of God againſt them. 'Tis ſtrange any man ſhould be ſo dark in that upon which depends the conduct of his life, and the expectation of happineſs hereafter.

I do not know what ſome of you may think, but I believe theſe things are not uſeleſs to be propoſed for our ſelves to anſwer temptations: We know not what wicked temptation in a debauched and ſceptick Age, meeting with a corrupt heart, may prompt men to: And tho there may not be any Atheiſt here preſent, yet I know there is more than one, who have accidentally met with ſuch, who openly denyed a Deity. And if the like occaſion happen, theſe conſiderations may not be

unuſeful to apply to their Conſciences. But I muſt confeſs, that ſince thoſe that live in this ſentiment, do not judge themſelves worthy of their own care, they are not worthy of the care of others; and a man muſt have all the Charity of the Chriſtian Religion, which they deſpiſe, not to contemn them, and leave them to their own folly. As we are to pity mad men, who ſink under an unavoidable diſtemper, we are as much to abominate them, who will fully hug this prodigious frenzy.

Uſe 3. If it be the Atheiſts folly to deny or doubt of the being of God, *'Tis our Wiſdom to be firmly ſettled in this Truth, That God is.* we ſhould never be without our Arms in an Age wherein Atheiſm appears bare fac'd without a diſguiſe.

You may meet with ſuggeſtions to it; though the *Devil* formerly never attempted to demoliſh this notion in the world, but was willing to keep it up, ſo the worſhip due to God might run in his own Channel; and was neceſſitated to preſerve it, without which he could not have erected that Idolatry, which was his great deſign in oppoſition to God: Yet ſince the Foundations of that are torn up, and never like to be rebuilt, he may endeavour, as his laſt refuge, to baniſh the Notion of God out of the world; that he may reign as abſolutely without it, as he did before by the miſtakes about the divine Nature. But we muſt not lay all upon *Satan*; the corruption of our own hearts miniſters matter to ſuch Sparks. 'Tis not ſaid, Satan hath ſuggeſted to the Fool, but *the Fool hath ſaid in his heart* there is no God. But let them come from what principle ſoever, ſilence them quickly, give them their diſmiſs; oppoſe the whole Scheme of Nature to fight againſt them, as the Stars did againſt *Siſera*. Stir up ſentiments of Conſcience to oppoſe ſentiments of corruption. Reſolve ſooner to believe, that your ſelves are not, than that God is not: And if you ſuppoſe they at any time come from Satan, object to him that you know he believes the contrary, to what he ſuggeſts. Settle this principle firmly in you, *let us behold Him that is inviſible, as* Moſes *did*: * Let us have the ſentiments following upon the Notion of a God; to be reſtrained by a fear of him, excited by a love to him, not to violate his Laws and offend his Goodneſs. He is not a God careleſs of our actions, negligent to inflict puniſhment, and beſtow rewards, *he forgets not the labour of our love*, * nor the integrity of our ways: He were not a God, if he were not a Governor: And puniſhments and rewards are as eſſential to Government, as a Foundation to a building: His being and his Government in rewarding, which implies puniſhment, (*for the neglects of him are linkt together*,) * are not to be ſeparated in our thoughts of him.

* Heb. 11. 27.

* Heb. 6. 10.

* Heb. 11. 6.

1. *Without this truth fixed in us, we can never give him the worſhip due to his Name.* When the knowledge of any thing is fluctuating and uncertain, our actions about it are careleſs. We regard not that which we think doth not much concern us. If we do not firmly believe there is a God, we ſhall pay him no ſteady worſhip; and if we believe not the excellency of his nature, we ſhall offer him but a ſlight ſervice. * The *Jews* * call the knowledge of the being of God, The Foundation and Pillar of Wiſdom. The whole frame of Religion is diſſolved without this apprehenſion, and totters if this apprehenſion be wavering. Religion in the heart is as water in a weather glaſs which riſeth or falls according to the ſtrength or weakneſs of this belief: How can any man worſhip that which he believes not to be, or doubts of? Could any man omit the paying an homage to one, whom he did believe to be an Omnipotent, Wiſe Being, poſſeſſing, (infinitely above our conceptions) the perfections of all Creatures? He muſt either think there is no ſuch Being, or that he is an eaſie, drowſy, inobſervant God, and not ſuch a one as our natural Notions of him, if liſtened to, as well as the Scripture, repreſent him to be.

* Mal. 1. 13. 14.
* *Maimon. funda. Legis cap.* 1.

2. *Without being rooted in this, we cannot order our lives.* All our baſeneſs, ſtupidity, dulneſs, wandrings, vanity, ſpring from a wavering and unſetledneſs in this principle. This gives ground to brutiſh pleaſures, not only to ſollicite, but conquer us. *Abraham* expected violence in any place were God was not owned, Gen. 20. 11. *Surely the fear of God is not in this place, and they will ſlay me for my Wifes ſake.* The natural knowledge of God firmly impreſt, would choak that which would ſtifle our reaſon and deface our Souls. The belief that God is, and what he is, would have a mighty influence to perſwade us to a real Religion, and ſerious Conſideration, and caſting about how to be like to him and united with him.

3. *Without it we cannot have any comfort of our Lives.* Who would willingly live

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in a ſtormy world, void of a God? If we waver in this Principle, to whom ſhould we make our complaints in our afflictions? Where ſhould we meet with ſupports? How could we ſatisfie our ſelves with the hopes of a future Happineſs? There is a Sweetneſs in the Meditation of his Exiſtence, and that *he is a Creator.* * Thoughts of other things have a Bitterneſs mixed with them: Houſes, Lands, Children now are, ſhortly they will not be; but *God is*, that made the World: His Faithfulneſs as he is a Creator, is a Ground to *depoſite our Souls* and Concerns in *our innocent Sufferings.* * So far as we are weak in the acknowledgement of God, we deprive our ſelves of our content in the view of his infinite perfections.

* Pſal. 104.24.

* 1 Pet. 4. 19.

4. *Without the rooting of this Principle, we cannot have a firm belief of Scripture.* The Scripture will be a ſlight thing to one that hath weak ſentiments of God. The Belief of a God muſt neceſſarily precede the belief of any Revelation; The latter cannot take place without the former as the foundation. We muſt firmly believe the being of a God, wherein our Happineſs doth conſiſt, before we can believe any means which conduct us to him: *Moſes* begins with the Author of Creation, before he treats of the Promiſe of Redemption. *Paul* preached *God as a Creator* to a Univerſity, before he preached Chriſt as Mediator. * What influence can the Teſtimony of God have in his Revelation upon one that doth not firmly aſſent to the truth of his being? All would be in vain that is ſo often repeated [*thus ſaith the Lord*] if we do not believe there is a Lord that ſpeaks it. There could be no awe from his Soveraignty in his commands, nor any comfortable taſte of his Goodneſs in his Promiſes. The more we are ſtrengthened in this Principle, the more credit we ſhall be able to give to divine Revelation, to reſt in his Promiſe, and to reverence his Precept; the Authority of all depends upon the being of the Revealer.

* Act 17. 24.

To this purpoſe, ſince we have handled this diſcourſe by natural Arguments,

1. *Study God in the Creatures as well as in the Scriptures.* The primary uſe of the Creatures, is to acknowledge God in them; they were made to be witneſſes of himſelf and his Goodneſs, and Heralds of his Glory, which Glory of God as Creator *ſhall endure for ever*, *Pſal.* 104. 31. that whole *Pſalm* is a Lecture of Creation and Providence. The World is a ſacred Temple; Man is introduced to contemplate it, and behold with Praiſe the Glory of God in the pieces of his Art. As Grace doth not deſtroy Nature, ſo the Book of Redemption blots not out that of Creation: Had he not ſhewn himſelf in his Creatures, he could never have ſhewn himſelf in his Chriſt: The order of things required it. God muſt be read where ever he is legible; the Creatures are one book, wherein he hath writ a part of the *excellency of his name*, * as many Artiſts do in their Works and Watches. Gods Glory like the Filings of Gold is too precious to be loſt where ever it drops: nothing ſo vile and baſe in the World, but carries in it an inſtruction for Man, and drives in further the Notion of a God. As he ſaid of his Cottage; Enter here, *Sunt hic etiam Dii*, God diſdains not this place: So the leaſt Creature ſpeaks to man, every Shrub in the Field, every Fly in the Air, every Limb in a Body; conſider me, God diſdains not to appear in me; he hath diſcovered in me his being and a part of his Skill, as well as in the higheſt. The Creatures manifeſt the being of God and part of his Perfections. We have indeed a more excellent way, a Revelation ſetting him forth in a more excellent manner, a firmer Object of dependence, a brighter Object of Love, raiſing our hearts from ſelf confidence to a confidence in him. Though the appearance of God in the one be clearer than in the other, yet neither is to be neglected: The *Scripture* directs us to *Nature* to view God; it had been in vain elſe for the *Apoſtle* to make uſe of natural arguments: Nature is not contrary to Scripture, nor Scripture to Nature; unleſs we ſhould think God contrary to himſelf, who is the Author of both.

* Pſal. 8. 9.

2. *View God in your own experiences of him.* There is a *taſte* and *ſight* of his Goodneſs, though no ſight of his Eſſence. * By the taſte of his Goodneſs you may know the reality of the fountain, whence it ſprings and from whence it flows: This ſurpaſſeth the greateſt Capacity of a meer natural Underſtanding. Experience of the ſweetneſs of the ways of Chriſtianity is a mighty preſervative againſt Atheiſm. Many a Man knows not how to prove Hony to be ſweet by his reaſon, but by his ſenſe; and if all the reaſon in the world be brought againſt it, he will not be reaſoned out of what he taſts.

* Pſal. 34. 38.

Have not many found the delightful illapſes of God into their Souls, often ſprinkled

led with his inward bleſſings upon their ſeeking of him; had ſecret warnings in their approaches to him; and gentle rebukes in their Conſciences upon their ſwervings from him? Have not many found ſometimes an inviſible hand raiſing them up when they were dejected; ſome unexpected providence ſtepping in for their relief; and eaſily perceived that it could not be a work of chance, nor many times the intention of the inſtruments he hath uſed in it? You have often found that he is, by finding that he is a rewarder, and can ſet to your ſeals that he is what he hath declared himſelf to be in his word, Iſa. 43. 12: *I have declared, and have ſaved, therefore you are my witneſſes ſaith the Lord, that I am God.* The ſecret touches of God upon the heart and inward converſes with him are a greater evidence of the Exiſtence of a ſupream and infinitely good Being, than all nature.

Uſe 4. 4. Is it a folly to deny or doubt of the being of God? *'Tis a folly alſo not to worſhip God, when we acknowledge his Exiſtence*: 'Tis our Wiſdom then to Worſhip him. As it is not indifferent whether we believe there is a God or no: So it is not indifferent whether we will give Honour to that God or no. A worſhip is his right as he is the Author of our being, and fountain of our happineſs. By this only we acknowledge his Deity: Tho we profeſs his being, yet we deny that profeſſion in neglects of worſhip. To deny him a Worſhip is as great a folly, as to deny his being. He that renounceth all homage to his Creator, envies him the being which he cannot deprive him of. The natural inclination to worſhip is as univerſal as the Notion of a God; Idolatry elſe had never gained footing in the world. *The Exiſtence of God* was never owned in any Nation, but a Worſhip of him was appointed. And many people who have turned their backs upon ſome other parts of the Law of nature, have paid a continual homage to ſome ſuperior and inviſible being. The *Jews* give a reaſon why Man was Created in the Evening of the Sabbath, becauſe he ſhould begin his Being with the Worſhip of his Maker. As ſoon as ever he found himſelf to be a Creature, his firſt ſolemn act ſhould be a particular reſpect to his Creator. * *To fear God and keep his Commandment, is the whole* * Eccl. 12. * Heb. *of Man*, or is * whole man; he is not a man but a beaſt, without obſervance of God. *Religion* is as requiſite as reaſon to compleat a man: He were not reaſonable if he were not Religious; becauſe by neglecting Religion, he neglects the chiefeſt dictate of reaſon. Either God framed the world with ſo much order, Elegancy, and variety to no purpoſe, or this was his end at leaſt, that reaſonable Creatures ſhould admire him in it, and Honour him for it. The Notion of God was not ſtampt upon men, the ſhadows of God did not appear in the Creatures, to be the Subject of an idle contemplation, but the motive of a due homage to God: He Created the world for his glory, a people for himſelf, that he might have the Honour of his works: That ſince we *live* and *move in him* and *by him*, we ſhould live and move *to* him and *for* him. It was the condemnation of the Heathen world, that when they *knew* * Rom. 1. 21. there was a God, they did *not give him the Glory* due to him. * He that denyes his being is an Atheiſt to his Eſſence: He that denyes his worſhip is an Atheiſt to his Honour.

5. If it be a folly to deny the Being of God, *It will be our Wiſdom then, ſince we acknowledge his being, often to think of him.* Thoughts are the *firſt iſſue of* a Creature * Pro. 4. 23. as reaſonable: * He that hath given us the faculty whereby we are able to think, ſhould be the principal object about which the power of it ſhould be exerciſed. 'Tis a Juſtice to God the Author of our underſtandings, a Juſtice to the nature of our underſtandings, that the Nobleſt faculty ſhould be imployed about the moſt excellent object. Our minds are a beam from God; and therefore, as the Beams of the Sun, when they touch the Earth, ſhould reflect back upon God: As we ſeem to deny the being of God, not to think of him; we ſeem alſo to unſoul our Souls, in miſimploying the activity of them any other way: like Flies to be oftner on Dunghils than Flowers.

'Tis made the black mark of an ungodly Man or an Atheiſt, that *God is not in all his thoughts*, Pſal. 10. 4. What comfort can be had in the being of God without thinking of him with Reverence and delight? A God forgotten is as good as no God to us.

A DISCOURSE UPON PRACTICAL ATHEISM.

Psalm 14. 1.

Doct. 2. *PRACTICAL Atheism is natural to Man in his depraved state, and very frequent in the hearts and lives of Men.*

The Fool hath said in his heart there is no God. He regards him as little as if he had no being: He said in his *heart*, not with his tongue, nor in his head: He never firmly thought it, nor openly asserted it: Shame put a Bar to the first, and natural reason to the second. Yet perhaps he had sometimes some doubts whether there were a God or no: He wished there were not any, and sometimes hoped there were none at all: He could not raze out the Notion of a Deity in his mind, but he neglected the fixing the sense of God in his heart, and made it too much his business to deface and blot out those Characters of God in his Soul, which had been left under the ruines of original nature.

Men may have Atheistical hearts without Atheistical heads. Their reasons may defend the Notion of a Deity, while their hearts are empty of affection to the Deity: *Jobs* Children may curse *God in their hearts*, tho not with their lips. *

* Job 1. 5.

There is no God. Most understand it of a denial of the Providence of God; as I have said in opening the former Doctrine.

He denies some essential Attribute of God, or the exercise of that Attribute in the world. *

*So the Chaldee reads: ליתּ שולטנא Non potestas, denying the authority of God in the world.

He that denies any *essential* Attribute, may be said to deny the being of God. Whosoever denies Angels or Men to have reason and Will, denies the human and Angelical nature, because Understanding and Will are essential to both those Natures; there could neither be Angel nor Man without them. No Nature can subsist without the perfections essential to that Nature, nor God be conceived of without his: The *Apostle* tells us, *Eph.* 2. 12. that the *Gentiles* were *without God in the World*: So in some sence all unbelievers may be termed *Atheists*; for rejecting the Mediator appointed by God, they reject that God who appointed him.

But this is beyond the intended scope, Natural Atheism being the only subject: Yet this is deducible from it. That the title of ἄθεοι, doth not only belong to those who denyed the Existence of God, or to those who contemn all sence of a Deity, and would root the Conscience and Reverence of God out of their Souls: But

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it belongs alſo to theſe who give not that Worſhip to God which is due to him: Who Worſhip many Gods, or who Worſhip one God in a falſe and ſuperſtitious manner; when they have not right conceptions of God, nor intend an adoration of him according to the excellency of his Nature: All thoſe that are unconcerned for any particular Religion, fall under this Character. Though they own a God in general, yet are willing to acknowledge any God that ſhall be coined by the powers under whom they live. The *Gentiles* were without God in the World; without the true Notion of God, not without a God of their own framing.

This general or practical Atheiſm is natural to men.

1. *Not natural by Created, but by corrupted* Nature: 'Tis againſt nature, as nature came out of the hand of God: But univerſally natural, as nature hath been ſophiſticated and infected by the Serpents breath. Inconſideration of God, or miſrepreſentations of his nature, are as agreeable to corrupt nature, as the diſowning the being of a God is contrary to common reaſon. God is not denied *naturâ ſed vitiis.* *

* Auguſtin *de Civit. Dei.*

2. *'Tis univerſally natural: The wicked are eſtranged from the Womb,* Pſa. 58. 3. *They go aſtray as ſoon as they be born, their poyſon is like the poyſon of a Serpent. The wicked*: And who by his birth hath a better title? They go aſtray from the dictates of God and the rule of their Creation as ſoon as ever they be born; their poyſon is like the poyſon of a Serpent, which is radically the ſame in all of the ſame ſpecies. 'Tis ſeminally and fundamentally in all men, though there may be a ſtronger reſtraint by a Divine hand upon ſome men, than upon others. This principle runs through the whole ſtream of Nature. The natural bent of every mans heart is diſtant from God: When we attempt any thing pleaſing to God, 'tis like the climbing up a Hill, againſt nature; when any thing is diſpleaſing to him, 'tis like a Current running down the Channel in its natural courſe: When we attempt any thing that is an acknowledgment of the Holineſs of God, we are fain to ruſh with Arms in our hands through a multitude of natural paſſions, and fight the way through the oppoſitions of our own ſenſitive appetite. How ſoftly do we naturally ſink down into that which ſets us at a greater diſtance from *God*? There is no active, potent, efficacious ſence of a God by nature. *The heart of the Sons of men is fully ſet in them to do evil,* Eccl. 8. 11. *The heart* in the ſingular number; as if there were but one Common heart beat in all mankind, and bent as with one pulſe, with a joynt conſent and force to wickedneſs, without a ſenſe of the Authority of God in the Earth; as if one heart acted every Man in the World.

* Rom. 3. 9, 10, 11, 12.

The great *Apoſtle* cites the *Text* to verifie the charge he brought againſt all mankind. * In his interpretation, the *Jews*, who owned one God, and were dignified with ſpecial priviledges, as well as the *Gentiles* that maintained many Gods, are within the compaſs of this Character: The *Apoſtle* leaves out the firſt part of the Text, *the fool hath ſaid in his heart*, but takes in the latter part, and the verſes following: He charges *all*, becauſe *all*, every man of them was under ſin: *There is none that ſeeks God*, and ver. 19. He adds *what the law ſaith, it ſpeaks to thoſe that are under the Law.* That none ſhould imagine he included only the *Gentiles* and exempted the *Jews* from this deſcription. The Leproſie of Atheiſm had infected the whole Maſs of human nature: No man among *Jews* or *Gentiles* did naturally ſeek God; and therefore all were void of any ſpark of the practical ſence of the Deity. The effects of this Atheiſm are not in all externally of an equal ſize: Yet in the fundamentals and radicals of it, there is not a hairs difference between the beſt and the worſt men that ever traverſed the world. The diſtinction is laid either in common grace, bounding and ſuppreſſing it; or in ſpecial Grace killing and crucifying it. 'Tis in every one either triumphant or militant, reigning or depoſed. No Man is any more born with ſenſible acknowledgments of God, than he is born with a clear knowledge of the nature of all the Stars in the Heavens, or Plants upon the Earth. *None ſeeks after God.* * None ſeeks God as his rule, as his end, as his happineſs, which is a debt the Creature naturally owes to God; he deſires no communion with God: He places his happineſs in any thing inferior to God: He prefers every thing before him, glorifies every thing above him; he hath no delight to know him; he regards not thoſe paths which lead to him; he loves his own filth better than Gods Holineſs; his actions are tinctured, and dyed with ſelf, and are void of that reſpect which is due from him to God.

* * Coccei.

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The Nobleſt Faculty of Man, his Underſtanding, wherein the remaining Lineaments of the Image of God are viſible; the higheſt Operation of that Faculty, which is Wiſdom, is in the Judgment of the Spirit of God *Deviliſh*, whiles it is *earthly* and *ſenſual* * : And the Wiſdom of the beſt man is no better by nature; a legion of impure Spirits poſſeſs it. Deviliſh, as the *Devil*, who though he believe there is a God, yet acts as if there were none, and wiſhes he had no Superior to preſcribe him a Law, and inflict that puniſhment upon him which his Crimes have merited. Hence the Poyſon of Man by nature is ſaid to be like the *Poyſon of a Serpent*, alluding to that ſerpentine temptation which firſt infected Mankind, and changed the nature of Man into the likeneſs of that of the Devil. * So that notwithſtanding the Harmony of the World that preſents Men not only with the Notice of the Being of a God, but darts into their minds ſome remarks of his Power and Eternity; yet the thoughts and reaſonings of Man are ſo corrupt, as may well be called Diabolical, and as contrary to the Perfection of God and the original Law of their Nature, as the actings of the Devil are: For ſince every natural Man is a Child of the Devil, and is acted by the Diabolical Spirit, he muſt needs have that nature which his Father hath, and the Infuſion of that Venom which the *Spirit* that acts him, is poſſeſſed with; though the full Diſcovery of it may be reſtrained by various Circumſtances, *Eph.* 2. 2. To conclude, though no Man, or at leaſt very few arrive to a round and poſitive Concluſion in their hearts that there is no God, yet there is no Man that naturally hath in his heart any reverence of God.

* Jam. 3. 15.

* Pſal. 58. 4.

In general, before I come to a particular proof, take ſome Propoſitions.

Propoſition 1. *Actions are a greater diſcovery of a Principle than words.* The Teſtimony of Works is louder and clearer than that of Words, and the Frame of Mens hearts muſt be meaſured, rather by what they do, than by what they ſay. There may be a mighty diſtance between the Tongue and the Heart, but a Courſe of Actions is as little guilty of lying as intereſt is, according to our common ſaying: All outward Impieties are the branches of an Atheiſm at the root of our Nature, as all peſtilential ſores are expreſſions of the Contagion in the Blood. Sin is therefore frequently called Ungodlineſs in our Engliſh Dialect. Mens Practices are the beſt Indexes of their Principles: The Current of a Mans Life, is the counter-part of the Frame of his heart: Who can deny an Error in the Spring or Wheels, when he perceives an Error in the hand of the Dial? Who can deny an Atheiſm in the Heart, when ſo much is viſible in the Life? The Taſt of the water diſcovers what Mineral 'tis ſtrained through. A practical denial of God is worſe than a verbal, becauſe Deeds have uſually more of deliberation than Words; words may be the fruit of a Paſſion, but a ſet of evil actions are the fruit and evidence of a predominant evil Principle in the Heart: All ſlighting words of a Prince do not argue an habitual Treaſon, but a ſucceſſion of overt Treaſonable Attempts ſignifie a ſetled Treaſonable diſpoſition in the Mind: Thoſe therefore are more deſervedly termed Atheiſts, who acknowledge a God and walk as if there were none, than thoſe (if there can be any ſuch) that deny a God and walk as if there were one.

A Senſe of God in the heart, would burſt out in the Life: Where there is no reverence of God in the Life, 'tis eaſily concluded there is leſs in the Heart.

What doth not influence a Man when it hath the addition of the Eyes, and cenſures of outward Spectators, and the care of a Reputation (ſo much the God of the world) to ſtrengthen it and reſtrain the action, muſt certainly have leſs power over the heart when it is ſingle without any other concurrence. The Flames breaking out of a Houſe diſcover the Fire to be much ſtronger and fiercer within. The *Apoſtle* judgeth thoſe of the Circumciſion, who gave heed to Jewiſh Fables, to be denyers of God, though he doth not tax them with any notorious Prophaneſs *Tit.* 1. 16. *They profeſs that they know God, but in works they deny him*; he gives them Epithites contrary to what they arrogated to themſelves: * They boaſted themſelves to be holy, the Apoſtle calls them abominable; They bragged that they fulfilled the Law and obſerved the Traditions of their Fathers, the Apoſtle calls them diſobedient, or unperſwadable; They boaſted that they only had the Rule of Righteouſneſs, and a ſound Judgment concerning it, the Apoſtle ſaid they had a Reprobate Senſe and unfit for any good work; and judges againſt all their vain glorious braggs, that they had not a Reverence of God in their Hearts; there was more of the Denial of

* Illyric.

God in their Works than there was Acknowledgment of God in their words: Thoſe that have neither God in their Thoughts, nor in their Tongues, nor in their Works, cannot properly be ſaid to acknowledge him: Where the Honour of God is not practically owned in the lives of men, the Being of God is not ſenſibly acknowledged in the hearts of Men: The principle muſt be of the ſame kind with the Actions; if the Actions be Atheiſtical, the Principle of them can be no better.

Prop. 2. *All ſin is founded in a ſecret Atheiſm.* Atheiſm is the Spirit of every Sin; all the Floods of impieties in the World break in at the Gate of a ſecret Atheiſm: And though ſeveral ſins may diſagree with one another, yet like *Herod* and *Pilate* againſt Chriſt, they joyn hand in hand againſt the intereſt of God. Though luſts and pleaſures be *divers*, yet they are all united in *Diſobedience* to him. * All the wicked inclinations in the heart, and ſtrugling motions, ſecret repinings, ſelf applauding confidences in our own wiſdom, ſtrength, *&c.* envy, ambition, revenge, are ſparks from this latent fire; the language of every one of theſe is, I would be a Lord to my ſelf, and would not have a God Superior to me.

* Tit. 3. 3.

The variety of ſins againſt the *firſt* and *ſecond Table*, the neglects of God and violences againſt Man are derived from this in the Text, *firſt the fool hath ſaid in his heart*, and then follows a Legion of Devils: As all vertuous actions ſpring from an acknowledgment of God; ſo all vitious actions riſe from a lurking Denial of him. All licentiouſneſs goes glib down where there is no ſenſe of God. *Abraham* judged himſelf not ſecure from Murder, nor his Wife from Defilement in *Gerar*, if there were no *Fear of God* there. * He that makes no Conſcience of Sin has no regard to the Honour, and conſequently none to the Being of God. *By the Fear of God men depart from Evil*, Pro. 16. 6. By the non-regarding of God men ruſh into Evil. *Pharaoh* oppreſt *Iſrael* becauſe he *knew not the Lord.* If he did not deny the Being of a Deity, yet he had ſuch an unworthy Notion of God as was inconſiſtent with the Nature of a Deity; he a poor Creature thought himſelf a Mate for the Creator.

* Gen. 20. 11.

In ſins of Omiſſion we own not God, in neglecting to perform what he enjoyns: In ſins of Commiſſion we ſet up ſome luſt in the place of God, and pay to that the Homage which is due to our Maker: In both we diſown him; in the one by not doing what he commands, in the other by doing what he forbids.

We deny his Soveraignty when we violate his Laws; we diſgrace his Holineſs when we caſt our filth before his Face; we diſparage his Wiſdom when we ſet up another Ruſe as the Guide of our Actions than that Law he hath fixed; we ſlight his Sufficiency when we prefer a ſatisfaction in ſin before a happineſs in him alone, and his Goodneſs, when we judge it not ſtrong enough to attract us to him. Every ſin invades the Rights of God, and ſtrips him of one or other of his Perfections: 'Tis ſuch a vilifying of God as if he were not God; as if he were not the ſupream Creator and Benefactor of the World; as if we had not our Being from Him; as if the Air we breathed in, the Food we lived by, were our own by right of Supremacy, not of Donation: For a Subject to ſlight his Soveraign, is to ſlight his Royalty; or a Servant a Maſter, is to deny his Superiority.

Prop. 3. *Sin implies that God is unworthy of a Being.* Every Sin is a kind of *curſing God in the Heart* *; an aim at the deſtruction of the Being of God; not actually, but vertually; not in the intention of every Sinner, but in the nature of every ſin. That affection which excites a man to break his Law, would excite him to annihilate his Being if it were in his power. A Man in every ſin aims to ſet up his own will as his Rule, and his own glory as the end of his actions againſt the will and glory of God; and could a ſinner attain his end, God would be deſtroyed: God cannot out-live his Will and his glory: God cannot have another Rule but his own Will, nor another end but his own honour: Sin is called a *turning the back* upon God, * a *kicking againſt him*, * as if he were a ſlighter perſon than the meaneſt beggar. What greater contempt can be ſhew'd to the meaneſt, vileſt perſon, than to turn the back, lift up the heel, and thruſt away with indignation? All which actions, though they ſignifie that ſuch a one hath a Being; yet they teſtifie alſo that he is unworthy of a Being, that he is an unuſeful Being in the World, and that it were well the World were rid of him.

* Job. 1. 5.

* Jer. 32. 33.
* Deut. 32. 15.

* Numb. 15. 30.
Ezek. 20. 27.

All ſin againſt Knowledge is called a *Reproach of God.* * Reproach is a vilifying

a man as unworthy to be admitted into Company. We naturally Judge God unfit to be converſed with. God is the *term* turned *from* by a ſinner: Sin is the *term* turned *to*; which implies a greater excellency in the nature of ſin, than in the nature of God. And as we naturally Judge *it* more worthy to have a being in our affections, ſo conſequently more worthy to have a being in the world, than that infinite nature from whom we derive our beings, and our all; and upon whom with a kind of diſdain we turn our backs. Whoſoever thinks the Notion of a Deity unfit to be cheriſhed in his mind by warm Meditation, implies that he cares not whether he hath a being in the world or no. Now tho the light of a Deity ſhines ſo clearly in Man, and the ſtings of Conſcience are ſo ſmart, that he cannot abſolutely deny the being of a God; yet moſt Men endeavour to ſmother this knowledge, and make the Notion of a God a ſapleſs and uſeleſs thing, Rom. 1. 28. *They like not to retain God in their knowledge.*

It is ſaid, Cain *went out from the preſence of the Lord*, Gen. 4. 16. That is, from the Worſhip of God. Our refuſing or abhorring the preſence of a man implies a careleſſneſs whether he continue in the World or no: 'Tis a uſing him, as if he had no being, or as if we were not concerned in it. Hence all men in *Adam*, under the Emblem of the Prodigal, are ſaid to go into a far Country. Not in reſpect of place, becauſe of Gods Omnipreſence; but in reſpect of acknowledgment and affection; they mind and love any thing but God. And the deſcriptions of the Nations of the world, lying in the Ruines of *Adams* fall, and the dregs of that revolt, is that they *know not God*: They forget God, as if there were no ſuch being above them; and indeed he that doth the works of the *Devil*, owns the Devil to be more worthy of obſervance, and conſequently of a being, than God, whoſe nature he forgets and whoſe preſence he abhors.

Propoſition 4. *Every ſin in its own nature would render God a fooliſh and impure Being.* Many Tranſgreſſors eſteem their acts, which are contrary to the Law of God, both Wiſe and Good: If ſo, the Law againſt which they are committed, muſt be both fooliſh and impure: What a reflection is there then upon the Law-giver? The Moral Law is not properly a meer act of Gods Will conſidered in it ſelf, or a Tyrannical Edict, like thoſe of whom it may well be ſaid, *ſtat pro ratione voluntas*: But it commands thoſe things, which are good in their own nature, and prohibits thoſe things, which are in their own nature evil; and therefore is an act of his Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs; the reſult of his wiſe Counſel, and an extract of his pure nature; as all the Laws of juſt Law-givers, are not only the acts of their Will, but of a Will governed by Reaſon and Juſtice, and for the good of the publick, whereof they are conſervators. If the Moral commands of God were only acts of his will, and had not an intrinſick neceſſity, reaſon and goodneſs, God might have commanded the quite contrary, and made a contrary Law, whereby that which we now call Vice, might have been canonized for Vertue: He might then have forbid any Worſhip of him, Love to him, fear of his name: He might then have commanded Murders, Thefts, Adulteries. In the firſt he would have united the link of duty from the Creature, and diſſolved the obligations of Creatures to him, which is impoſſible to be conceived; for from the Relation of a Creature to God, obligations to God, and duties upon thoſe obligations, do neceſſarily reſult. It had been againſt the rule of Goodneſs and Juſtice, to have commanded the Creature not to love him, and fear and obey him: This had been a Command againſt Righteouſneſs, Goodneſs, and intrinſick obligations to gratitude: And ſhould Murder, Adulteries, Rapines have been commanded inſtead of the contrary, God would have deſtroyed his own Creation; he would have acted againſt the rule of goodneſs and order; he had been an unjuſt tyrannical Governor of the world: Publick ſociety would have been crackt in pieces, and the world become a Shambles, a Brothel Houſe, a place below the common ſentiments of a meer man. All ſin therefore being againſt the Law of God, the Wiſdom and holy rectitude of Gods Nature is denyed in every Act of diſobedience: And what is the conſequence of this, but that God is both fooliſh and unrighteous in commanding that, which was neither an Act of Wiſdom, as a Governour, nor an Act of goodneſs, as a benefactor to his Creature?

As was ſaid before, preſumptuous ſins are called reproaches of God, Num. 15. 30. *The Soul that doth ought preſumptuouſly, reproacheth the Lord.* Reproaches of men

are either for natural, moral, or intellectual defects. All reproaches of God muſt imply a charge, either of unrighteouſneſs, or ignorance: If of unrighteouſneſs 'tis a denial of his Holineſs: If of Ignorance, 'tis a blemiſhing his Wiſdom. If Gods Laws were not wiſe and holy, God would not enjoyn them: And if they are ſo, we deny infinite Wiſdom and Holineſs in God by not complying with them. As when a man believes not God when he promiſes, he *makes him a lyar*, 1 *John* 5. 10. So he that obeys not a wiſe and holy God commanding, makes him guilty either of folly, or unrighteouſneſs.

Now ſuppoſe you knew an abſolute Atheiſt, who denied the Being of a God, yet had a life free from any notorious ſpot or defilement; would you in reaſon count him ſo bad as the other that owns a God in being, yet lays, by his courſe of action, ſuch a black imputation of folly and impurity upon the God he profeſſeth to own; an imputation which renders any man a moſt deſpicable Creature?

Propoſition 5. *Sin in its own nature endeavours to render God the moſt miſerable Being.* 'Tis nothing, but an oppoſition to the will of God: The will of no Creature is ſo much contradicted, as the Will of God is by Devils and Men: And there is nothing under the Heavens that the affections of human nature ſtand more point blank againſt, than againſt God. There is a ſlight of him in all the faculties of Man; our Souls are as unwilling to know him, as our Wills are averſe to follow him, Rom. 8. 7. *The carnal mind is enmity againſt God, 'tis not ſubject to the Law of God, nor can be ſubject.* 'Tis true, Gods will cannot be hindered of its effect, for then God would not be ſupremely bleſſed, but unhappy and miſerable: All miſery ariſeth from a want of that, which a nature would have, and ought to have: Beſides, if any thing could fruſtrate Gods Will, it would be ſuperior to him: God would not be Omnipotent, and ſo would loſe the perfection of the Deity, and conſequently the Deity it ſelf; for that which did wholly defeat Gods will, would be more powerful than he. But ſin is a contradiction to the will of Gods Revelation; to the Will of his Precept, and therein doth naturally tend to a ſuperiority over God, and would uſurp his Omnipotence, and deprive him of his bleſſedneſs. For if God had not an infinite power to turn the deſigns of it to his own Glory, but the will of ſin could prevail, God would be totally deprived of his bleſſedneſs. Doth not ſin endeavour to ſubject God to the extravagant and contrary wills of men, and make him more a ſlave than any Creature can be? For the Will of no Creature, not the meaneſt and moſt deſpicable *Creature*, is ſo much croſt, as the Will of God is by ſin, Iſa. 43. 24. *Thou haſt made me to ſerve with thy ſins*: Thou haſt endeavoured to make a meer ſlave of me by ſin: Sin endeavours to ſubject the bleſſed God to the humour and luſt of every perſon in the world.

Propoſition 6. *Men ſometimes in ſome circumſtances do wiſh the not being of God.* This ſome think to be the meaning of the Text, *the fool hath ſaid in his heart there is no God*, that is, he wiſhes there were no God: Many tamper with their own hearts to bring them to a perſwaſion that there is no God. And when they cannot do that, they conjure up wiſhes that there were none. Men naturally have ſome Conſcience of ſin, and ſome notices of Juſtice; Rom, 1. 32. *They know the Judgment of God*, and they know the demerit of ſin; they know the Judgment of God, and that *they which do ſuch things are worthy of death.* What is the conſequent of this but fear of puniſhment? and what is the iſſue of that fear, but a wiſhing the Judge either unwilling or unable to vindicate the Honour of his violated Law? When God is the object of ſuch a wiſh, 'tis a vertual undeifying of him: Not to be able to puniſh, is to be impotent; not to be willing to puniſh, is to be unjuſt; Imperfections inconſiſtent with the Deity: God cannot be ſuppoſed without an infinite Power to act, and an infinite Righteouſneſs as the Rule of acting. Fear of God is natural to all men; not a Fear of offending him, but a Fear of being puniſhed by him: The wiſhing the Extinction of God has its degree in men, according to the degree of their Fears of his juſt Vengeance: And though ſuch a Wiſh be not in its *Meridian* but in the Damned in Hell, yet it hath its ſtarts and motions in affrighted and awakened Conſciences on the Earth: Under this Rank of Wiſhers that there were no God, or that God were deſtroyed, do fall,

1. *Terrified Conſciences*, that are *Magor miſſabib*, ſee nothing but matter of fear round about. As they have lived without the bounds of the Law, they are afraid

to

to fall under the ſtroak of his Juſtice: Fear wiſhes the deſtruction of that which it apprehends hurtful: It conſiders him as a God to whom *Vengeance belongs*, as the Judge *of all the Earth.* * The leſs hopes ſuch a one hath of his Pardon, the more joy he would have to hear that his Judge ſhould be ſtript of his Life: He would entertain with delight any reaſons, that might ſupport him in the conceit that there were no God: In his preſent State ſuch a Doctrine would be his ſecurity from an Account: He would as much rejoyce, if there were no God to enflame an Hell for him, as any guilty Malefactor would if there were no Judge to order a Gibbet for him. Shame may bridle mens words, but the heart will be caſting about for ſome Arguments this way, to ſecure it ſelf: Such as are at any time in *Spira*'s Caſe, would be willing to ceaſe to be Creatures, that God might ceaſe to be Judge. *The Fool hath ſaid in his heart*, there is no *Elohim*, no *Judge*, fancying God without any exerciſe of his judicial Authority. And there is not any wicked man under anguiſh of Spirit, but, were it within the reach of his power, would take away the Life of God, and rid himſelf of his fears, by deſtroying his Avenger. * Pſal. 94. 12.

2. *Debaucht Perſons* are not without ſuch wiſhes ſometimes: An obſtinate Servant wiſhes his Maſters death, from whom he expects Correction for his Debaucheries. As man ſtands in his corrupt Nature, 'tis impoſſible but one time or other moſt debaucht perſons, at leaſt have ſome kind of velleities, or imperfect wiſhes. 'Tis as natural to men to abhor thoſe things which are unſutable and troubleſome, as it is to pleaſe themſelves in things agreeable to their minds and humours: And ſince Man is ſo deeply in love with Sin, as to count it the moſt eſtimable good, he cannot but wiſh the abolition of that Law which checks it, and conſequently the change of the Law-Giver which Enacted it; and in wiſhing a change in the holy Nature of God he wiſhes a deſtruction of God, who could not be God, if he ceaſed to be immutably holy. They do as certainly wiſh, that God had not a holy Will to command them, as deſpairing Souls wiſh, that God had not a righteous Will to puniſh them; and to wiſh Conſcience extinct for the moleſtations they receive from it, is to wiſh the power Conſcience repreſents out of the world alſo.

Since the State of Sinners is a State of diſtance from God, and the Language of Sinners to God is *departed from us*: * They deſire as little the continuance of his being as they deſire the knowledge of his Ways: The ſame reaſon which moves them to deſire Gods diſtance from them, would move them to deſire Gods not Being: Since the greateſt diſtance would be moſt agreeable to them, the Deſtruction of God muſt be ſo too: Becauſe there is no greater diſtance from us, than in not being. Men would rather have God not to be, than themſelves under controul, that ſenſuality might range at pleaſure: He is like a *Heifer ſliding from the Yoke*, *Hoſ.* 4. 16. The Curſing of God in the Heart feared by *Job* of his Children, intimates a wiſhing God deſpoiled of his Authority, that their pleaſure might not be dampt by his Law, Beſides, is there any natural man that ſins againſt actuated knowledge, but either thinks or wiſhes that God might not ſee him, that God might not know his actions? And is not this to wiſh the Deſtruction of God, who could not be God unleſs he were immenſe and omniſcient? * Job. 21. 14.

3. Under this rank fall thoſe, *who perform external Duties only out of a Principle of ſlaviſh Fear.* Many men perform thoſe Duties that the Law enjoyns with the ſame Sentiments that Slaves perform their drudgery, and are conſtrained in their Duties by no other conſiderations but thoſe of the Whip and the Cudgel. Since therefore they do it with reluctancy, and ſecretly murmur while they ſeem to obey, they would be willing that both the Command were recall'd, and the Maſter that commands them were in another World. The Spirit of Adoption makes men act towards God as a Father, a Spirit of Bondage only eyes him as a Judge. Thoſe that look upon their Superiors as tyrannical, will not be much concerned in their welfare; and would be more glad to have their Nails pared, than be under perpetual fear of them.

Many men regard not the infinite goodneſs in their ſervice of him, but conſider him as cruel, tyrannical, injurious to their Liberty. *Adam*'s Poſterity are not free from the Sentiments of their common Father, till they are regenerate. You know what Conceit was the Hammer whereby the Helliſh *Jael* ſtruck the Nail into our firſt Parents, which conveyed Death, together with the ſame Imagination to all their

their Poſterity, *Gen.* 3. 5. *God knows that in the day you eat thereof, your eyes ſhall be opened, and you ſhall be as Gods knowing Good and Evil*: Alas poor Souls! God knew what he did when he forbad you that Fruit: He was jealous you ſhould be too happy: It was a cruelty in him to deprive you of a Food ſo pleaſant and delicious. The apprehenſion of the ſeverity of Gods Commands riſeth up no leſs in deſires that there were no God over us, than *Adam*'s apprehenſion of Envy in God for the reſtraint of one Tree mov'd him to attempt to be equal with God: Fear is as powerful to produce the one in his Poſterity, as Pride was to produce the other in the Common-Root. When we apprehend a thing hurtful to us, we deſire ſo much evil to it, as may render it uncapable of doing us the hurt we fear. As we wiſh the preſervation of what we love or hope for; ſo we are naturally apt to wiſh the not being of that whence we fear ſome hurt or trouble. We muſt not underſtand this as if any man did formally wiſh the deſtruction of God, as God. God in himſelf is an infinite Mirror of Goodneſs and raviſhing Lovelineſs: He is infinitely good, and ſo univerſally good, and nothing but good; and is therefore ſo agreeable to a Creature, as a Creature, that it is impoſſible that the Creature, while it bears it ſelf to God as a Creature, ſhould be guilty of this, but thirſt after him and cheriſh every motion to him. As no man wiſhes the deſtruction of any Creature, as a Creature, but as it may conduce to ſomething which he counts may be beneficial to himſelf; ſo no man doth, nor perhaps can wiſh the ceſſation of the Being of God, as God; for then he muſt wiſh his own Being to ceaſe alſo; But as he conſiders him clothed with ſome perfections, which he apprehends as injurious to him; as his Holineſs in forbidding Sin, his Juſtice in puniſhing Sin: And God being judged in thoſe perfections contrary to what the revolted Creature thinks convenient and good for himſelf, he may wiſh God ſtript of thoſe perfections, that thereby he may be free from all fear of trouble and grief from him in his fallen State. In wiſhing God deprived of thoſe, he wiſhes God deprived of his Being; becauſe God cannot retain his Deity without a love of Righteouſneſs and Hatred of Iniquity; and he could not teſtifie his Love to the one, or his loathing of the other, without encouraging goodneſs, and witneſſing his Anger againſt Iniquity.

Let us now appeal to our ſelves, and examin our own Conſciences: Did we never pleaſe our ſelves ſometimes in the thoughts, how happy we ſhould be, how free in our vain pleaſures, if there were no God? Have we not deſired to be our own Lords without controul, ſubject to no Law but our own, and be guided by no Will but that of the Fleſh? Did we never rage againſt God under his afflicting Hand? Did we never wiſh God ſtript of his Holy Will to command, and his Righteous Will to puniſh, *&c.*

Thus much for the general.

For the proof of this, many conſiderations will bring in Evidence: Moſt may be reduced to theſe two generals.

Man would ſet himſelf up, Firſt as his own Rule. Secondly as his own End and Happineſs.

1. *Man would ſet himſelf up as his own Rule inſtead of God*: This will be evidenced in this Method.

1. *Man naturally diſowns the Rule Gods ſets him.*
2. *He owns any other Rule rather than that of Gods preſcribing.*
3. *Theſe he doth in order to the ſetting himſelf up as his own Rule.*
4. *He makes himſelf not only his own Rule, but would make himſelf the Rule of God, and give Laws to his Creator.*

1. *Man naturally diſowns the Rule God ſets him.* 'Tis all one to deny his Royalty and to deny his Being: When we diſown his Authority, we diſown his Godhead: 'Tis the Right of God to be the Soveraign of his Creatures; and it muſt be a very looſe and trivial aſſent that ſuch men have to Gods Superiority over them, (and conſequently to the Excellency of his Being, upon which that Authority is founded) who are ſcarce at eaſe in themſelves, but when they are invading his Rights, breaking his Bands, caſting away his Cords, and contradicting his Will.

Every man naturally is a Son of *Belial*, would be without a Yoke, and leap over Gods Incloſures; and in breaking out againſt his Soveraignty, we diſown his Being as God: For to be God and Soveraign are inſeparable: He could not be God, if he were

were not Supreme; nor could he be a Creator without being a Law-giver. To be God and yet inferior to another, is a contradiction. To make Rational Creatures without prescribing them a Law, is to make them without Holiness, Wisdom and Goodness.

1. *There is in Man naturally an unwillingness to have any acquaintance with the Rule God sets him*, Psal. 14. 2. *None that did understand and seek God. The refusing Instruction* and *casting his word behind the back* is a part of Atheism. * We are heavy in hearing the Instructions either of Law or Gospel, * and slow in the Apprehension of what we hear. The people that God had hedged in from the Wilderness of the World for his own Garden, were *foolish* and did *not know God*; were *sottish* and had no understanding of him. * The Law of God is accounted a *strange thing*; * a thing of a different Climate, and a far Country from the heart of man; wherewith the mind of man had no natural acquaintance, and had no desire to have any; or they regarded it as a sordid thing: What God accounts great and valuable, they account mean and despicable. Men may shew a Civility to a Stranger, but scarce contract an Intimacy: There can be no Amicable Agreement between the holy Will of God and the heart of a depraved Creature: One is holy, the other unholy; one is universally good, the other stark naught. The purity of the Divine Rule renders it nauseous to the impurity of a carnal heart. Water and Fire may as well friendly kiss each other and live together without quarrelling and hissing, as the holy Will of God and the unregenerate heart of a fallen Creature.

* Psal. 50. 17.
* Heb 5. 11, 12.
* Jer. 4. 22.
* Hos. 8. 12.

The nauseating a *Holy Rule* is an Evidence of Atheism in the heart, as the nauseating wholesome Food is of putrified Flegm in the Stomack. 'Tis found more or less in every Christian, in the Remainders, though not in a full Empire. As there is a Law in *his Mind* whereby he delights in the Law of God, so there is a Law in *his Members* whereby he wars against the Law of God, *Rom.* 7. 22, 23, 25. How predominant is this loathing of the Law of God, when corrupt Nature is in its full strength, without any principle to controul it? There is in the *Mind* of such a one a Darkness whereby it is ignorant of it, and in the *Will* a Depravedness whereby it is repugnant to it. If Man were naturally willing and able to have an intimate acquaintance with, and delight in the Law of God, it had not been such a signal favour for God to promise to *write the Law in the heart.* A Man may sooner engrave the Chronicle of a whole Nation, or all the Records of God in the Scripture upon the hardest Marble with his bare finger, than write one Syllable of the Law of God in a Spiritual manner upon his heart. For,

1. *Men are negligent in using the means for the knowledge of Gods Will.* All natural men are fools, who know not how to use the *price God puts into their hands*; * They put not a due estimate upon opportunities and means of Grace, and account that Law folly which is the Birth of an infinite and holy Wisdom. The knowledge of God which they may glean from Creatures, and is more pleasant to the natural gust of men, is not improved to the Glory of God, if we will believe the Indictment the *Apostle* brings against the *Gentiles.* * And most of those that have dived into the depths of Nature, have been more studious of the qualities of the Creatures, than of the excellency of the nature, or the discovery of the mind of God in them; who regard only the rising and motions of the Star, but follow not with the wise men, its conduct to the King of the *Jews.* How often do we see Men filled with an eager thirst for all other kind of Knowledge, that cannot acquiesce in a twilight discovery, but are inquisitive into the causes and reasons of effects, yet are contented with a weak and languishing knowledge of God and his Law, and are easily tired with the Proposals of them?

* Pro. 17. 16.
* Rom. 1. 21.

He now that nauseates the means whereby he may come to know and obey God, has no intention to make the Law of God his Rule: There is no Man that intends seriously an end, but he intends means in order to that end: As when a man intends the preservation or recovery of his health, he will intend means in order to those ends, otherwise he cannot be said to intend his health: So he that is not diligent in using means to know the mind of God, has no sound intention to make the Will and Law of God his Rule. Is not the inquiry after the Will of God made a work by the by, and fain to lacquy after other concerns of an inferior nature, if it hath any place at all in the Soul? which is a despising the Being of God: The Notion of the Soveraignty of God, bears the same date with the Notion of his Godhead; and

and by the ſame way that he reveals himſelf, he reveals his Authority over us; whether it be by Creatures without, or Conſcience within. All Authority over Rational Creatures conſiſts in commanding and directing; the duty of Rational Creatures in compliance with that Authority conſiſts in obeying: Where there is therefore a careleſs neglect of thoſe means which convey the knowledge of Gods Will and our Duty, there is an utter diſowning of God as our Soveraign and our Rule.

2. *When any part of the Mind and Will of God breaks in upon Men, they endeavour to ſhake it off*; As a Man would a Sergeant that comes to arreſt him; *they like not to retain God in their Knowledge*, Rom. 1. 28. *A natural Man receives not the things of the Spirit of God*; that is, into his Affection; he puſheth them back as men do troubleſome and importunate Beggers: They have no kindneſs to beſtow upon it: They thruſt with both ſhoulders againſt the Truth of God, when it preſſeth in upon them; and daſh as much contempt upon it as the *Phariſees* did upon the Doctrine our Saviour directed againſt their Covetouſneſs. As Men naturally delight to be without God in the world, ſo they delight to be without any off-ſpring of God in their thoughts. Since the Spiritual Palate of Man is depraved, Divine Truth is unſavoury and ungrateful to us, till our taſte and reliſh is reſtor'd by Grace: Hence men damp and quench the motions of the Spirit to Obedience and Compliance with the Dictates of God; ſtrip them of their Life and Vigor, and kill them in the Womb. How unable are our Memories to retain the ſubſtance of ſpiritual Truth; but like Sand in a Glaſs, put in at one part and runs out at the other? Have not many a ſecret wiſh, that the Scripture had never mentioned ſome truths, or that they were blotted out of the *Bible*, becauſe they face their Conſciences, and diſcourage thoſe boiling Luſts they would with eagerneſs and delight purſue? Me thinks that interruption *John* gives our *Saviour* when he was upon the reproof of their *Pride*, looks little better * than a deſign to divert him from a diſcourſe ſo much againſt the grain, by telling him a ſtory of their *prohibiting one to caſt out Devils*, becauſe he followed not them. How glad are men when they can raiſe a Battery againſt a Command of God, and raiſe ſome ſmart Objection whereby they may ſhelter themſelves from the ſtrictneſs of it?

* Mark 9. 33, 38.

3. *When men cannot ſhake off the Notices of the Will and Mind of God, they have no pleaſure in the conſideration of them.* Which could not poſſibly be, if there were a real and fixed deſign to own the Mind and Law of God as our Rule: Subjects or Servants that love to obey their Prince and Maſter, will delight to read and execute their Orders. The Devils underſtand the Law of God in their minds, but they loath the impreſſions of it upon their Wills: Thoſe miſerable Spirits are bound in Chains of Darkneſs, evil Habits in their Wills, that they have not a thought of obeying that Law they know. It was an unclean Beaſt under the Law, that did not chew the Cud: 'Tis a corrupt Heart, that doth not chew Truth by Meditation. A natural man is ſaid not to know God, or the things of God; he may know them notionally, but he knows them not affectionately. A ſenſual Soul can have no delight in a Spiritual Law. To be *ſenſual* and *not to have the Spirit* are inſeparable, *Jude* 19.

Natural Men may indeed meditate upon the Law and Truth of God, but without delight in it: if they take any pleaſure in it, 'tis only as 'tis knowledge, not as it is a *Rule*; for we delight in nothing that we deſire, but upon the ſame account that we deſire it. Natural Men deſire to know God and ſome part of his Will and Law, not out of a ſenſe of their practical excellency, but a natural thirſt after knowledge: And if they have a delight, 'tis in the Act of knowing, not in the Object known, not in the Duties that ſtream from that Knowledge; they deſign the furniſhing their Underſtandings, not the quickning their Affections; like idle Boys that ſtrike Fire, not to warm themſelves by the heat, but ſport themſelves with the Sparks; Whereas a gracious Soul accounts not only his *Meditation*, or the Operations of his Soul about God and his Will to be *ſweet*, but he hath a joy in the object of that Meditation. * Many have the knowledge of God, who have no delight in him or his Will. *Owls* have Eyes to perceive that there is a Sun, but by reaſon of the weakneſs of their ſight have no pleaſure to look upon a Beam of it: So neither can a man by Nature love, or delight in the Will of God, becauſe of his natural corruption: That Law that riſeth up in men for Conviction and Inſtruction,

* Pſal. 104. 34.

they

they keep down under the power of Corruption; making their Souls not the Sanctuary, but Prison of Truth, *Rom.* 1. 18. They will keep it down in their hearts, if they cannot keep it out of their heads, and will not endeavour to know and taste the Spirit of it.

4. *There is further, a rising and swelling of the Heart against the Will of God.* (1.) *Internal.* Gods Law cast against a hard Heart, is like a ball thrown against a stone Wall, by reason of the resistance rebounding the further from it: The meeting of a Divine Truth and the Heart of Man, is like the meeting of two Tides, the weaker swells and foams: We have a natural Antipathy against a Divine Rule; and therefore when it is clapt close to our Consciences, there is a snuffing at it, high reasonings against it, corruption breaks out more strongly: As water poured on Lime sets it on fire by an *Antiperistasis*, and the more Water is cast upon it, the more furiously it burns: Or as the Sun Beams shining upon a Dung-hill makes the steams the thicker and the stench the noysomer, neither being the positive cause of the smoke in the Lime, or the stench in the Dung-hill; but by accident the causes of the eruption, *Rom.* 7. 8. *But Sin taking occasion by the Commandment, wrought in me all manner of Concupiscence, for without the Law Sin was dead.* Sin was in a languishing posture, as if it were dead; like a lazy Garrison in a City, till upon an Alarm from the Adversary it takes Arms and revives its courage; all the sin in the heart gathers together its force, to maintain its standing; like the vapours of the Night, which unite themselves more closely to resist the Beams of the rising Sun. Deep Conviction often provokes fierce Opposition; sometimes disputes against a Divine Rule end in Blasphemies, *Acts* 13. 45. *Contradicting and Blaspheming* are coupled together. Men naturally desire things that are forbidden, and reject things commanded, from the corruption of Nature, which affects an unbounded Liberty, and is impatient of returning under that Yoke it hath shaken off; and therefore rageth against the bars of the Law, as the Waves roar against the restraint of a bank: When the understanding is dark and the Mind Ignorant, sin lies as dead; * [a man scarce knows he hath such Motions of Concupiscence in him, he finds not the least breath of wind, but a full calm in his Soul; but when he is awakened by the Law, then the vitiousness of nature being sensible of an Invasion of its Empire, arms it self against the Divine Law, and the more the Command is urged, the more vigorously it bends its strength, and more insolently lifts up it self against it] he perceives more and more Atheistical Lusts than before; *all manner of Concupiscence*, more leprous and contagious than before: When there are any motions to turn to God, a reluctancy is presently perceived; Atheistical thoughts bluster in the mind like the wind, they know not whence they come, nor whither they go: So unapt is the heart to any acknowledgment of God as his Ruler, and any re-union with him. Hence men are said to *resist the Holy Ghost*, Acts. 7. 51. to fall against it, as the word signifies, as a stone or any ponderous body falls against that which lies in its way: They would dash to pieces or grind to powder that very motion which is made for their instruction, and the Spirit too which makes it, and that not from a fit of passion, but an habitual repugnance. *Ye always resist*, &c. (2.) *External*; 'tis a fruit of Atheism, in the *fourth verse* of this *Psalm*; *Who eat up my people as they eat bread.* How do the revelations of the Mind of God meet with opposition? And the Carnal World like dogs bark against the shining of the Moon? So much men hate the Light, that they spurn at the Lanthorns that bear it: And because they cannot endure the Treasure, often fling the earthen vessels against the ground wherein it is held. If the entrance of Truth render the Market worse for *Diana*'s Shrines, the whole City will be in an *uproar*. * When *Socrates* upon natural Principles confuted the Heathen Idolatry, and asserted the unity of God, the whole cry of *Athens*, a learned University, is against him; and because he opposed the publick received Religion, though with an undoubted Truth, he must end his Life by Violence: How hath every Corner of the World steam'd with the blood of those, that would maintain the Authority of God in the World! The Devils Children will follow the steps of their Father, and endeavour to bruise the Heel of Divine Truth, that would endeavour to break the Head of corrupt Lust.

* Thef. Salmur. *De Spiritu Servitutis Thef.* 15.

* Act. 19. 24, 28, 29.

5. *Men often seem desirous to be acquainted with the Will of God, not out of any respect to his Will and to make it their Rule, but upon some other Consideration.* Truth is

ſcarce received as truth. There is more of Hypocriſie than ſincerity in the pale of the Church, and attendance on the Mind of God. The outward dowry of a religious Profeſſion makes it often more deſirable than the Beauty. *Judas* was a follower of Chriſt for the Bag, not out of any affection to the Divine Revelation: Men ſometime pretend a deſire to be acquainted with the Will of God, to ſatisfie their own paſſions, rather than to conform to Gods Will: The Religion of ſuch is not the judgment of the Man, but the paſſion of the Brute. Many entertain a Doctrine for the perſons ſake, rather than a perſon for the Doctrine's ſake; and believe a thing becauſe it comes from a Man they eſteem, as if his lips were more Canonical than Scripture.

The *Apoſtle* implies in the Commendation he gives the *Theſſalonians*, * that ſome receive the Word for human intereſt, not *as it is in truth the Word* and *Will of God*, to command and govern their Conſciences by its Soveraign Authority: Or elſe they have *the Truth of God* (as St. *James* ſpeaks of the Faith of Chriſt) *with reſpect of perſons*: * and receive it not for the ſake of the Fountain, but of the Channel: So that many times the ſame Truth delivered by another, is diſregarded, which when dropping from the fancy and mouth of a Mans own Idol, is cryed up as an Oracle. This is to make not God, but Man the *Rule*: For though we entertain that which materially is the Truth of God, yet not formally as his Truth, but as conveyed by one we affect: And that we receive a Truth and not an Error, we ow the obligation to the honeſty of the Inſtrument, and not to the ſtrength and clearneſs of our own Judgment. Wrong conſiderations may give admittance to an unclean as well as a clean beaſt into the Ark of the Soul: That which is contrary to the Mind of God, may be entertained, as well as that which is agreeable. 'Tis all one to ſuch that have no reſpect to God, what they have; As it is all one to a Spunge to ſuck up the fouleſt water or the ſweeteſt wine, when either is applyed to it.

* 1 Theſ. 2. 13.

* Jam. 2. 2.

6. *Many that entertain the Notions of the Will and Mind of God, admit them with unſetled and wavering Affections.* There is a great Levity in the heart of Man. The *Jews* that one day applaud our Saviour with *Hoſannahs* as their King, vote his Crucifixion the next, and uſe him as a Murderer. VVe begin in the Spirit and end in the Fleſh. Our hearts like Lute-ſtrings are changed with every change of weather, with every appearance of a Temptation; ſcarce one motion of God in a thouſand prevails with us for a ſetled abode. 'Tis a hard task to make a ſignature of thoſe Truths upon our affections, which will with eaſe paſs currant with our underſtandings; Our affections will as ſoon looſe them, as our underſtandings embrace them. The *heart* of Man is *unſtable as water.* * Some were willing to rejoyce in *Johns Light*, which reflected a luſtre on their minds; but not in his *Heat*, which would have conveyed a warmth to their hearts: and the light was pleaſing to them but for a ſeaſon, * while their corruptions lay as if they were dead, not when they were awakened. Truth may be admitted one day, and the next day rejected. As *Auſtin* ſaith of a wicked Man, he *loves* the Truth ſhining, but he *hates* the Truth reproving. This is not to make God, but our own humor our rule and meaſure.

* Gen. 49. 4.
* Jam. 1. 8.

* Joh. 5. 35.

7. *Many deſire an acquaintance with the Law and Truth of God, with a deſign to improve ſome luſt by it.* To turn the word of God to be a Pander to the Breach of his Law. This is ſo far from making Gods VVill our Rule, that we make our own vile affections the Rule of his Law. How many forced Interpretations of Scripture have been coyned to give content to the luſts of men; and the Divine Rule forced to bend and be ſquared to mens looſe and carnal apprehenſions! 'Tis a part of the inſtability or falſeneſs of the heart to *wreſt the Scriptures to their own deſtruction*; * which they could not do, if they did not firſt wring them to countenance ſome deteſtable Error or filthy Crime. In *Paradiſe* the firſt Interpretation made of the firſt Law of God, was point blank againſt the mind of the Law-giver, and venemous to the whole Race of Mankind. *Paul* himſelf feared that ſome might put his Doctrine of Grace to ſo ill a uſe, as to be an Altar and Sanctuary to ſhelter their preſumption, *Rom.* 6. 1, 15. *ſhall we then continue in ſin, that Grace may abound?* Poyſonous Conſequences are often drawn from the ſweeteſt Truths: As when Gods *Patience* is made a *Topick*, whence to argue againſt his *Providence*, * or an encouragement to commit Evil more greedily; as though becauſe he had not preſently a revenging hand, he had not an all ſeeing Eye: Or when the Doctrine of Juſtification

* 2 Pet. 3. 16.

* Pſal 94. 1.

tion by Faith, is made uſe of to depreſs a holy life; or Gods readineſs to receive returning ſinners, an encouragement to defer repentance till a death bed. A Lyar will hunt for ſhelter in the reward God gave the Midwives that lyed to *Pharaoh* for the preſervation of the Males of *Iſrael*, and *Rahabs* ſaving the Spies by falſe intelligence. God knows how to diſtinguiſh between grace and corruption, that may lie cloſe together; or between ſomething of moral goodneſs and moral evil, which may be mixed: We find their fidelity rewarded, which was a moral good; but not their lye approved, which was a moral evil. Nor will Chriſts converſing with ſinners, be a plea for any to thruſt themſelves into evil Company. Chriſt converſed with ſinners, as a Phyſitian with diſeaſed perſons, to cure them, not approve them; others with profligate perſons to receive infection from them, not to communicate holineſs to them. *Satans* Children have ſtudied their Fathers art, who wanted not perverted *Scripture* to ſecond his Temptations againſt our Saviour. * How often do carnal hearts turn Divine Revelation to carnal ends, as the Sea freſh water into ſalt? As men ſubject the precepts of God to carnal intereſts, ſo they ſubject the truths of God to carnal fancies. When men will allegorize the Word, and make a humorous and crazy fancy the Interpreter of Divine Oracles, and not the Spirit ſpeaking in the word; This is to enthrone our own imaginations as the rule of Gods Law, and depoſe his Law from being the rule of our reaſon: This is to rifle truth of its true mind and intent. 'Tis more to rob a man of his reaſon, the eſſential conſtitutive part of man, than of his eſtate. This is to refuſe an intimate acquaintance with his Will. We ſhall never tell what is the matter of a precept, or the matter of a promiſe, if we impoſe a ſenſe upon it contrary to the plain meaning of it: Thereby we ſhall make the Law of God to have a diſtinct ſenſe according to the variety of mens imaginations, and ſo make every mans fancy a Law to himſelf.

* Mat. 4. 4, 6.

Now that this unwillingneſs to have a Spiritual acquaintance with Divine Truth, is a diſowning God as our rule, and a ſetting up *ſelf* in his ſtead, is evident; becauſe this unwillingneſs reſpects Truth,

1. *As it is moſt Spiritual and Holy.* A fleſhly mind is moſt contrary to a Spiritual Law, and particularly as it is a ſearching and diſcovering Law, that would dethrone all other rules in the Soul. As men love to be without a Holy God in the world, ſo they love to be without a holy Law, the tranſcript and image of Gods Holineſs in their hearts; and without holy men, the lights kindled by the Father of lights. As the holineſs of God, ſo the holineſs of the Law moſt offends a carnal heart. *Iſa.* 30. 11. *Cauſe the holy one of Iſrael to ceaſe from before us, prophecy to us right things:* They could not endure God as a holy one. Herein God places their Rebellion, rejecting him as their rule, *ver.* 9. *Rebellious Children that will not hear the Law of the Lord.* The more pure and precious any diſcovery of God is, the more it is diſreliſht by the world: As Spiritual ſins are ſweeteſt to a carnal heart, ſo Spiritual truths are moſt diſtaſtful. The more of the brightneſs of the Sun any beam conveys, the more offenſive it is to a diſtempered eye.

2. *As it doth moſt relate to, or lead to God.* The Devil directs his fierceſt batteries againſt thoſe Doctrines in the VVord, and thoſes Graces in the heart, which moſt exalt God, debaſe man, and bring men to the loweſt ſubjection to their Creator; Such is the Doctrine and grace of juſtifying faith. That men hate not knowledge as knowledge, but as it directs them to chooſe the fear of the Lord, was the determination of the Holy Ghoſt long ago. Prov. 1. 29. *for that they hated knowledge and did not chooſe the fear of the Lord.* Whatſoever reſpects God, clears up guilt, witneſſes mans revolt to him, rouzeth up Conſcience, and moves to a return to God, a man naturally runs from, as *Adam* did from God, and ſeeks a ſhelter in ſome weak buſhes of error, rather than appear before it. Not that men are unwilling to inquire into and contemplate ſome Divine Truths, which lie furtheſt from the heart, and concern not themſelves immediatly with the rectifying the Soul: They may view them with ſuch a pleaſure as ſome might take in beholding the Miracles of our Saviour, who could not endure his ſearching Doctrine. The light of ſpeculation may be pleaſant, but the light of conviction is grievous; that which galls their Conſciences, and would affect them with a ſenſe of their duty to God.

Is it not eaſy to perceive, that when a men begins to be ſerious in the concerns of the Honour of God and the duty of his Soul, he feels a reluctancy within him, even

againſt the pleas of Conſcience; which evidenceth that ſome unworthy principle has got footing in the hearts of Men which fights againſt the declarations of God without, and the impreſſions of the Law of God within, at the ſame time when a mans own Conſcience takes part with it, which is the ſubſtance of the Apoſtles diſcourſe, *Rom.* 7. 15, 16, *&c.*

Cloſe diſcourſes of the Honour of God, and our duty to him are irkſome, when men are upon a merry pin: They are like a damp in a Mine that takes away their breath; they ſhuffle them out as ſoon as they can, and are as unwilling to retain the ſpeech of them in their mouths, as the knowledge of them in their hearts. Gracious ſpecches, inſtead of bettering many men, diſtemper them, as ſometimes ſweet perfumes affect a weak head with aches.

3. *As 'tis moſt contrary to ſelf.* Men are unwilling to acquaint themſelves with any truth that leads to God, becauſe it leads from ſelf. Every part of the Will of God, is more or leſs diſpleaſing, as it ſounds harſh againſt ſome carnal intereſt men would ſet above God, or as a Mate with him. Man cannot deſire any intimacy with that Law which he regards as a Bird of prey, to pick out his right eye, or gnaw off his right hand, his luſt dearer than himſelf. The reaſon we have ſuch hard thoughts of Gods Will, is becauſe we have ſuch high thoughts of our ſelves. 'Tis a hard matter to Believe or Will that, which hath no affinity with ſome principle in the underſtanding, and no intereſt in our Will and Paſſions: Our unwillingneſs to be acquainted with the Will of God ariſeth from the diſproportion between that and our corrupt hearts, *We are alienated from the life of God* in our *minds*, Eph. 4. 18, 19. As we live not like God, ſo we neither think, or Will as God: There is an antipathy in the heart of man againſt that Doctrine, which teaches us to deny our ſelves and be under the rule of another: But whatſoever favours the ambition, luſts, and profits of men, is eaſily entertainable. Many are fond of thoſe Sciences, which may enrich their underſtandings, and grate not upon their ſenſual delights. Many have an admirable dexterity in finding out *Philoſophical* reaſons, *Mathematical* demonſtrations, or raiſing obſervations upon the Records of *Hiſtory*, and ſpend much time and many ſerious and affectionate thoughts in the ſtudy of them; In thoſe they have not immediatly to do with God, their beloved pleaſures are not impaired: 'Tis a ſatisfaction to *ſelf* without the exerciſe of any hoſtility againſt it. But had thoſe Sciences been againſt *ſelf*, as much as the Law and Will of God, they had long ſince been rooted out of the World. VVhy did the *Young-man* turn his back upon the Law of Chriſt? Becauſe of his worldly *ſelf:* VVhy did the *Phariſees* mock at the Doctrine of our Saviour and not at their own traditions? Becauſe of Covetous *ſelf.* VVhy did the *Jews* ſlight the perſon of our Saviour and put him to death, after the reading ſo many Credentials of his being ſent from Heaven? becauſe of ambitious *ſelf*, that the *Romans* might not come and take away their Kingdom. If the Law of God were fitted to the humours of *ſelf*, it would be readily and cordially obſerved by all men: *Self* is the meaſure of a world of ſeeming Religious actions; while God ſeems to be the object, and his Law the motive, *ſelf* is the rule and end; *Zach.* 7. 5. *Did you faſt unto me*, &c.

2. As men diſcover their diſowning the VVill of God as a rule by unwillingneſs to be acquainted with it, ſo they diſcover it *by the contempt of it, after they cannot avoid the Notions and ſome impreſſions of it.* The rule of God is burthenſome to a ſinner, he flies from it as from a frightful bug-bear, and unpleaſant Yoke: Sin againſt the knowledge of the Law is therefore called, *a going back from the Commandment of Gods lips*, Job 23. 12. *A caſting Gods word behind them*, * as a contemptible thing, fitter to be trodden in the dirt, than lodged in the heart: Nay it is a caſting it off as an abominable thing, for ſo the word זנח ſignifies, Hoſ. 8. 3. *Iſrael hath caſt off the thing that is good*; an utter refuſal of God, Jer. 44. 16. *As for the word which thou haſt ſpoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken.* In the ſlight of his precepts his eſſential perfections are ſlighted. In diſowning his Will as a *Rule*, we diſown all thoſe attributes which flow from his VVill, as Goodneſs, Righteouſneſs and Truth. As an Act of the Divine underſtanding is ſuppoſed to precede the Act of the Divine VVill, ſo we ſlight the infinite reaſon of God. Every Law, tho it proceeds from the VVill of the Law-giver, and doth formally conſiſt in an Act of the VVill, yet it doth preſuppoſe an act of the underſtanding. If *the Commandment be holy, juſt and good*,

* Pſal. 50. 17.

good, as it is Rom. 7. 12. If it be the Image of Gods holineſs, a tranſcript of his righteouſneſs, and the efflux of his goodneſs; then in every breach of it durt is caſt upon thoſe Attributes which ſhine in it, and a ſlight of all the regards he hath to his own Honour, and all the proviſions he makes for his Creature. This *Atheiſm* or contempt of God, is more taken notice of by God than the matter of the ſin it ſelf: As a reſpect to God in a weak and imperfect obedience is more than the matter of the obedience it ſelf, becauſe it is an acknowledgment of God: So a contempt of God in an act of diſobedience, is more than the matter of diſobedience. The Creature ſtands in ſuch an Act not only in a poſture of diſtance from God, but defiance of him: It was not the bare act of Murder and Adultery which *Nathan* charged upon *David*, but the Atheiſtical principle which Spirited thoſe evil acts. The *deſpiſing the Commandment of the Lord*, was the venom of them. * Tis poſſible to break a Law without contempt; But when Men pretend to believe there is a God, and that this is the Law of God, it ſhews a contempt of his Majeſty: Men naturally account Gods Laws too ſtrict, his Yoak too heavy, and his limits too ſtrait: And he that liveth in a contempt of this Law, curſeth God in his life: How can they believe there is a God, who deſpiſe him as a Ruler? How can they believe him to be a guide, that diſdain to follow him? To think we firmly believe a God without living conformable to his Law, is an idle and vain imagination. The true and ſenſible Motion of a God cannot ſubſiſt with diſorder and an affected unrighteouſneſs.

* 2 Sam. 12. 9, 10. * Claud.

This contempt is ſeen,

1. *In any preſumptuous breach of any part of his Law.* Such ſins are frequently called in Scripture *Rebellions*, which are a denial of the Allegiance we owe to him. By a wilful refuſal of his right in one part we root up the foundation of that rule he doth juſtly challenge over us: His Right is as extenſive to command us in one thing, as in another: And if it be diſowned in one thing, 'tis vertually diſowned in all, and the whole Statute Book of God is contemned. Jam. 2. 10, 11. *Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point is guilty of all.* A willing breaking one part, tho there be a willing obſervance of all the other points of it, is a breach of the whole, becauſe the Authority of God, which gives ſanction to the whole is ſlighted: The obedience to the reſt is diſſembled: For the love, which is the root of all obedience, is wanting; For *Love is the fulfilling the whole Law:* * The reſt are obeyed becauſe they croſs not carnal deſire ſo much as the other, and ſo 'tis an obſervance of himſelf, not of God. Beſides, the Authority of God, which is not prevalent to reſtrain us from the breach of one point, would be of as little force with us to reſtrain us from the breach of all the reſt, did the allurements of the fleſh give us as ſtrong a diverſion from the one, as from the other: And tho the Command that is tranſgreſt be the leaſt in the whole Law, yet the Authority which enjoyns it is the ſame with that which enacts the greateſt. And it is not ſo much the matter of the command, as the Authority commanding which lays the obligation.

* Rom. 13. 10.

2. *In the natural averſeneſs to the declarations of Gods will and mind, which way ſo ever they tend.* Since Man affected to be as God, he deſires to be boundleſs; he would not have Fetters, tho they be golden ones, and conduce to his happineſs; tho the Law of God be a ſtrength to them, yet they will not, Iſa. 30. 15. *In returning ſhall be your ſtrength and you would not.* They would not have a bridle to reſtrain them from running into the pit, nor be hedged in by the Law, tho for their ſecurity: As if they thought it too ſlaviſh and low Spirited a thing to be guided by the Will of another: Hence man is compared to a *Wild-Aſs*, that loves to *ſnuff up the wind in the Wilderneſs at her pleaſure*, rather than come under the guidance of God; * From whatſoever quarter of the Heavens you purſue her ſhe will run to the other.

* Jer. 2. 24.

The Iſraelites *could not endure what was Commanded*, * tho in regard of the Moral part, agreeable to what they found written in their own Nature; And to the obſervance whereof, they had the higheſt obligations of any people under Heaven, ſince God had by many prodigies delivered them from a cruel ſlavery: The memory of which preface'd the *Decalogue*; Exod. 20. 2. *I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the Land of* Egypt, *out of the Houſe of bondage*: They could not think of the rule of their duty, but they muſt reflect upon the grand incentive of it in their Redemption from *Ægyptian* thraldom: Yet this people were croſs to God,

* Heb. 12. 20.

which

which way ſoever he moved: When they were in the brick-kilns, they cryed for deliverance; when they had heavenly Manna, they longed for their *Onions* and *Garlick*. In *Num.* 14. 3. They repent of their deliverance from *Egypt*, and talk of *returning again* to ſeek the Remedy of their Evils in the hands of their cruelleſt Enemies; and would rather put themſelves into the Irons, whence God had delivered them, than believe one word of the promiſe of God for giving them a fruitful Land: But when *Moſes* tells them Gods order, that they ſhould turn back by the way of the *Red Sea*, * and that God had confirmed it by an Oath, that they ſhould not ſee the Land of *Canaan* *: They then run croſs to this Command of God, and inſtead of marching towards the Red-Sea, which they had wiſhed for before, they will go up to *Canaan*, as in ſpight of God and his threatning. *We will go to the Place which the Lord hath promiſed*, ver. 40. which *Moſes* calls a *Tranſgreſſing the Commandment of the Lord*, ver. 41. They would preſume to go up, notwithſtanding *Moſes* his Prohibition, and are ſmitten by the *Amalekites*: When God gives them a Precept, with a Promiſe to go up to *Canaan*, they long for *Egypt*; when God commands them to return to the Red-Sea, which was nearer to the place they longed for; they will ſhift ſides and go up to *Canaan*. * And when they found they were to traverſe the Solitudes of the Deſart, they took Pett againſt God, and inſtead of thanking him for the late Victory againſt the *Canaanites*, they reproach him for his Conduct from *Egypt*, and the *Manna* wherewith he nouriſhed them in the Wilderneſs: They would not go to *Canaan*, the way God had choſen, nor preſerve themſelves by the means God had ordained: They would not be at Gods diſpoſal, but complain of the badneſs of the way, and the lightneſs of *Manna*, empty of any neceſſary juyce to ſuſtain their Nature. They murmuringly ſollicite the Will and Power of God to change all that order which he had reſolved in his Council, and take another, conformable to their vain fooliſh deſires: And they ſignified thereby that they would invade his Conduct, and that he ſhould act according to their fancy; which the *Pſalmiſt* calls a *tempting of God, and limiting the Holy One of* Iſrael, Pſal. 78. 41.

* ver. 25.
* ver. 28.
* Num 21.4,5. & Daill. *Serm.* 1 Cor. 10. *Ser.* 9. p. 234. 235. 40.

To what point ſoever the Declarations of God ſtand, the Will of Man turns the quite contrary way. Is not the carriage of this Nation, the beſt then in the world? A diſcovery of the depth of our natural corruption, how croſs Man is to God: And that charge God brings againſt them, may be brought againſt all men by Nature, that they *deſpiſe his Judgments*, and have a rooted Abhorrency of his *Statutes* in their Soul, *Levit.* 26. 43. No ſooner had they recovered from one Rebellion, but they revolted to another: So difficult a thing it is for mans nature to be rendred capable of conforming to the Will of God: The carriage of his People is but a Copy of the Nature of Mankind, and is *written for our admonition*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 11. From this, temper men are ſaid to make *void the Law of God* *: To make it oft no obligation an antiquated and moth-eaten Record. And the *Phariſees* by ſetting up their Traditions againſt the Will of God, are ſaid to make his Law of *none effect*, to ſtrip it of all its *Authority*, as the word ſignifies, *Mat.* 15. 6. ἠκυρώσατε.

* Pſal. 119. 126.

3. *We have the greateſt ſlight of that Will of God which is moſt for his Honour and his greateſt Pleaſure.* 'Tis the Nature of Man, ever ſince *Adam*, to do ſo, *Hoſ.* 6. 6, 7. *God deſired Mercy and not Sacrifice, the Knowledge of himſelf more than burnt Offering; but they like men, as* Adam, *have tranſgreſſed the Covenant*, invade Gods Rights, and not let him be Lord of one Tree.

We are more curious Obſervers of the Fringes of the Law, than of the greater concerns of it. The *Jews* were diligent in Sacrifices and Offerings, which God did not urge upon them as Principals, but as Types of other things; but negligent of the Faith which was to be eſtabliſhed by him: Holineſs, Mercy, Pity, which concerned the Honour of God, as Governour of the World, and were imitations of the Holineſs and goodneſs of God, they were *Strangers to*. This is Gods Complaint, *Iſa.* 1. 11, 12. and 16, 17.

We ſhall find our hearts moſt averſe to the obſervation of thoſe Laws which are Eternal and Eſſential to Righteouſneſs; ſuch that he could not but command, as he is a Righteous Governour; in the obſervation of which, we come neareſt to him and expreſs his Image more clearly: As thoſe Laws for an inward and Spiritual Worſhip, a ſupreme Affection to him. God in regard of his Righteouſneſs and Holineſs of his Nature, and the Excellency of his Being, could not command the contra-

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ry to these: But this part of his Will our hearts most swell against, our corruption doth most snarle at; whereas those Laws which are only positive and have no intrinsick Righteousness in them, but depend purely upon the Will of the Law-giver, and may be changed at his pleasure, (which the other, that have an intrinsick Righteousness in them, cannot) we better comply with, than that part of his Will that doth express more the *Righteousness* of his Nature; * such as the *Ceremonial* part of Worship, and the Ceremonial Law among the Jews: We are more willing to observe Order in some outward attendances and glavering devotions, than discard secret affections to evil, crucify inward lusts and delightful thoughts: A *hanging down the head like a bulrush* is not difficult, but the *breaking the heart* like a Potters vessel to shreds and dust, (a sacrifice God delights in, whereby the excellency of God and the vileness of the Creature is owned) goes against the grain: To cut off an outward branch is not so hard, as to hack at the root. What God most loaths, as most contrary to his Will, we most love: No sin did God so severely hate, and no sin were the *Jews* more enclined unto, than that of *Idolatry*. The Heathen had not *changed their God*, as the *Jews* had *changed their glory*, Jer. 2. 11. And all men are naturally tainted with this sin, which is so contrary to the holy and excellent nature of God: By how much the more defect there is of purity in our respects to God, by so much the more respect there is to some Idol within or without us, to humor, custom and interest, *&c.*

* Psal. 50. 8. 17, 19.

Never did any Law of God meet with so much opposition as Christianity, which was the design of God from the first promise to the exhibiting the Redeemer, and from thence to the end of the World: All people drew Swords at first against it: The *Romans* prepared Yokes for their Neighbors, but provided Temples for the Idols, those people Worshipped. But Christianity, the choicest design and most delightful part of the Will of God, never met with a kind entertainment at first in any place: *Rome*, that entertained all others, persecuted this with Fire and Sword, tho sealed by greater Testimonies from Heaven, than their own Records could report in favour of their Idols.

4. *In running the greatest hazards, and exposing our selves to more trouble to cross the Will of God, than is necessary to the observance of it.* 'Tis a vain charge men bring against the Divine precepts, that they are rigorous, severe, difficult: When, besides the contradiction to our Saviour, who tells us his *Yoke is easy*, and his *Burthen light*, they thwart their own calm reason and Judgment. Is there not more difficulty to be Vicious, Covetous, Violent, Cruel, than to be Vertuous, Charitable, Kind? Doth the Will of God enjoyn that, that is not conformable to right reason, and secretly delightful in the exercise and issue? And on the Contrary what doth Satan and the world engage us in, that is not full of molestation and hazard? Is it a sweet and comely thing to combat continually against our own Consciences, and resist our own light, and commence a perpetual quarrel against our selves, as we ordinarily do when we sin? They in the *Prophet*, Mich. 6. 6, 7, 8. would be at the expence of *thousands of Rams, and ten thousand Rivers of Oyl*, if they could compass them; yea, would strip themselves of their Natural affection to their first-born to expiate the *sin of their Soul*, rather then to *do Justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God*; things more conducible to the Honour of God, the welfare of the world, the security of their Souls, and of a more easie practice than the offerings they wished for.

Do not men then disown God when they will walk in ways hedged with thorns, wherein they meet with the Arrows of Conscience at every turn in their sides, and slide down to an everlasting punishment, sink under an intolerable slavery to contradict the Will of God? When they will prefer a sensual satisfaction, with a combustion in their Consciences, violation of their reasons, gnawing cares and weary travels, before the Honour of God, the dignity of their Natures, the happiness of peace and health, which might be preserved at a cheaper rate, than they are at to destroy them?

5. *In the unwillingness and awkardness of the heart, when it is to pay God a service.* Men *do evil with both hands earnestly*, * but do good with one hand faintly; no life in the heart, nor any diligence in the hand. What slight and loose thoughts of God doth this unwillingness imply? 'Tis a wrong to his providence, as tho we were not under his Government, and had no need of his assistance. A wrong to his excel-

* Mich. 7. 3.

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lency, as tho there were no aimableneſs in him to make his ſervice deſirable. An injury to his goodneſs and power, as if he were not able or willing to reward the Creatures obedience, or careleſs, not to take notice of it. 'Tis a ſign we receive little ſatisfaction in him, and that there is a great unſutableneſs between him and us.

1. *There is a kind of conſtraint in the firſt engagement.* We are rather preſt to it than enter our ſelves Volunteers. What we call ſervice to God, is done naturally, much againſt our Wills; tis not a delightful food, but a bitter potion; we are rather haled, than run to it. There is a contradiction of ſin within us againſt our ſervice, as there was a contradiction of ſinners without our Saviour againſt his doing the VVill of God. Our hearts are unweildy to any Spiritual ſervice of God; we are fain to uſe a violence with them ſometimes. *Hezekiah*, it is ſaid, *walked before the Lord with a perfect heart.* 2 Kings 20. 9. he walked, he made himſelf to walk: Man naturally cares not for a walk with God: If he hath any Communion with him, 'tis with ſuch a dulneſs and heavineſs of Spirit, as if he wiſhed himſelf out of his Company. Mans nature, being contrary to holineſs, hath an averſion to any act of homage to God; becauſe Holineſs muſt at leaſt be pretended: In every duty wherein we have a Communion with God, Holineſs is requiſite: Now as men are againſt the truth of Holineſs, becauſe it is unſutable to them, ſo they are not friends to thoſe duties which require it, and for ſome ſpace divert them from the thoughts of their beloved luſts. The word of the Lord is a Yoke, Prayer a drudgery, Obedience a ſtrange Element. We are like fiſh, that *drink up iniquity like water*, * and come not to the bank without the force of an Angle: No more willing to do ſervice for God, than a fiſh is of it ſelf to do ſervice for Man. 'Tis a conſtrained act to ſatisfie Conſcience, and ſuch are ſervile, not Son-like performances, and ſpring from bondage more than affection: If Conſcience, like a task Maſter, did not ſcourge them to duty, they would never perform it.

* Job 15. 16.

Let us appeal to our ſelves, whether we are not more unwilling to ſecret, Cloſet, hearty duty to God, than to joyn with others in ſome external ſervice; as if thoſe inward ſervices, were a going to the rack, and rather our pennance than priviledg. How much ſervice hath God in the world from the ſame principle that Vagrants perform their task in Bridewel? How glad are many of evaſions to back them in the neglect of the Commands of God, of Corrupt reaſonings from the fleſh to waylay an Act of obedience, and a multitude of excuſes to blunt the edge of the precept? The very ſervice of God ſhall be a pretence to deprive him of the obedience due to him. *Saul* will not be ruled by Gods VVill in the deſtroying the Cattle of the *Amalekites*, but by his own; and will impoſe upon the VVill and VViſdom of God, Judging God miſtaken in his Command, and that the Cattle God thought fitteſt to be *meat to the fouls*, were fitter to be *Sacrifices* on the Altar. *

* 1 Sam. 15. 3, 9, 15, 21.

If we do perform any part of his VVill, is it not for our own ends to have ſome deliverance from trouble? Iſa. 26. 16. *In trouble have they viſited thee, they poured out a Prayer, when thy Chaſtening was upon them.* In affliction he ſhall find them kneeling in Homage and Devotion. In proſperity, he ſhall feel them kicking with contempt; they can *pour* out a Prayer in diſtreſs, and ſcarce *drop* one when they are delivered.

2. *There is a ſlightneſs in our ſervice of God.* VVe are loth to come into his preſence, and when we do come, we are loth to continue with him. VVe pay not an Homage to him heartily, as to our Lord and Governour; we regard him not as our Maſter, whoſe work we ought to do, and whoſe Honour we ought to aim at.

1. *In regard of the matter of ſervice.* VVhen the *torn*, the *lame*, and the *ſick* is offered to God; * ſo thin and lean a Sacrifice, that you might have thrown it to the ground with a puff, ſo ſome underſtand the meaning of (*you have ſnuffi at it.*) Men have naturally ſuch ſlight thoughts of the Majeſty and Law of God, that they think any ſervice is good enough for him, and conformable to his Law. The dulleſt and deadeſt times we think fitteſt to pay God a ſervice in; when ſleep is ready to cloſe our eyes and we are unfit to ſerve our ſelves, we think it a fit time to open our hearts to God. How few *Morning Sacrifices* hath God from many perſons and Families? Men leap out of their beds to their carnal pleaſures or worldly employments, without any thought of their Creator and Preſerver, or any reflection upon his VVill as the rule of our dayly obedience. And as many reſerve the dregs of their

* Mal. 1. 13, 14.

their Lives, their Old-age, to offer up their Souls to God: So they reſerve the Dreggs of the Day, their ſleeping time for the offering up their ſervice to him: How many grudge to ſpend their beſt time in the ſerving the Will of God, and reſerve for him the ſickly and rheumatick part of their Lives; the remainder of that which the Devil and their own Luſts have fed upon?

VVould not any Prince or Governour judge a Preſent half eaten up by wild-beaſts, or that which died in a Ditch, a contempt of his Royalty? a corrupt thing is too baſe and vile for ſo great a King as God is, whoſe Name is *dreadful*. * VVhen by Age Men are weary of their own Bodies, they would preſent them to God; yet grudgingly, as if a tired body were too good for him, ſnuffing at the Command for Service. God calls for our beſt, and we give him the worſt. * Mal. 1. 24.

2. *In reſpect of Frame.* VVe think any frame will ſerve Gods turn, which ſpeaks our ſlight of God as a *Ruler*. Man naturally performs duty with an unholy heart, whereby it becomes an abomination to God, Pro. 28. 9. *He that turns away his Ear from hearing the Law, even his prayers ſhall be an abomination to God.* The Services which he commands, he hates for their evil frames or corrupt ends, Amos, 5. 21. *I hate, I deſpiſe your Feaſt-days, I will not ſmell in your Solemn Aſſemblies:* God requires gracious ſervices, and we give him corrupt ones: VVe do not rouze up our hearts, as *David* called upon his *Lute* and *Harp to awake*, Pſal. 57. 8. Our hearts are not given to him, we put him off with bodily exerciſe: The heart is but Ice to what it doth not affect, [1.] *There is not that natural vigor in the obſervance of God, which we have in worldly buſineſs*: VVhen we ſee a livelineſs in men in other things, change the Scene into a motion towards God, how ſuddenly doth their vigor ſhrink and their hearts freeze into ſluggiſhneſs? Many times we ſerve God as languiſhingly as if we were afraid he ſhould accept us, and pray as coldly as if we were unwilling he ſhould hear us, and take away that luſt by which we are Governed, and which Conſcience forces us to pray againſt; as if we were afraid God ſhould ſet up his own throne and Government in our hearts. How fleeting are we in Divine Meditation, how ſleepy in Spiritual exerciſes? but in other exerciſes active: The Soul doth not awaken it ſelf, and excite thoſe animal and vital Spirits, which it will in bodily recreations and ſports; much leſs the powers of the Soul; whereby 'tis evident we prefer the latter before any ſervice to God: Since there is a fulneſs of Animal Spirits, why might they not be excited in holy duties as well as in other operations, but that there is a reluctancy in the Soul to exerciſe its Supremacy in this caſe, and perform any thing becoming a Creature in ſubjection to God as a Ruler?

2. 'Tis evident alſo *in the diſtractions we have in his ſervice*: How loth are we to ſerve God fixedly one hour, nay a part of an hour, notwithſtanding all the thoughts of his Majeſty, and the Eternity of glory ſet before our eye? VVhat man is there ſince the fall of *Adam*, that ſerved God one hour without many wandrings and unſutable thoughts unfit for that ſervice? How ready are our hearts to ſtart out and unite themſelves with any worldly objects that pleaſe us?

3. *Wearineſs in it* evidenceth it. To be weary of our dulneſs ſignifies a deſire; to be weary of ſervice ſignifies a diſcontent to be ruled by God: How tired are we in the performance of Spiritual duties, when in the vain triflings of time we have a perpetual motion: How will many willingly revel whole nights, when their hearts will flag at the Threſhold of a Religious ſervice? Like *Dagon*, * loſe, both our heads to think, and hands to act, when the Ark of God is preſent: Some in the *Prophet* wiſhed the *new Moon* and the *Sabbath over*, that they might ſell their Corn, and be buſied again in their worldly affairs: * A ſlight and wearineſs of the *Sabbath*, was a ſlight of the Lord of the Sabbath, and of that freedom from the Yoke and rule of ſin, which was ſignified by it. The deſign of the Sacrifices in the new Moon, was to ſignifie a reſt from the tyranny of ſin, and a conſecration to the Spiritual ſervice of God. Servants that are quickly weary of their work, are weary of the Authority of their Maſter, that enjoyns it: If our hearts had a value for God, it would be with us as with the needle to the Load-ſtone; there would be upon his beck a ſpeedy motion to him, and a fixed union with him. VVhen the Judgments and affections of the Saints ſhall be fully refined in glory, they ſhall be willing to behold the face of God and be under his Govern- * 1 Sam. 5. 4. * Amos 8. 5.

ment to Eternity, without any wearineſs. As the holy Angels, have owned God as their Soveraign near theſe ſix thouſand years, without being weary of running on his Errands: But alas while the fleſh clogs us, there will be ſome Reliques of unwillingneſs to hear his Injunctions, and wearineſs in performing them; tho men may excuſe thoſe things by extrinſick cauſes, yet Gods unerring Judgment calls it a wearineſs of himſelf, Iſa. 43. 22. *Thou haſt not called upon me, oh* Jacob, *but thou haſt been weary of me, oh* Iſrael. Of this he taxeth his own people, when he tells them he would have the beaſts of the Field; The *Dragons* and the *Owls*; the *Gentiles*, that the Jews counted no better than ſuch, to honour him and acknowledge him their rule in a way of duty, *ver.* 20. 21.

6. *This contempt is ſeen in a deſerting the rule of God, when our expectations are not anſwered upon our ſervice.* When ſervices are performed from carnal principles, they are ſoon caſt off when carnal ends meet not with deſired ſatisfaction. But when we own our ſelves Gods Servants, and God our Maſter, *our eyes will wait upon him till he have mercy on us.* * 'Tis one part of the duty we owe to God as *our Maſter* in heaven, *to continue in Prayer*, Col. 4. 1, 2 And by the ſame reaſon in all other ſervice, and to watch in the ſame with thankſgiving: To watch for occaſions of praiſe, to watch with chearfulneſs for further manifeſtations of his will, ſtrength to perform it, ſucceſs in the performance, that we may from all draw matter of praiſe: As we are in a poſture of obedience to his precepts, ſo we ſhould be in a poſture of waiting for the bleſſing of it.

* Pſal. 123. 2.

But naturally we reject the duty we owe to God, if he do not ſpeed the bleſſing we expect from him. How many do ſecretly mutter the ſame as they in Job 21. 15. *What is the Almighty that we ſhould ſerve him, and what profit ſhall we have if we Pray to him?* They ſerve not God out of Conſcience to his Commands, but for ſome carnal profit; and if God make them to wait for it, they will not ſtay his leiſure, but ceaſe ſolliciting him any longer. Two things are expreſt that God was not worthy of any Homage from them. *What is the Almighty that we ſhould ſerve him*; And that the ſervice of him would not bring them in a good Revenue or an advantage of that kind they expected. Intereſt drives many men on to ſome kind of ſervice, and when they do not find an advance of that, they will acknowledge God no more; but like ſome beggers, if you give them not upon their asking, and calling you good Maſter, from bleſſing they will turn to curſing.

How often do men do that ſecretly, practically, if not plainly, which *Jobs* Wife adviſed him to, Curſe God, and caſt off that diſguiſe of integrity they had aſſumed? Job. 2. 9. *Doſt thou ſtill retain thy integrity? Curſe God.* What a ſtir and puling and crying is here? Caſt off all thoughts of Religious ſervice, and be at Daggers drawing with that God, who for all thy ſervice of him has made thee ſo wretched a ſpectacle to men, and a banquet for worms. The like temper is deciphered in the *Jews* Mal. 3. 14. *'Tis in vain to ſerve God, and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinances, that we have walked mournfully before the Lord?* What profit is it that we have regarded his Statutes, and carryed our ſelves in a way of ſubjection to God, as our Soveraign, when we inherit nothing but ſorrow, and the Idolatrous Neighbors ſwim in all kind of pleaſures? As if it were the moſt miſerable thing to acknowledge God. If men have not the benefits they expect, they think God unrighteous in himſelf, and injurious to them, in not conferring the favour they imagine they have merited: And if they have not that recompence, they will deny God that ſubjection they owe to him as Creatures. Grace moves to God upon a ſenſe of duty; corrupt nature upon a ſenſe of Intereſt: Sincerity is encouraged by gracious returns, but is not melted away by Gods delay or refuſal: Corrupt nature would have God at its beck, and ſteers a courſe of duty by hope of ſome carnal profit, not by a ſenſe of the Soveraignty of God.

7. *This contempt is ſeen in breaking promiſes with God.* * [One while the Conſcience of a man makes vows of new obedience, and perhaps binds himſelf with many an Oath, but they prove like *Jonahs* Gourd, withering the next day after their birth. This was *Pharaohs* temper; under a ſtorm he would ſubmit to God, and let *Iſrael* go; but when the ſtorm is ended, he will not be under Gods controul, and *Iſraels* ſlavery ſhall be increaſed: The fear of Divine wrath makes many a ſinner turn his back upon his ſin, and the love of his ruling luſt makes him turn his back, upon his true Lord. This is from the prevalency of ſin, that diſputes with God for the Soveraignty.]

* Reyn.

When

When God hath ſent a ſharp diſeaſe, as a meſſenger to bind men to their beds, and make an interruption of their ſinful pleaſures, their mouths are full of promiſes of a new life, in hope to eſcape the juſt vengeance of God: The ſenſe of Hell which ſtrikes ſtrongly upon them, makes them full of ſuch pretended reſolutions when they howl upon their beds. But if God be pleaſed in his Patience, to give them a reſpite, to take off the Chains wherewith he ſeemed to be binding them for deſtruction, and recruit their ſtrength, they are more earneſt in their ſins, than they were in their promiſes of a reformation; as if they had got the maſtery of God, and had outwitted him. How *often* doth God charge them * *of not returning to him after a ſucceſſion of Judgments?* So hard it is, not only to allure, but to ſcourge men to an acknowledgment of God as their Ruler. * Amos 4. 6. to ver. 11.

Conſider then,

Are we not naturally inclined to diſobey the known Will of God? Can we ſay, Lord, for thy ſake we refrain the thing to which our hearts encline? Do we not allow our ſelves to be licentious, earthly, vain, proud, revengeful, tho we know it will offend him? Have we not been peeviſhly croſs to his declared Will? Run Counter to him and thoſe Laws which expreſs moſt of the glory of his holineſs? Is not this to diſown him as our Rule? Did we never wiſh there were no Law to bind us, no precept to check our Idols? What is this, but to wiſh that God would depoſe himſelf from being our Governour, and leave us to our own conduct? or elſe to wiſh that he were as unholy as our ſelves, as careleſs of his own laws as we are, that is, that he were no more a God then we, a God as ſinful and unrighteous as our ſelves? He whoſe heart riſeth againſt the Law of God to unlaw it, riſeth againſt the Author of that Law to undeifie him. He that caſts contempt upon the deareſt thing God hath in the world, that which is the image of his holineſs, the delight of his Soul; that which he hath given a ſpecial charge to maintain, and that becauſe it is holy, juſt and good; would not ſtick to rejoyce at the deſtruction of God himſelf. If Gods Holineſs and righteouſneſs in the beam be deſpiſed, much more will an immenſe goodneſs and holineſs in the fountain be rejected: He that wiſheth a beam far from his eyes, becauſe it offends and ſcorcheth him, can be no friend to the Sun, from whence that beam doth iſſue. How unworthy a Creature is man, ſince he only, a rational Creature, is the ſole being that withdraws it ſelf from the Rule of God in this Earth? And how miſerable a Creature is he alſo, Since departing from the order of Gods goodneſs, he falls into the order of his Juſtice; and while he refuſeth God to be the rule of his life, he cannot avoid him being the Judge of his puniſhment? 'Tis this is the original of all ſin, and the fountain of all our miſery.

This is the firſt thing man diſowns, the Rule which God ſets him.

Secondly, 2. *Man naturally owns any other rule rather than that of Gods preſcribing.* The Law of God orders one thing, the heart of Man deſires another. There is not the baſeſt thing in the world, but man would ſooner ſubmit to be guided by it, rather than by the holineſs of God; and when any thing that God commands croſſes our own Wills, we value it no more, than we would the advice of a poor deſpicable beggar.

How many are *lovers of pleaſure, more than lovers of God?* * To make ſomething which contributes to the perfection of nature, as learning, wiſdom, moral vertues, our Rule, would be more tolerable: But to pay that homage to a ſwiniſh pleaſure, which is the right of God, is an inexcuſable contempt of him. The greateſt excellency in the world is infinitely below God; much more a beſtial delight, which is both diſgraceful and below the nature of man. If we made the vileſt Creature on Earth our Idol, 'tis more excuſable than to be the ſlave of a brutiſh pleaſure. The viler the thing is that doth poſſeſs the throne in our heart, the greater contempt it is of him who can only claim a right to it and is worthy of it. Sin is the firſt object of mans election, as ſoon as the faculty whereby he chooſes comes to exerciſe its power: And it is ſo dear to man, that it is, in the eſtimate of our Saviour, counted as the right hand, and the right eye, dear, precious and uſeful members. * 2 Tim. 3. 4.

1. *The rule of Satan is owned before the rule of God.* The natural man would rather be under the guidance of Satan than the Yoke of his Creator. *Adam* choſe him to be his Governour in Paradice. No ſooner had Satan ſpoke of God in a way of deriſion, *Gen.* 3. 1, 5. *Yea, hath God ſaid?* but man follows his Counſel and approves.

proves of the ſcoff; and the greateſt part of his poſterity, have not been wiſer by his ill, but would rather ramble in the Devils Wilderneſs, than to ſtay in Gods fold. 'Tis by the ſin of man that the Devil is become the God of the world, as if men were the Electors of him to the Government: Sin is an Election of him for a Lord, and a putting the Soul under his Government. Thoſe that live according to the courſe of the world, and are loth to diſpleaſe it, are under the Government of the Prince of it. The greateſt part of the works done in the world is to enlarge the Kingdom of *Satan*. For how many ages were the Laws whereby the greateſt part of the world was governed in the affairs of Religion, the fruits of his uſurpation and policy? When Temples were erected to him, Prieſts conſecrated to his ſervice; The rites uſed in moſt of the Worſhip of the world were either of his own Coyning, or the miſapplying the Rites, God had ordained to himſelf, under the notion of a God: Whence the Apoſtle calls all Idolatrous Feaſts, *the table of Devils, the cup of Devils, Sacrifice to Devils, fellowſhip with Devils*, * Devils being the real object of the *Pagan* Worſhip, tho not formally intended by the Worſhipper; tho in ſome parts of the *Indies*, the direct and peculiar worſhip is to the *Devil*, that he might not hurt them. And tho the intention of others was to offer to *God*, and not the *Devil*, yet ſince the action was contrary to the Will of God, he regards it as a Sacrifice to Devils. It was not the intention of *Jeroboam* to eſtabliſh Prieſts to the Devil, when he Conſecrated them to the ſervice of his Calves, for *Jehu* afterwards calls them *the Servants of the Lord*, 2 King. 10. 23. *See if there be here none of the Servants of the Lord*, to diſtinguiſh them from the Servants of *Baal*, ſignifying that the *true God* was Worſhipped under thoſe Images, and not *Baal*, nor any of the Gods of the Heathens; yet Scripture couples the *Calves* and *Devils* together, and aſcribes the Worſhip given to one, to be given to the other. * *He ordained him Prieſts for the high places, and for the Devils, and for the Calves which he had made*; ſo that they were Sacrifices to Devils, notwithſtanding the intention of *Jeroboam* and his Subjects that had ſet them up and worſhipped them, becauſe they were contrary to the mind of God, and agreeable to the Doctrine and mind of Satan, tho the object of their worſhip in their own intention were not the Devil but ſome deified man or ſome Canonized Saint: The intention makes not a good action: If ſo, when men *kill* the beſt Servants of God with a deſign to do *God ſervice*, as our Saviour foretels, * the action would not be Murder; yet who can call it otherwiſe, ſince God is wronged in the perſons of his Servants? Since moſt of the worſhip of the world, which mens corrupt natures incline them to, is falſe and different from the revealed will of God, 'tis a practical acknowledgment of the Devil, as the Governour, by acknowledging and practiſing thoſe Doctrines, which have not the ſtamp of Divine Revelation upon them, but were minted by Satan to depreſs the Honour of God in the World: It doth concern men then to take good heed, that in their acts of worſhip they have a Divine rule; otherwiſe it is an owning the Devil as the rule; for there is no *medium*: Whatſoever is not from *God*, is from *Satan*.

* 1 Cor. 10. 20, 21.

* 2 Chron. 11. 15.

* Joh. 16. 2.

But to bring this cloſer to us, and conſider that which is more common among us: Men that are in a natural condition and Wedded to their luſts, are under the paternal Government of Satan, Joh. 8. 44. *Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the luſts of your Father you will do.* If we divide ſin into Spiritual and carnal, which diviſion comprehends all, the Devils Authority is owned in both; In Spiritual, we conform to his *example*, becauſe thoſe he commits: In carnal, we obey his *will*, becauſe thoſe he directs: He acts the one, and ſets us a *Copy*: He tempts to the other, and gives us a kind of a *precept*. Thus man by nature being a willing ſervant of ſin, is more deſirous to be bound in the Devils Iron Chains, than in Oods ſilken Cords.

What greater Atheiſm can there be, than to uſe God as if he were inferior to the Devil? to take the part of his greateſt Enemy, who drew all others into the faction againſt him? to pleaſure Satan by offending God, and gratifie our adverſary with the injury of our Creator? For a Subject to take arms againſt his Prince with the deadlieſt Enemy, both himſelf and Prince hath in the whole word, adds a greater blackneſs to the Rebellion.

2. *The more viſible rule preferred before God in the World, is man.* The opinion of the world is more our rule than the precept of God; and many mens abſtinence from ſin, is not from a ſenſe of the Divine Will, no, nor from a principle of reaſon, but

but from an affection to ſome man on whom they depend, or fear of puniſhment from a ſuperior: The ſame principle with that in a ravenous beaſt, who abſtains from what he deſires for fear only of a ſtick or Club: Men will walk with the Herds, go in faſhion with the moſt, ſpeak and act as the moſt do: While we conform to the world, we cannot perform a *reaſonable ſervice* to God, nor prove, nor approve practically what the good and acceptable Will of God is: The *Apoſtle* puts them in *oppoſition* to one another. * * Rom. 12.1,2.

This appears,

1. *In complying more with the dictates of men, than the Will of God.* Men draw encouragement from Gods forbearance to ſin more freely againſt him; but the fear of puniſhment for breaking the Will of Man, lays a reſtraint upon them: The fear of man is a more powerful curb, to reſtrain men in their duty, than the fear of God: So we may pleaſe a Friend, a Maſter, a Governour, we are regardleſs whether we pleaſe God or no: Men pleaſers are more than God pleaſers: Man is more advanced as a rule, than God, when we ſubmit to human orders and ſtagger and diſpute againſt Divine. Would not a Prince think himſelf ſlighted in his authority, if any of his Servants ſhould decline his commands, by the order of one of his Subjects? And will not God make the ſame account of us, when we deny or delay our obedience, for fear of one of his Creatures? In the fear of man, we as little acknowledge God for our Soveraign, as we do for our comforter: Iſa. 51. 12, 13. *I, even I am he, that comforteth you, who art thou, that thou ſhouldſt be afraid of a man that ſhall die*, &c. *and forgetteſt the Lord thy maker*, &c. We put a ſlight upon God, as if he were not able to bear us out in our duty to him; and uncapable to ballance the ſtrength of an arm of fleſh.

2. *In obſerving that which is materially the Will of God, not becauſe 'tis his Will, but the injunctions of men.* As the word of God may be *received*, yet not as *his word*, ſo the Will of God may be performed, yet not as his Will. 'Tis materially done, but not formally obeyed: An *action*, and *obedience* in that action are *two* things: as when man Commands the ceaſing from all works of the ordinary calling on the Sabbath, 'tis the ſame that God enjoyns; the Ceſſation, or attendance of his Servants on the hearing the word, are conformable in the matter of it to the Will of God; but it is only conformable in the obediential part of the acts to the Will of man, when it is done only with reſpect to a human precept. As God hath a right to enact his Laws without conſulting his Creature in the way of his Government; So man is bound to obey thoſe Laws, without conſulting whether they be agreeable to mens laws or no: If we act the Will of God, becauſe the Will of our ſuperiors concurs with it, we obey not God in that, but man; a human Will being the rule of our obedience; and not the Divine: This is to vilifie God, and make him inferior to man in our eſteem, and a valuing the rule of man above that of our Creator.

Since God is the higheſt perfection and infinitely good, whatſoever rule he gives the Creature muſt be good, elſe it cannot proceed from God. A baſe thing cannot be the product of an infinite excellency; and an unreaſonable thing cannot be the product of an infinite wiſdom and goodneſs: Therefore as the reſpecting Gods Will before the VVill of man is excellent and worthy of a Creature, and is an acknowledging the excellency, goodneſs and wiſdom of God; So the eying the VVill of man before and above the VVill of God, is, on the contrary, a denyal of all thoſe in a lump, and a preferring the wiſdom, goodneſs and power of man in his Law above all thoſe perfections of God in his. VVhatſoever men do that looks like moral virtue or abſtinence from vices, not out of obedience to the rule God hath ſet, but becauſe of cuſtom, neceſſity, example or imitation, they may in the doing of it be rather ſaid to be Apes than Chriſtians.

3. *In obeying the Will of man, when 'tis contrary to the Will of God.* As the *Iſraelites* willingly *walked after the Commandment*; * Not of *God*, but of *Jeroboam* in the caſe of the Calves: And *made the Kings heart glad with their lies.* * They cheered him with their ready obedience to his Command for Idolatry (which was a lie in it ſelf, and a lie in them) againſt the Commandment of God and the warnings of the Prophets; rather than cheer the heart of God with their obedience to his worſhip inſtituted by him: Nay, and when God offered them, to cure them their wound, their * Hoſ. 5. 11. * Hoſ. 7. 3.

their iniquity breaks out afreſh; they would neither have him as a Lord to rule them, nor a Phyſician to cure them, Hoſ. 7. 1. *When I would have healed* Iſrael, *then the iniquity of* Ephraim *was diſcovered.* The whole *Perſian* Nation ſhrunk at once from a duty due by the light of nature to the Deity, upon a *decree* that *neither God or man ſhould be petitioned to for thirty days, but only their King.* * One only *Daniel* excepted againſt it, who preferred his homage to God, above obedience to his Prince. An adulterous generation is many times made the rule of mens profeſſions, as is implyed in thoſe words of our Saviour, Mark 8. 38. *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and my words in this Adulterous and ſinful Generation:* Own him among his Diſciples, and be aſhamed of him among his Enemies: Thus men are ſaid to deny God, *Tit.* 1. 16. When they *attend to Jewiſh fables and the precepts of men rather than the word of God:* When the decrees or Canons of fallible men are valued at a higher rate, and preferred before the writings of the Holy Ghoſt by his Apoſtles.

* Daniel 6.

As Man naturally diſowns the rule God ſets him, and owns any other rule than that of Gods preſcribing, ſo

Thirdly, 3. *He doth this in order to the ſetting himſelf up as his own rule.* As tho' our own Wills, and not Gods, were the true ſquare and meaſure of Goodneſs. We make an Idol of our own Wills: And as much as *ſelf* is exalted, God is depoſed: The more we eſteem our own Wills, the more we endeavour to annihilate the Will of God: Account nothing of him, the more we account of our ſelves: And endeavour to render our ſelves his ſuperiors by exalting our own Wills. No Prince but would look upon his Authority as invaded, his Royalty derided, if a Subject ſhould reſolve to be a Law to himſelf, in oppoſition to his known Will: True piety is to hate our ſelves, deny our ſelves, and cleave ſolely to the ſervice of God. To make our ſelves our *own rule*, and the object of our chiefeſt love is *Atheiſm.* If *ſelf denyal* be the greateſt part of Godlineſs, the great Letter in the Alphabet of Religion; *Self love* is the great Letter in the Alphabet of Practical Atheiſm. *Self* is the great Anti-Chriſt and Anti-God in the World, that *ſets up it ſelf above all that is called God: Self love* is the Captain of that black band, 2 *Tim.* 3. 2. It ſits in the Temple of God and would be ador'd, as God: Self love *begins*; but denying the power of Godlineſs, which is the ſame with denying the ruling power of God, *ends* the liſt: 'Tis ſo far from binding to the righteous Will of the Creator, that it would have the Eternal Will of God ſtoop to the humour and unrighteous Will of a Creature: And this is the ground of the contention between the fleſh and the Spirit in the heart of a renewed man; Fleſh Wars for the God-head of *ſelf*, and Spirit fights for the God-head of God: The one would ſettle the throne of the Creator, and the other maintain a Law of Covetouſneſs, Ambition, Envy, Luſt in the ſtead of God.

The Evidence of this will appear in theſe Propoſitions.

1. *This is natural to man as he is corrupted.* What was the venom of the ſin of *Adam*, is naturally derived with his nature to all his poſterity. It was not the eating a forbidden Apple, or the pleaſing his Palate that *Adam* aimed at, or was the chief object of his deſire; but to live independently on his Creator, and be a God to himſelf, *Gen.* 3. 5. *You ſhall be as Gods.* That which was the matter of the Devils Temptation, was the incentive of mans rebellion: A likeneſs to God he aſpired to in the Judgment of God himſelf, an infallible interpreter of mans thoughts; *Behold, man is become as one of us, to know good and evil*, in regard of ſelf ſufficiency and being a rule to himſelf. The Jews underſtand the ambition of man to reach no further, than an equality with the Angelical nature: But *Jehovah* here underſtands it in another ſenſe: God had ordered man by this prohibition not to eat of the fruit of the *Tree of knowledge of good and evil*; not to attempt the knowledge of good and evil of himſelf, but to wait upon the dictates of God; not to truſt to his own Counſels, but to depend wholly upon him for direction and guidance. Certainly he that would not hold off his hand from ſo ſmall a thing as an Apple, when he had his choice of the fruit of the Garden, would not have denyed himſelf any thing his Appetite had deſired, when that principle had prevailed upon him: He would not have ſtuck at a greater matter to pleaſure himſelf with the diſpleaſing of God, when for ſo ſmall a thing he would incur the anger of his Creator.

Thus would he deifie his own underſtanding againſt the wiſdom of God, and his own

own appetite againſt the will of God: This deſire of equality with God, a learned man thinks the Apoſtle intimates, *Phil.* 2. 6. *Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God*: The Sons being in the form of God, and thinking it not robbery to be equal with God, implies that the robbery of ſacriledge committed by our firſt Parents, for which the Son of God humbled himſelf to the death of the Croſs, was an attempt to be equal with God, and depend no more upon Gods directions, but his own conduct, which could be no leſs than an invaſion of the throne of God, and endeavour to put himſelf into a poſture to be his mate: Other ſins, Adultery and Theft, *&c.* could not be committed by him at that time, but he immediately puts forth his hand to uſurp the power of his Maker: This treaſon is the old *Adam* in every man. The *firſt Adam* contradicted the Will of God to ſet up himſelf: The *ſecond Adam* humbled himſelf, and did nothing but by the Command and Will of his Father. This principle wherein the venom of the *Old Adam* lies, muſt be Crucified to make way for the Throne of the humble and obedient principle of the *New Adam* or quickning Spirit. Indeed ſin in its own nature is nothing elſe, but *a willing according to* ſelf, *and contrary to the Will of God*: Luſts are therefore called the *Wills* of the fleſh and of the mind * As the precepts of God are Gods Will: So the violations of theſe precepts is mans will: And thus man uſurps, a God-head to himſelf, by giving that Honour to his own will which belongs to God; appropriating the right of rule to himſelf and denying it to his Creator. That Servant that acts according to his own Will with a neglect of his Maſters refuſeth the duty of a Servant, and invades the right of his Maſter: This Self-love and deſire of Independency on God has been the root of all ſin in the World: The great controverſie between God and man hath been, whether he or they ſhall be God; whether his Reaſon or theirs, his Will or theirs ſhall be the guiding principle: As grace is the union of the Will of God and the Will of the Creature; ſo ſin is the oppoſition of the Will of *ſelf* to the Will of God. *Leaning to our own underſtanding*, is oppoſed as a natural evil, *to truſting in the Lord*, * a ſupernatural grace. Men commonly love what is their own, their own inventions, their own fancies; therefore the ways of a wicked man are called the *ways of his own heart*; * and the ways of a ſuperſtitious man his own devices, Jer. 18. 11. *We will walk after our own devices*: We will be a law to our ſelves: And what the *Pſalmiſt* ſaith of the tongue, our tongues are *our own*, who ſhall controul us? Is as truly the language of mens hearts, our Wills are our own, who ſhall check us?

Dr. Jackſon.

* Eph. 2. 3.

* Pro. 3. 5.

* Eccl. 11. 9.

2. *This is evident in the diſſatisfaction of men with their own Conſciences when they contradict the deſires of* ſelf. Conſcience is nothing but an actuated or reflex knowledge of a ſuperior power and an equitable law; a law impreſt, and a power above it impreſſing it. Conſcience is not the law-giver, but the remembrancer to mind us of that law of nature imprinted upon our Souls, and actuate the conſiderations of the duty and penalty, to apply the rule to our acts, and paſs Judgment upon matter of fact: 'Tis to give the charge, urge the rule, enjoyn the practice of thoſe notions of Right, as part of our duty and obedience.

But man is much diſpleaſed with the directions of Conſcience, as he is out of love with the accuſations and condemning ſentence of this officer of God: We cannot naturally endure any quick and lively practical thoughts of God and his Will, and diſtaſt our own Conſciences for putting us in mind of it, They therefore *like not to retain God in their knowledge*, * that is, God in their own Conſciences; they would blow it out as it is the Candle of the Lord in them to direct them, and their acknowledgments of God, to ſecure themſelves againſt the practice of its principles: They would ſtop all the avenues to any beam of light, and would not ſuffer a ſparkle of Divine knowledge to flutter in their minds, in order to ſet up another directing rule ſuited to the fleſhly appetite: And when they cannot ſtop the light of it from glaring in their faces, they rebel againſt it, and cannot endure to abide in its paths: * He ſpeaks not of thoſe which had the written word or ſpecial Revelations; but only a natural light or traditional, handed from *Adam*: Hence are all the endeavors to ſtill it when it begins to ſpeak, by ſome carnal pleaſures; as *Sauls* evil Spirit with a fit of Muſick; or bribe it with ſome fits of a glavering devotion when it holds the Law of God in its commanding Authority before the mind: they would wipe out all the impreſſions of it when it preſſes the advancement of God above *ſelf*, and entertain

* Rom. 1. 28.

* Job 24. 13.

tertain it with no better Complement, than *Ahab* did *Elijah*, *haſt thou found me O my Enemy*?

If we are like to God in any thing of our natural fabrick, 'tis in the ſuperior and more Spiritual part of our Souls: The reſiſtance of that which is moſt like to God, and inſtead of God in us, is a diſowning of the Soveraign repreſented by that Officer: He that would be without *Conſcience*, would be without God, whoſe *Vice-gerent* it is, and make the *ſenſitive part*, which Conſcience oppoſes, his *Law-giver*. Thus a man out of reſpect to ſinful *ſelf*, quarrels with his natural ſelf; and cannot comport himſelf in a friendly behaviour to his internal implanted principles: He hates to come under the rebukes of them, as much as *Adam* hated to come into the preſence of God, after he turned Traytor againſt him: The bad entertainment Gods deputy hath in us, reflects upon that God whoſe cauſe it pleads: 'Tis upon no other account that men loath the upright Language of their own reaſons in thoſe matters, and wiſh the eternal ſilence of their own Conſciences, but as they maintain the rights of God, and would hinder the *Idol* of *ſelf* from uſurping his God-head, and prerogative. Tho this power be part of a mans ſelf, rooted in his nature, as eſſential to him and inſeparable from him, as the beſt part of his being; yet he quarrels with it as it is Gods Deputy, and ſtickling for the honour of God in his Soul, and quarrelling with that ſinful ſelf he would cheriſh above God: We are not diſpleaſed with this faculty barely as it exerciſeth a ſelf-reflection; but as it is Gods Vice-gerent and bears the mark of his Authority in it. In ſome caſes this *ſelf*-reflecting act meets with good Entertainment, when it acts not in contradiction to *ſelf*, but ſutable to natural affections: As ſuppoſe a man hath in his paſſion ſtruck his Child, and cauſed thereby ſome great miſchief to him, the reflection of Conſcience will not be unwelcome to him; will work ſome tenderneſs in him, becauſe it takes the part of *ſelf* and of natural affection: But in the more Spiritual concerns of God, it will be rated as a buſy body.

3. *Many, if not moſt actions, materially good in the world, are done more becauſe they are agreeable to* ſelf, *than as they are honourable to God.* As the *word of God* may be heard not *as his word*, * but as there may be pleaſing Notions in it, or diſcourſes againſt an opinion or party we diſaffect: So the Will of God may be performed, not as his Will, but as it may gratifie ſome ſelfiſh conſideration, when we will pleaſe God ſo far as it may not diſpleaſe our ſelves, and ſerve him as our Maſter, ſo far as his Command may be a Servant to our humor; When we conſider not who it is that Commands, but how ſhort it comes of diſpleaſing that ſin which Rules in our heart, pick and chuſe what is leaſt burdenſome to the fleſh and diſtaſtful to our luſts.

* 1 Theſ. 2. 13.

He that doth the Will of God, not out of Conſcience of that Will, but becauſe it is agreeable to himſelf, caſts down the VVill of God, and ſets his own VVill in the place of it; takes the Crown from the head of God, and places it upon the head of *ſelf*: If things are done, not becauſe they are Commanded by God, but deſirable to us; 'tis a diſobedient obedience; a conformity to Gods VVill in regard of the *matter*, a conformity to our own VVill in regard of the *motive*; either as the things done are agreeable to natural and moral ſelf, or ſinful ſelf.

1. *As they are agreeable to natural or moral ſelf.* VVhen men will practice ſome points of Religion, and walk in the track of ſome Divine precepts; not becauſe they are Divine, but becauſe they are agreeable to their humor or conſtitution of nature; from the ſway of a natural bravery, the *Byas* of a ſecular intereſt, not from an ingenuous ſenſe of Gods Authority, or a voluntary ſubmiſſion to his will: As when a man will avoid exceſs in drinking, not becauſe it is diſhonourable to God, but as it is a blemiſh to his own reputation, or an impair of the health of his body: Doth this deſerve the name of an obſervance of the Divine injunction, or rather an obedience to our ſelves? Or when a man will be liberal in the diſtribution of his Charity, not with an eye to Gods precept, but in compliance with his own natural compaſſion, or to pleaſure the generoſity of his nature: The one is obedience to a mans own preſervation, the other an obedience to the intereſt or impulſe of a moral Vertue. 'Tis not reſpect to the *rule* of God, but the Authority of *ſelf*; and at the beſt, is but the performance of the material part of the Divine Rule, without any concurrence of a Spiritual motive or a Spiritual manner. That only is a maintaining

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the rights of God, when we pay an obſervance to his rule, without examining the agreeableneſs of it to our ſecular intereſt, or conſulting with the humour of fleſh and blood; when we will not decline his ſervice, though we find it croſs, and hath no affinity with the pleaſure of our own nature: Such an obedience as *Abraham* manifeſted in his readineſs to ſacrifice his Son: Such an obedience as our Saviour demands in cutting off the right hand. When we obſerve any thing of divine order upon the account of its ſuitableneſs to our natural Sentiments, we ſhall readily divide from him, when the intereſt of nature turns its point againſt the intereſt of Gods honour; we ſhall fall off from him according to the change we find in our own humors: And can that be valued as a ſetting up the rule of God, which muſt be depos'd upon the mutable intereſt of an inconſtant mind? *Eſau* had no regard to God in delaying the execution of his reſolution to ſhorten his Brothers days; though he was awed by the reverence of his Father to delay it; he conſidered perhaps, how juſtly he might lie under the imputation of haſtening crazy *Iſaacs* death, by depriving him of a beloved Son: But had the old mans head been laid, neither the contrary Command of God, nor the nearneſs of a fraternal Relation could have bound his hands from the act, no more than they did his heart from the reſolution, *Gen.* 27.41. Eſau *hated* Jacob *becauſe of the bleſſing, wherewith his Father bleſſed him; and* Eſau *ſaid in his heart, the days of mourning for my Father are at hand, then will I ſlay my Brother.*

So many Children, that expect at the death of their Parents great Inheritances or Portions, may be obſervant of them, not in regard of the rule fixed by God, but to their own hopes, which they would not fruſtrate by a diſobligement: Whence is it that many men abſtain from groſs ſins, but in love to their reputation? Wickedneſs may be acted privately, which a mans own credit puts a bar to the open commiſſion of. The preſerving his own eſteem may divert him from entring into a brothel houſe, to which he hath ſet his mind before, againſt a known precept of his Creator. As *Pharaoh* parted with the *Iſraelites*; ſo do ſome men with their blemiſhing ſins; not out of a ſenſe of Gods rule, but the ſmart of preſent Judgments, or fear of a future wrath: Our ſecurity then, and reputation is ſet up in the place of God.

This alſo may be, and is in renewed men, who have the law written in their hearts, that is, an habitual diſpoſition to an agreement with the law of God; when what is done is with a reſpect to this habitual inclination, without eying the divine precept, which is appointed to be their rule; This alſo is to ſet up a Creature, as renewed *ſelf* is, inſtead of the Creator, and that Law of his in his word, which ought to be the rule of our actions: Thus it is when men chuſe a moral life, not ſo much out of reſpect to the law of nature, as it is the law of God, but as it is a law become one with their Souls and Conſtitutions: There is more of *ſelf* in this, than conſideration of God; For if it were the latter, the revealed law of God would upon the ſame reaſon be received as well as his natural law: From this principle of *ſelf*, morality comes by ſome to be advanced above Evangelical dictates.

2. *As they are agreeable to ſinful ſelf.* Not that the commands of God are ſuited to bolſter up the corruptions of men, no more than the law can be ſaid to excite or *revive* ſin. * But it is like a ſcandal taken, not given; an occaſion taken by the tumultuouſneſs of our depraved nature. The *Phariſees* were devout in *long Prayers*, not from a ſenſe of duty, or a care of Gods honour; but to ſatisfie their ambition, and rake together fuel for their *covetouſneſs*; * that they might have the greater eſteem and richer offerings, to free by their Prayers the Souls of deceaſed perſons from Purgatory; an opinion that ſome think the Jewiſh Synagogue had then entertain'd, * ſince ſome of their Doctors have defended ſuch a notion. Men may obſerve ſome Precepts of God to have a better conveniency to break others. *Jehu* was ordered to cut off the houſe of *Ahab*: The ſervice he undertook was in it ſelf acceptable, but corrupt nature miſacted that which holineſs and righteouſneſs Commanded; God appointed it to magnifie his Juſtice, and check the Idolatry that had been ſupported by that family: *Jehu* acted it to ſatisfie his revenge and ambition; he did it to fulfil his luſt, not the will of God who enjoyn'd him: Jehu applauds it as zeal, and God abhors it as Murder, and therefore would *avenge the blood of* Jezreel *on the houſe of Jehu*, Hoſ. 1.4. Such kind of ſervices are not paid to God for his own ſake, but to our ſelves for our luſts ſake.

* Rom. 7. 8, 9.

* Matth. 23. 14. *You devour Widdows Houſes, and for a pretence make long Prayers.*

* Gerrard *in loc.*

4. *This is evident in neglecting to take Gods direction upon emergent occaſions* This follows the Text, [*none did ſeek God*]. When we conſult not with him, but truſt more to our own Will and Counſel, we make our ſelves our own Governours and Lords, independent upon him: As though we could be our own Counſellors, and manage our Concerns without his leave and aſſiſtance; as though our works were in our own hands and not in the *hands of God*, * that we can by our own ſtrength and ſagacity direct them to a ſucceſsful end without him. If we muſt *acquaint our ſelves with God* before we decree a thing; * then to decree a thing without acquainting God with it, is to prefer our purblind wiſdom before the infinite Wiſdom of God; to reſolve without conſulting God, is to depoſe God, and deifie *ſelf*, our own wit and ſtrength. We would rather like *Lot* follow our own humor and ſtay in *Sodom*, than obſerve the Angels order to go out of it.

* Eccleſ. 9. 1.

* Job. 22. 28.

5. *As we account the actions of others to be good or evil, as they ſuit with or ſpurn againſt our fancies and humours.* Vertue is a crime, and vice a vertue, as it is contrary or concurrent with our humours: Little Reaſon have many men to blame the actions of others, but becauſe they are not agreeable, to what they affect and deſire: We would have all men take directions from us, and move according to our beck: Hence that common Speech in the World; ſuch an one is an honeſt friend, why? becauſe he is of their humour, and lackies according to their Wills: Thus we make *ſelf* the meaſure and ſquare of good and evil in the reſt of mankind, and judge of it by our own fancies, and not by the will of God, the proper rule of Judgment.

Well then let us Conſider,

Is not this very common, are we not naturally more willing to diſpleaſe God than diſpleaſe our ſelves, when it comes to a point that we muſt do one or other? Is not our own Counſel of more value with us than Conformity to the will of the Creator? Do not our Judgments often run Counter to the Judgment of God? Have his Laws a greater reſpect from us, than our own humours. Do we ſcruple the ſtaining his honour when it comes in competition with our own? Are not the Lives of moſt men a pleaſing themſelves, without a repentance that ever they diſpleaſed God? Is not this to undeifie God, to deifie our ſelves, and diſown the propriety he hath in us by the right of Creation and Beneficence? VVe order our own ways by our own humours, as though we were the Authors of our own being, and had given our ſelves life and underſtanding. This is to deſtroy the order that God hath placed between our VVills and his own, and a lifting up of the foot above the head; 'tis the deformity of the Creature: The honor of every rational Creature conſiſts in the ſervice of the firſt cauſe of his being; as the welfare of every Creature conſiſts in the orders and proportionable motion of its members, according to the Law of its Creation.

He that moves and acts according to a law of his own, offers a manifeſt wrong to God, the higheſt wiſdom and chiefeſt good; diſturbs the order of the VVorld; nulls the deſign of the righteouſneſs and holineſs of God: The Law of God is the rule of that order he would have obſerved in the VVorld: He that makes another law his rule, thruſts out the order of the Creator, and eſtabliſhes the diſorder of the Creature.

But this will yet be more evident in the fourth thing.

4. *Man would make himſelf the rule of God, and give Laws to his Creator.* VVe are willing God ſhould be our benefactor, but not our ruler; we are content to admire his excellency and pay him a VVorſhip, provided he will walk by our rule.

* [This commits a riot upon his nature. To think him to be what we our ſelves *would have him and wiſh him to be*, Pſal. 50. 21. VVe would amplifie his Mercy and contract his Juſtice: VVe would have his power enlarg'd to ſupply our wants, and ſtraightned when it goes about to revenge our crimes: VVe would have him wiſe to defeat our enemies, but not to diſappoint our unworthy projects: We would have him all eye to regard our indigence, and blind, not to diſcern our guilt: We would have him true to his promiſes, regardleſs of his precepts, and falſe to his threatnings. We would new mint the nature of God according to our models, and ſhape a God according to our fancies, as he made us at firſt according to his own Image:] Inſtead of obeying him, we would have him obey us: Inſtead of owning and admiring

* *Decay of Chriſtian piety* p. 166. *ſomewhat changed.*

miring his perfections, we would have him ſtrip himſelf of his infinite excellency, and cloth himſelf with a nature agreeable to our own. This is not only to ſet up *ſelf* as the Law of God, but to make our own Imaginations the model of the nature of God.]

Corrupted man takes a pleaſure to accuſe or ſuſpect the actions of God: We would not have him act conveniently to his nature; but act what doth gratifie us, and abſtain from what diſtaſts us. Man is never well, but when he is impeaching one or other perfection of Gods Nature, and undermining his Glory; as if all his Attributes muſt ſtand Indicted at the bar of our purblind Reaſon: This Weed ſhoots up in the exerciſe of Grace: *Peter* intended the refuſal of our Saviours waſhing his feet, as an act of *humility*, but *Chriſt* underſtands it to be a preſcribing *a law to himſelf*, a correcting his love, *John* 13. 8, 9.

This is evidenc'd,

1. *In the ſtrivings againſt his Law.* How many men imply by their Lives, that they would have God depos'd from his Government, and ſome unrighteous being ſtep into his Throne; as if God had or ſhould change his Laws of Holineſs into Laws of Licentiouſneſs; as if he ſhould abrogate his old Eternal precepts and enact contrary ones in their ſtead? What is the Language of ſuch practices, but that they would be Gods Law-givers and not his Subjects? that he ſhould deal with them according to their own wills, and not according to his righteouſneſs? that they could make a more holy, wiſe and righteous Law than the Law of God? that their imaginations, and not Gods righteouſneſs, ſhould be the rule of his doing good to them? Jer. 9. 31. *They have forſaken my Law and walked after the imaginations of their own heart.*

When an act is known to be a ſin, and the Law that forbids it acknowledg'd to be the Law of God, and after this we perſiſt in that which is contrary to it, we tax his wiſdom as if he did not underſtand, what was convenient for us, *we would teach God knowledge* *; 'tis an implicite wiſh that God had laid aſide the holineſs of his nature and framed a Law to pleaſure our luſts. When God calls for *weeping and mourning and girding with ſackcloath* upon approaching Judgments, then the corrupt heart is for joy and gladneſs, *eating of Fleſh and drinking of Wine, becauſe to morrow they ſhould die* *: As if God had miſtaken himſelf when he ordered them ſo much ſorrow, when their lives were ſo near an end; and had loſt his underſtanding when he order-ed ſuch a precept: Diſobedience is therefore called contention, Rom. 2. 8. *Contentious and obey not the truth:* Contention againſt God, whoſe truth it is that they diſobey; a diſpute with him, which hath more of wiſdom in it ſelf and conveniency for them, his truth or their imaginations. The more the love, goodneſs and holineſs of God appears in any command, the more are we naturally averſe from it, and caſt an imputation on him, as if he were fooliſh, unjuſt, cruel, and that we could have adviſed and directed him better. The goodneſs of God is eminent to us in appointing a day for his own worſhip, wherein we might converſe with him and he with us, and our ſouls be refreſht with Spiritual Communications from him; and we rather uſe it for the eaſe of our bodies, than the advancement of our Souls; as if God were miſtaken and injured his Creature, when he urg'd the Spiritual part of duty. Every diſobedience to the Law is an implicite giving Law to him, and a charge againſt him that he might have provided better for his Creature.

* Job. 21. 22.

* Iſa. 22. 12; 13.

2. *In diſapproving the methods of Gods Government of the world.* If the Counſels of Heaven roul not about according to their Schemes, inſtead of adoring the unſearchable depths of his judgments, they call him to the bar, and accuſe him, becauſe they are not fitted to their narrow Veſſels; as if a Nut-ſhell could contain an Ocean. As corrupt reaſon eſteems the higheſt truths, fooliſhneſs; ſo it counts the moſt righteous ways, unequal: Thus we commence a ſuit againſt God, as though he had not acted righteouſly and wiſely, but muſt give an account of his proceedings at our tribunal. This is to make our ſelves Gods ſuperiors, and preſume to inſtruct him better in the government of the world; As though God hinder'd himſelf and the world, in not making us of his Privy Council, and not ordering his affairs according to the contrivances of our dim underſtandings.

Is not this manifeſt in our immoderate complaints of Gods dealings with his Church, as though there were a coldneſs in Gods affections to his Church, and a

glowing heat towards it only in us? Hence are thoſe importunate deſires for things which are not eſtabliſhed by any promiſe, as though we would over-rule and over-perſwade God to comply with our humour. We have an ambition to be Gods Tutors and direct him in his Counſels: *Who hath been his Counſellor*, ſaith the *Apoſtle*? * Who ought not to be his Counſellor, ſaith corrupt nature? Men will find fault with God in what he ſuffers to be done according to their own minds, when they feel the bitter fruit of it. When *Cain* had kill'd his Brother, and his Conſcience rackt him, how ſawcily and diſcontentedly doth he anſwer God, Gen. 4. 9. *Am I my Brothers keeper*? Since thou doſt own thy ſelf the Rector of the world, thou ſhouldſt have preſerved his perſon from my fury; ſince thou doſt accept his Sacrifice before my Offering, preſervation was due as well as acceptance. If this temper be found on earth, no wonder it is lodged in hell. That deplorable perſon under the ſenſible ſtroke of Gods Soveraign juſtice, would oppoſe his Nay to Gods will, Luke 16. 30. (*And he ſaid, Nay, Father* Abraham, *but if one went to them from the dead, they will repent*:) He would preſume to preſcribe more effectual means than *Moſes* and the *Prophets*, to inform men of the danger they incurr'd by their ſenſuality: *David was diſpleas'd*, it's ſaid, 2 Sam. 6. 8, *when the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah*; not with *Uzzah*, who was the object of his pity, but with God who was the inflicter of that puniſhment.

* Rom. 11. 34.

When any of our friends have been ſtruck with a Rod againſt our Sentiments and wiſhes, have not our hearts been apt to ſwell in complaints againſt God, as though he diſregarded the goodneſs of ſuch a perſon, did not ſee with our eyes, and meaſure him by our eſteem of him? As if he ſhould have ask'd our Counſel, before he had reſolved, and managed himſelf according to our Will, rather than his own. If he be patient to the wicked, we are apt to tax his holineſs, and accuſe him as an enemy to his own Law. If he inflict ſeverity upon the righteous, we are ready to ſuſpect his goodneſs, and charge him to be an enemy to his affectionate Creature. If he ſpare the *Nimrods* of the World, we are ready to ask *where is the God of Judgment*? * If he afflict the Pillars of the Earth, we are ready to queſtion where is the God of Mercy? 'Tis impoſſible, ſince the depraved nature of man, and the various intereſts and paſſions in the world, that infinite power and wiſdom can act righteouſly for the good of the Univerſe, but he will ſhake ſome corrupt intereſt or other upon the earth; ſo various are the inclinations of men, and ſuch a Weather-cock Judgment hath every Man in himſelf, that the divine method he applauds this day, upon a change of his intereſt he will cavil at the next: 'Tis impoſſible for the juſt orders of God to pleaſe the ſame perſon many weeks, ſcarce many minutes together: God muſt ceaſe to be God or to be holy, if he ſhould manage the concerns of the world according to the fancies of men.

* Mal. 2. 17.

How unreaſonable is it thus to impoſe Laws upon God? Muſt God revoke his own orders? Govern according to the dictates of his Creature? Muſt God, who hath only power and wiſdom to ſway the Scepter, become the obedient Subject of every mans humour, and manage every thing to ſerve the deſign of a ſimple Creature? This is not to be God, but to ſet the Creature in his Throne: Though this be not formally done, yet that it is interpretatively and practically done, is every hours experience.

3. *In impatience in our particular concerns.* 'Tis ordinary with man to charge God in his complaints in the time of affliction. Therefore 'tis the commendation the Holy Ghoſt gives to *Job*, Job 1. 22. That *in all this*, that is, in thoſe many waves that roll'd over him, he did *not charge God fooliſhly*, he never ſpake nor thought any thing unworthy of the Majeſty and righteouſneſs of God: Yet afterwards we find him warping; he nicknames the affliction to be Gods oppreſſion of him, and no act of his goodneſs, *Job* 10. 3. *Is it good for thee, that thou ſhouldſt oppreſs*? He ſeems to charge God with injuſtice, for puniſhing him when he was not wicked, for which he appeals to God; *thou knoweſt that I am not wicked*, ver. 7. and that God acted not like a Creator, ver. 8.

If our projects are diſappointed, what fretfulneſs againſt Gods management are our hearts rackt with? How do uncomely paſſions bubble up in us, interpretatively at leaſt wiſhing that the arms of his power had been bound, and the eye of his omniſcience been hoodwinkt, that we might have been left to our own liberty and deſigns? And this oftentimes when we have more reaſon to bleſs him, than repine at him: The

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Israelites murmured more against God in the Wilderness, with Manna in their mouths, than they did at *Pharoah* in the Brickilns, with their Garlike and Onyons between their Teeth. Tho we repine at Instruments in our afflictions, yet God counts it a reflection upon himself: The *Israelites* speaking against *Moses*, was in Gods interpretation a *Rebellion* against himself. * And Rebellion is always a desire of imposing Laws and Conditions upon those against whom the Rebellion is raised, The sottish dealings of the Vine-dressers in *Franconia* with the Statue of St. *Urban*, the Protector of the Vines, upon his own day, is an Emblem of our dealing with God: If it be a clear day and portend a prosperous Vintage, they honour the Statue and drink healths to it; if it be a rainy day, and presage a scantiness, they daub it with durt in indignation. We cast out our mire and durt against God when he acts cross to our wishes, and flatter him when the wind of his Providence joyns it self to the tide of our interest.

* Numb. 16. 41. *compar'd with* 17, 10.

Men set a high price upon themselves, and are angry God values them not at the same rate; as if their Judgment concerning themselves, were more piercing than his. This is to disannul Gods Judgment, and condemn him, and *count our selves righteous*; as 'tis *Job* 40. 8. This is the Epidemical disease of human nature; they think they deserve Caresses instead of Rods, and upon crosses are more ready to tear out the heart of God, than reflect humbly upon their own hearts. When we accuse God, we applaud our selves, and make our selves his superiors, intimating that we have acted more righteously to him than he to us, which is the highest manner of imposing Laws upon him; as that *Emperor* accused the Justice of God for snatching him out of the World too soon. * What an high piece of Practical Atheism is this, to desire that that infinite wisdom should be guided by our folly, and asperse the righteousness of God rather than blemish our own? Instead of silently submitting to his Will and adoring his Wisdom, we declaim against him, as an unwise and unjust governour: We would invert his order, make him the Steward and our selves the Proprietors of what we are and have: We deny our selves to be sinners and our mercies to be forfeited.

* *Cælum suspiciens vitam, &c. Vita Titi, cap. 10.*

4. 'Tis evidenced, *in envying the gifts and prosperities of others.* Envy hath a deep tincture of practical Atheism, and is a cause of Atheism. * We are unwilling to leave God to be the Proprietor and do what he will with his own, and as a Creator to do what he pleases with his Creatures: We assume a liberty to direct God what Portions, when and how he should bestow upon his Creatures: We would not let him chuse his own favourites, and pitch upon his own instruments for his Glory: As if God should have askt Counsel of us how he should dispose of his benefits. We are unwilling to leave to his wisdom the management of his own Judgments to the wicked, and the dispensation of his own love to our selves. This temper is natural: 'Tis as ancient as the first age of the world: *Adam* envyed God a felicity by himself, and would not spare a Tree that he had reserved as a mark of his Soveraignty: The Passion that God had given *Cain* to employ against his sin, he turns against his Creator: He was *wroth* with God * and with *Abel*; but envy was at the root, because his *Brothers Sacrifice was accepted and his refused.* How could he envy his accepted person, without reflecting upon the accepter of his offering? Good men have not been free from it. *Job* questions the goodness of God, that he should *shine upon the Counsel of the wicked*, Job 10. 3. *Jonah* had too much of *self* in fearing to be counted a *false Prophet*, when he came with absolute denunciations of wrath. * And when he could not bring a volley of destroying Judgments upon the *Ninivites*, he would shoot his fury against his Master, envying those poor people the benefit, and God the honour of his mercy: And this after he had been sent into the Whales belly to learn humiliation; which tho he exercised there, yet those two great branches of self-pride and envy were not lopt off from him in the belly of Hell. And God was fain to take pains with him, and by a gourd, scarce makes him ashamed of his peevishness. Envy is not like to cease, till all Atheism be Cashiered, and that is in Heaven.

* *Because wicked men flourish in the world.* Sollicitor ni esse putat Deos.

* Gen. 4. 5.

* Jonah 4. 2.

This sin is an imitation of the Devil, whose first sin upon Earth was Envy, as his first sin in Heaven was Pride. 'Tis a wishing that to our selves which the Devil asserted as his right, to give the *Kingdoms of the World to whom he pleased*: * 'Tis an anger with God, because he hath not given us a Patent for Government. It utters the

* Luke 4. 6.

the ſame Language in diſparagement of God, as *Abſolom* did in reflection on his Father, *If I were King in Iſrael, Juſtice* ſhould be better managed: If I were Lord of the world, there ſhould be more Wiſdom to diſcern the merits of men, and more righteouſneſs in diſtributing to them their ſeveral portions. Thus we impoſe Laws upon God, and would have the righteouſneſs of his Will ſubmit to the corruptions of ours, and have him lower himſelf to gratifie our minds, rather than fulfil his own: We charge the Author of thoſe gifts with injuſtice, that he hath not dealt equally; or with ignorance, that he hath miſtook his mark. In the ſame breath that we cenſure him by our peeviſhneſs, we would Guide him by our Wills.

This is an unreaſonable part of *Atheiſm*. If all were in the ſame ſtate and condition, the order of the world would be impaired: Is God bound to have a care of
* Job 18. 4. thee, and neglect all the world beſides? *Shall the Earth be forſaken for thee?* * *Joſeph* had reaſon to be diſpleaſed with his Brothers, if they had muttered, becauſe he gave *Benjamin* a double portion, and the reſt a ſingle. It was unfit that they, who had deſerved no gift at all, ſhould preſcribe him rules how to diſpenſe his own doles; much more unworthy it is to deal ſo with God; yet this is too rife.

5. It is evidenced, *in corrupt matter or ends of Prayer and Praiſe*. When we are importunate for thoſe things, that we know not whether the righteouſneſs, holineſs, and wiſdom of God can grant, becauſe he hath not diſcovered his will in any promiſe to beſtow them; we would then impoſe ſuch conditions on God, which he never obliged himſelf to grant; when we pray for things not ſo much to *glorifie God*, which ought to be the *end* of Prayer, as to gratifie our ſelves. We acknowledge indeed by the act of petitioning, *that there is a God*; but we would have him un-God himſelf to be at our beck, and debaſe himſelf to ſerve our turns. When we deſire thoſe things, which are repugnant to thoſe attributes, whereby he doth manage the Government of the world? VVhen by ſome ſuperficial ſervices we think we have gained indulgence to ſins: VVhich ſeems to be thought of the Strumpet in her paying her Vows, to wallow more freely in the mire of her ſenſual pleaſures; * *I have peace offerings with me, this day I have paid my vows, I have made my peace with God, and have entertainment for thee*: Or when men deſire God to bleſs them in the Commiſſion of ſome ſin. As when *Balak* and *Balaam* offered *Sacrifices*, that they might proſper in the *Curſing of the Iſraelites*, Numb. 25. 1. *&c.*
* Pro. 7. 14.

So for a Man to pray to God to ſave him while he neglects the means of Salvation appointed by God: Or to renew him when he ſlights the VVord, the only Inſtrument to that purpoſe: This is to impoſe Laws upon God, contrary to the declared VVill and Wiſdom of God, and to deſire him to ſlight his own inſtitutions, VVhen we come into the preſence of God with luſts reeking in our hearts, and leap from ſin to duty, we would impoſe the Law of our corruption on the holineſs of God. VVhile we pray the *Will of God may be done*, ſelf-love wiſhes its own will may be performed, as tho God ſhould ſerve our humors, when we will not obey his precepts. And when we make vows under any affliction, what is it often but a ſecret contrivance to bend and flatter him to our conditions? VVe will ſerve him if he will reſtore us; we think thereby to compound the buſineſs with him and bring him down to our terms.

6. 'Tis evidenced; *In poſitive and bold interpretations of the Judgments of God in the World*. To interpret the Judgments of God to the diſadvantage of the ſufferer, unleſs it be an unuſual Judgment, and have a remarkable hand of God in it, and the ſin be rendred plainly legible in the affliction, is a preſumption of this nature. VVhen men will Judge the *Galileans*, whoſe blood *Pilate* mingled with the Sacrifices, *greater ſinners* than others, and themſelves righteous, becauſe no drops of it were daſht upon them. Or when *Shimei*, being of the Houſe of *Saul*, ſhall Judge according to his own intereſt and deſires *Davids* flight upon *Abſolons* rebellion to be a puniſhment for invading the rights of *Sauls* Family, and depriving him of the ſucceſſion in the Kingdom, * as if he had been of Gods Privy Council when he decreed ſuch acts of Juſtice in the world.
* 2 Sam. 16. 5.

Thus we would faſten our own VVills as a Law or Motive upon God, and interpret his acts according to the Motions of *ſelf*. Is it not too ordinary when God ſends an affliction upon thoſe that bear ill will to us, to Judge it to be a righting of

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our cauſe, to be a fruit of Gods concern for us in revenging our wrongs, as if we *had heard the ſecrets of God*, or as *Eliphaz* ſaith, *had turned over the records of Heaven*, Job 15. 8. This is a judgment according to ſelf-love, not a divine rule; and impoſeth Laws upon Heaven, implying a ſecret wiſh, that God would take care only of them, make our concerns his own; not in ways of kindneſs and juſtice, but according to our fancies: And this is common in the prophane World in thoſe curſes they ſo readily ſpit out upon any affront; as if God were bound to draw his Arrows and ſhoot them into the heart of all their offenders at their beck and pleaſure.

7. It is evidenc'd, *In mixing rules for the Worſhip of God, with thoſe which have been ordered by him.* Since men are moſt prone to live by ſenſe, 'tis no wonder that a ſenſible worſhip, which affects their outward ſenſe, with ſome kind of amazement, is dear to them, and ſpiritual Worſhip, moſt loathſome.

Pompous rites have been the great Engine wherewith the Devil hath deceived the Souls of men, and wrought them to a nauſeating the *ſimplicity* of divine Worſhip, as unworthy the Majeſty and excellency of God. * Thus the *Jews* would not underſtand the glory of the *ſecond Temple* in the preſence of the *Meſſiah*, becauſe it had not the pompous grandeur of that of *Solomons* erecting. * 2 Cor. 11. 3.

Hence in all Ages men have been forward to diſfigure Gods models, and dreſs up a brat of their own; as though God had been defective in providing for his own honour in his inſtitutions without the aſſiſtance of his Creature. This hath always been in the World: The old World had their imaginations, and the new World hath continued them. The *Iſraelites* in the midſt of miracles, and under the memory of a famous deliverance would erect a Calf. The *Phariſees*, that ſate in *Moſes Chair*, would coyn *new Traditions* and enjoyn them to be as currant as the law of God. * *Papiſts* will be blending the Chriſtian appointments with *Pagan* Ceremonies, to pleaſe the carnal fancies of the common people. *Altars have been multiplied*, under the knowledge of the Law of God. * Intereſt is made the ballance of the conveniency of Gods injunctions. *Jeroboam* fitted a worſhip to politick ends, and poſted up *Calves* to prevent his ſubjects revolting from his Scepter, which might be occaſioned by their reſort to *Hieruſalem*, and converſe with the body of the people from whom they were ſeparated. * Men will be putting in their own dictates with Gods laws, and are unwilling he ſhould be the ſole Governour of the World without their Counſel: They will not ſuffer him to be Lord of that which is purely and ſolely his concern. How often hath the practice of the *Primitive* Church, the cuſtom wherein we are bred, the Sentiments of our Anceſtors been owned as a more authentick rule in matters of Worſhip, than the mind of God delivered in his word? 'Tis natural by Creation to Worſhip God; and it is as natural by corruption for man to Worſhip him in a humane way, and not in a divine. Is not this to impoſe Laws upon God? To eſteem our ſelves wiſer than he? To think him negligent of his own ſervice, and that our feeble brains can find out ways to accommodate his honour, better than himſelf hath done? Thus do men for the moſt part equal their own imaginations to Gods oracles: As *Solomon* built a high place to *Moloch* and *Chemoch*, upon the Mount of Olives, to face on the Eaſt part *Hieruſalem* and the *Temple*: * This is not only to impoſe Laws on God, but alſo to make *ſelf* the Standard of them. * Mat. 13. 6. * Hoſ. 8. 12. * 1 Kings 12. 27. * 1 Kings 11. 7.

8. 'Tis evidenc'd, *in fitting interpretations of Scripture to their own minds and humors.* Like the *Lacedemonians*, that dreſt the Images of their Gods according to the faſhion of their own Country: We would wring Scripture to ſerve our own deſigns; and Judge the Law of God by the law of ſin; and make the Serpentine ſeed in us to be the interpreter of Divine Oracles. This is like *Belſhazar*; to drink healths out of the ſacred Veſſels. As God is the Author of his Law and Word, ſo he is the beſt interpreter of it; the Scripture having an impreſs of divine Wiſdom, Holineſs and goodneſs, muſt be regarded according to that impreſs, with a ſubmiſſion and meekneſs of Spirit and Reverence of God in it. But when in our enquiries into the word, we enquire not of God, but conſult fleſh and blood, the temper of the times wherein we live, or the ſatisfaction of a party we ſide withal, and impoſe gloſſes upon it according to our own fancies; it is to put Laws upon God and make *ſelf* the rule of him, He that interprets the law to bolſter up ſome eager appetite againſt the Will of the law-giver, aſcribes to himſelf as great an authority as he that enacted it.

9. *In*

9. *In falling off from* God *after ſome fair compliances, when his Will grateth upon us and croſſeth ours.* They will walk with him as far as he pleaſeth them, and leave him upon the firſt diſtaſt, as tho God muſt obſerve their humors more than they his Will. *Amos* muſt be ſuſpended from Prophecying, becauſe the *Land could not bear his words*, and his diſcourſes condemned their unworthy practices againſt God. * The *Young man* came not to receive directions from our Saviour, but expected a Confirmation of his *own rules*, rather than an impoſition of new. * He rather cares for Commendations than Inſtructions, and upon the diſappointment turns his back; *He was ſad*, that Chriſt would not ſuffer him to be rich and a Chriſtian together, and leaves him becauſe his Command was not ſuitable to the Law of his Covetouſneſs. Some truths that are at a further diſtance from us, we can *hear gladly*. But when the Conſcience begins to ſmart under others, if God will not obſerve our Wills, we will with *Herod* be a Law to our ſelves. *

* Amos 7. 10. &c.

* Mark 10. 17, 22.

* Mark 6. 20, 27.

More inſtances might be obſerved.

Ingratitude is a ſetting up *ſelf*, and an impoſing Laws on God. 'Tis as much as to ſay God did no more than he was obliged to do; as if the Mercies we have, were an Act of Duty in God, and not of bounty. Inſatiable deſires after wealth. Hence are thoſe ſpeeches, Jam. 4. 13. *We will go into ſuch a City and buy and ſell*, &c. *to get gain.* As tho they had the Command of God, and God muſt Lacquey after their Wills. When our hearts are not contented with any ſupply of our wants, but are craving an overplus for our luſt: When we are unſatisfied in the midſt of plenty, and ſtill like the *Grave*, cry *give, give.*

Incorrigibleneſs under affliction, *&c.*

Secondly, 2. The ſecond main thing. As Man would be a Law to himſelf; *So he would be his own End and Happineſs in oppoſition to God.*

Here four things ſhall be diſcourſed on.

1. *Man would make himſelf his own End and Happineſs.*
2. *He would make any thing his End and Happineſs rather than* God.
3. *He would make himſelf the End of all Creatures.*
4. *He would make himſelf the End of* God.

Firſt, 1. *Man would make himſelf his own End and Happineſs.* As God ought to be eſteem'd the *firſt cauſe*, in point of our dependance on him, ſo he ought to be our *laſt end*, in point of our enjoyment of him. When we therefore truſt in our ſelves, we refuſe him as the firſt cauſe; and when we act for our ſelves and expect a bleſſedneſs from our ſelves, we refuſe him as the Chiefeſt good, and laſt End, which is an undeniable piece of Atheiſm. For man is a Creature of a higher rank than others in the world; and was not made as Animals, Plants, and other works of the Divine power, materially to glorifie God; but a rational Creature, intentionally to Honour God by obedience to his Rule, dependance on his goodneſs and zeal for his glory. 'Tis therefore as much a ſlighting of God, for man, a Creature, to ſet himſelf up as his own End, as to regard himſelf as his own Law.

For the diſcovery of this, obſerve that there is a *three-fold ſelf-love.*

1. *Natural*, which is common to us by the Law of nature with other Creatures, Inanimate, as well as Animate; and ſo cloſely twiſted with the nature of every Creature, that it cannot be diſſolved, but with the diſſolution of nature it ſelf. It conſiſted not with the wiſdom and goodneſs of God to Create an unnatural nature, or to Command any thing unnatural: Nor doth he; for when he Commands us to Sacrifice our Selves, and deareſt lives for himſelf, 'tis not without a promiſe of a more noble ſtate and being, in exchange for what we loſe. This ſelf-love is not only commendable, but neceſſary, as a *Rule* to meaſure that duty we owe to our Neighbour, whom we cannot love as our ſelves, if we do not *firſt love* our ſelves: God having planted this ſelf-love in our nature, makes this natural principle the meaſure of our affection to all Mankind of the ſame blood with our ſelves.

2. *Carnal ſelf-love*, when a man loves himſelf above God, in oppoſition to God, with a contempt of God; when our thoughts, affections, deſigns, Center only in our own fleſhly intereſt; and rifle God of his honour, to make a preſent of it to our ſelves: Thus the natural ſelf-love, in it ſelf good, becomes Criminal by the exceſs, when it would be ſuperior and not ſubordinate to God.

3. *A*

3. *A Gracious self-love* : When we love our selves for higher ends than the nature of a Creature, as a Creature, dictates, *Viz.*. in subserviency to the Glory of God. This is a reduction of the revolted Creature, to his true and happy order. A Christian is therefore said to be *Created in Christ to good works.* * As all Creatures were Created, not only for themselves, but for the honour of God; so the grace of the new Creation carries a Man to answer this end, and to order all his operations to the Honour of God, and his well pleasing. * Eph. 1. 10.

The *first* is from *nature*, the *second* from *sin*, the *third* from *Grace.* The *first* is implanted by *Creation*, the *second* the fruit of *Corruption*, and the *third* is by the powerful *operation of Grace.*

This *Carnal self-love* is set up in the stead of God as our last end; like the Sea, which all the little and great streams of our actions run to, and rest in.

And this is,

1. *Natural.* It sticks as close to us as our Souls; it is as natural as sin; the foundation of all the evil in the world: As *self*-abhorrency is the first stone that is laid in Conversion: So an inordinate self-love was the first inlet to all iniquity: As grace is a rising from *self* to Center in God; so is sin a shrinking from God., into the mire of a Carnal selfishness: Since every Creature is neerest to it self and next to God, it cannot fall from God, but must immediatly sink into *self.* * And therefore all sins are well said to be branches, or modifications of this fundamental passion. What is wrath, but a defence and strengthning *self*, against the attempts of some real or imaginary evil? Whence springs envy, but from a self-love, grieved at its own wants in the midst of anothers enjoyment, able to supply it? What is impatience, but a regret, that *self* is not provided for at the rate of our wish, and that it hath met with a shock against supposed merit? What is pride, but a sense of self-worth, a desire to have *self* of a higher Elevation than others? What is drunkenness, but a seeking a satisfaction for sensual *self* in the spoils of reason? No sin is committed as sin, but as it pretends a self-satisfaction. Sin indeed may well be term'd a mans self, because it is, since the loss of original righteousness, the form that overspreads every part of our Souls. The understanding assents to nothing false, but under the Notion of true, and the Will embraceth nothing evil but under the Notion of good; but the rule whereby we measure the truth and goodness of proposed objects, is not the unerring word, but the inclinations of *self*, the gratifying of which is the aim of our whole lives. * *More*, Dial. 2. § 17. *pa.* 274.

Sin and *self* are all one. What is called a *living to sin* in one place, * is called a living to *self* in another: * *That they that live should not live unto themselves.* And upon this account it is that both the Hebrew word, חטא and the Greek word, ἁμαρτάνω, used in Scripture to express sin, properly signifie to miss the mark, and swerve from that *white* to which all our actions should be directed, *viz.* the glory of God. When we fell to loving our selves, we fell from loving God: And therefore when the *Psalmist* saith, *Psal.* 14. 2. There were none that *sought God*, *viz.* as the last end; he presently adds, *they are all gone aside*, *viz.* from their true mark, and therefore become filthy. * Rom. 6. * 1 Cor. 5. 15.

2. Since 'tis natural, *'Tis also universal.* * The not seeking God is as universal as our ignorance of him. No Man in a state of nature, but hath it predominant; no renewed Man on this side Heaven, but hath it partially: The one hath it flourishing, the other hath it strugling. If to aim at the glory of God as the chief end, *and not to live to our selves*, be the greatest mark of the restauration of the Divine Image, * and a conformity to Christ, who *glorified not himself*, * but the *Father*: * then every man wallowing in the mire of Corrupt nature, pays a homage to *self*, as a renewed Man is byast by the honour of God. * Psal. 14. 1. * 1 Cor. 5. 15. * Heb. 1. 5. * Joh. 17. 4.

The Holy-Ghost excepts none from this Crime, *Phil.* 2. 21. *All seek their own.* 'Tis rare for them to look above or beyond themselves: Whatsoever may be the immediate subject of their thoughts and enquiries, yet the utmost end and stage, is their profit, honour or pleasure: Whatever it be, that immediatly possesses the Mind and Will, *self* sits like a Queen, and sways the Scepter, and orders things at that rate, that God is Excluded, and can find no room in all his thoughts, Psa. 10. 4. *The wicked through the pride of his Countenance will not seek after God, God is not*

in all his thoughts. The whole little World of Man is ſo overflowed with a Deluge of *ſelf*, that the *Dove*, the Glory of the Creator, can find no place where to ſet its Foot; and if ever it gain the favour of Admittance, 'tis to diſguiſe and be a Vaſſal to ſome carnal project; as the Glory of God was a Maſk for the murdering his Servants.

'Tis from the Power of this principle, that the difficulty of Converſion ariſeth. As there is no greater pleaſure to a believing Soul, than the giving it ſelf up to God; and no ſtronger deſire in him, than to have a fixed and unchangeable Will to ſerve the deſigns of his Honour: So there is no greater torment to a wicked Man, than to part with his carnal Ends, and lay down the *Dagon* of *ſelf* at the feet of the Ark. Self-Love, and Self-Opinion in the *Phariſees*, way-layd all the entertainment of Truth, *John* 5. 44. *They ſought Honour one of another, and not the Honour which comes from God.* 'Tis of ſo large an Extent, and ſo inſinuating Nature, that it winds it ſelf into the exerciſe of moral Virtues, mixeth with our *Charity*, *Matt.* 6. 2. and finds nouriſhment in the Aſhes of *Martyrdom*, 1 Cor. 13. 3.

This making *our ſelves our End*, will appear in a few things.

1. *In frequent ſelf applauſes, and inward overweening Reflections.* Nothing more ordinary in the Natures of Men, than a dotage on their own Perfections, Acquiſitions, or actions in the World: *Moſt think of themſelves above what they ought to think*, *Rom.* 12. 3, 4. Few think of themſelves ſo meanly as they ought to think. This ſticks as cloſe to us as our Skin. And as Humility is the Beauty of Grace, this is the filthieſt Soyl of Nature: Our thoughts run more delightfully upon the track of our own Perfections, than the excellency of God. And when we find any thing of a ſeeming worth, that may make us glitter in the eyes of the World; how cheerfully do we graſp and embrace our ſelves? When the groſſer prophaneſſes of Men have been diſcarded, and the Flouds of them damm'd up; the Head of Corruption, whence they ſprang, will ſwell the higher within, in *ſelf-applauding* ſpeculations of their own Reformation, without acknowledgements of their own weakneſſes, and deſires of Divine Aſſiſtance to make a further Progreſs. *I thank God I am not like this Publican.* * A ſelf-reflection, with a contempt rather than compaſſion to his Neighbor, is frequent in every *Phariſee*. The vapors of ſelf-affections, in our clouded underſtandings, like thoſe in the Air in miſty mornings, alter the appearance of things, and make them look bigger than they are. This is thought by ſome to be the Sin of the fallen Angels, who reflecting upon their own natural Excellency ſuperior to other Creatures, would find a Bleſſedneſs in their own Nature, as God did in his; and make themſelves the laſt end of their actions. 'Tis from this Principle we are naturally ſo ready to compare our ſelves, rather with thoſe that are below us, than with thoſe that are above us; and often think thoſe that are above us, inferior to us, and ſecretly glory that we are become none of the meaneſt and loweſt in natural or moral Excellencies.

* Luk. 18. 11.

How far were the gracious Pen-men of the *Scripture* from this, who when poſſeſſed and directed by the Spirit of God, and filled with a Senſe of him; inſtead of applauding *themſelves*, publiſh upon Record their *own faults* to all the Eyes of the World? And if *Peter*, as ſome think, dictated the Goſpel which *Mark* wrote as his Amanuenſis; 'tis obſervable, that his Crime in denying his Maſter, is aggravated in that Goſpel in ſome Circumſtances, and leſs ſpoken of his Repentance, than in the other Evangeliſts: *When he thought thereon, he wept.* * But in the other, *He went out and wept bitterly.* *

* Mark 14. 72.
* Matt. 26. 37.
* Luke 22. 62.

This is one part of Atheiſm and Self-Idolatry, to magnifie our ſelves with the Forgetfulneſs, and to the injury of our Creator.

2. *In aſcribing the glory of what we do or have, to our ſelves, to our own Wiſdom, Power, Vertue*, &c. How ſtaunting is *Nebuchadnezzar*, at the Proſpect of *Babylon*, which he had exalted to be the Head of ſo great an Empire, *Dan.* 4. 30. *Is not this great* Babylon *that I have built? For*, &c. He ſtruts upon the Battlements of his Palace, as if there were no God but himſelf in the World, while his eye could not but ſee the Heavens above him to be none of his own framing; attributing his Acquiſitions to his own Arm, and referring them to his own Honour, for his own delight; not for the Honour of God, as a Creature ought; nor for the advantage of his Subjects, as the Duty of a Prince: He regards *Babylon* as his

Heaven

Heaven, and himself as his Idol, as if he were all, and God nothing. An Example of this we have in the present Age. But it is often observed, that God vindicates his own Honour, brings the most heroical men to contempt and unfortunate ends, as a punishment of their Pride, as he did here, *Dan.* 4. 31. *While the word was in the Kings Mouth, there fell a Voice from Heaven,* &c. * This was *Herods* Crime, to suffer others to do it: He had discovered his Eloquence actively, and made himself his own end passively, in approving the flatteries of the people; and offered not with one hand to God *the glory*, he received from his people with the other. * *Samosatenus* is reported to put down the Hymns which were sung for the glory of God and Christ, and caused Songs to be sung in the Temple for his own Honour.

* *Sanderſons* Sermons.

* Acts 12. 22, 23.

When any thing succeeds well, we are ready to attribute it to our own Prudence, and Industry: If we meet with a Cross, we fret against the Stars and Fortune, and second Causes, and sometimes against God; as they *curse God* as well as *their King*, Esa. 8. 21. not acknowledging any defect in themselves. The *Psalmist* by his Repetition of *Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy Name give Glory*, Psal. 115. 1. implies the naturality of this temper, and the difficulty to cleanse our hearts from those Self-reflections. If it be *Angelical* to refuse an undue Glory stollen from Gods Throne, *Revela.* 22. 8, 9. 'tis *Diabolical* to accept and cherish it. To seek our *own Glory is not Glory*, Pro. 25. 27. 'Tis vile, and the dishonour of a Creature, who by the Law of his Creation is referred to another end. So much as we Sacrifice to our own credit, to the dexterity of our hands, or the sagacity of our wit, we detract from God.

3. *In desires to have self-pleasing Doctrines.* When we cannot endure to hear any thing that crosses the Flesh; though the wise man tells us, 'tis better to hear the *Rebuke of the Wise, than the Song of Fools*, Eccles. 7. 5. If *Hanani* the Seer reprove King *Asa* for not relying on the Lord; his passion shall be armed for *self* against the Prophet, and arrest him a Prisoner, 2 *Chron.* 16. 10. If *Micaiah* declare to *Ahab* the Evil that shall befall him, *Amon* the Governour shall receive Orders to clap him up in a Dungeon. Fire doth not sooner seize upon combustible matter, than Fury will be kindled, if *self* be but pincht. This interest of lustful *self* barr'd the heart of *Herodias* against the entertainment of the Truth, and caused her savagely to dip her hands in the blood of the *Baptist*, to make him a Sacrifice to that *inward Idol.* *

* Mark 6. 18, 19, 28.

4. *In being highly concerned for Injuries done to our selves, and little or not at all concerned for Injuries done to God.* How will the blood rise in us, when our Honour and Reputation is invaded, and scarce reflect upon the Dishonour God suffers in our sight and hearing, Violent Passions will transform us into *Bonaarges* in the one Case, and our unconcernedness render us *Gallios* in the other. We shall extenuate that which concerns God, and aggravate that which concerns our selves. Nothing but the Death of *Jonathan*, a first born and a generous Son, will satisfie his Father *Saul*, when the Authority of his Edict was broken by his tasting of Hony; though he had recompensed his Crime committed in Ignorance, by the purchase of a Gallant Victory. But when the Authority of God was violated in saving the *Amalekites* Cattle, against the Command of a greater Soveraign than himself; he can daub the business, and excuse it with a Design of Sacrificing. He was not so earnest in hindring the people from the breach of *Gods Command*, as he was in vindicating the Honour of his *own*: * He could hardly admit of an excuse to salve his own Honour; but in the Concerns of Gods Honour, pretend Piety, to cloak his Avarice.

* 1Sam. 15. 21.

And it is often seen, when the violation of Gods Authority, and the stain of our own Reputation are coupled together; we are more troubled for what disgraces us, than for what dishonours God: When *Saul* had thus transgrest, he is desirous that *Samuel* would turn again to preserve his own honour before the Elders, rather than grieved that he had broken the Command of God, *v.* 30.

5. *In trusting in our selves.* When we consult with our own Wit and Wisdom, more than inquire of God, and ask leave of him: As the *Assyrian*, *Isa.* 10. 13. *By the Strength of my hands I have done it, and by Wisdom, for I am prudent.* When we attempt things in the strength of our own heads and parts, and trust in our own Industry, without application to God, for direction, Blessing and success, we affect the priviledge of the Deity, and make Gods of our selves. The same language in reality with *Ajax* in *Sophocles*: Others think to overcome with the assistance of the Gods,

but I hope to gain Honour without them. Dependence and Truſt is an act due from the Creature only to God. Hence God aggravates the crime of the Jews in truſting in *Egypt*, Iſa. 31. 3. *the Egyptians are men and not Gods.* Confidence in our ſelves is a defection from God, *Jer.* 17. 5. And when we depart from and caſt off God to depend upon our ſelves, which is but an arm of fleſh, we chuſe the arm of fleſh for our God; We rob God of that confidence, we ought to place in him, and that adoration which is due to him, and build it upon another foundation: Not that we are to neglect the reaſon and parts God hath given us, or ſpend more time in Prayer than in conſulting about our own affairs; but to mix our own intentions in buſineſs, with Ejaculations to Heaven, and take God along with us in every motion: But certainly it is an Idolizing of *ſelf*, when we are more diligent in our attendance on our own wit, then fervent in our recourſes to God.

6. The power of ſinful *ſelf*, above the efficacy of the notion of God, is evident *in our workings for carnal ſelf againſt the light of our own Conſciences.* When men of ſublime reaſon, and clear natural Wiſdom, are voluntary ſlaves to their own luſts, row againſt the ſtream of their own Conſciences, ſerve carnal *ſelf* with a diſgraceful and diſturbing drudgery, making it their God, Sacrificing natural *ſelf*, all Sentiments of virtue, and the quiet of their lives, to the pleaſure, honour, and ſatisfaction of carnal *ſelf*: This is a proſtituting God in his Deputy Conſcience, to carnal affections, when their eyes are ſhut againſt the inlightnings of it, and their ears deaf to its voice, but open to the leaſt breath and whiſper of *ſelf*: A debt that the Creature owes Supreamly to God.

Much more might be ſaid, but let us ſee what Atheiſm lurks in this, and how it intrencheth upon God.

1. *'Tis a uſurping God's prerogative.* 'Tis Gods prerogative to be his own end, and act for his own glory; becauſe there is nothing Superior to him in Excellency and Goodneſs to act for: He had not his Being from any thing without himſelf, whereby he ſhould be obliged to act for any thing but himſelf. To make our ſelves then our *laſt End*, is to corrival God in his being, the Supreme Good, and Bleſſedneſs to himſelf: As if we were our own Principle, the Author of our own Being, and were not obliged to a higher Power than our ſelves, for what we are and have. To direct the Lines of all our Motions to our ſelves, is to imply that they firſt iſſued only from our ſelves. When we are Rivals to God in his chief end, we own or deſire to be Rivals to him in the principle of his being: This is to ſet our ſelves in the place of God. All things have ſomething without them, and above them as their end: All inferior Creatures act for ſome Superior order in the rank of Creation; the leſſer animals are deſign'd for the greater, and all for man: Man therefore for ſomething nobler than himſelf. To make our ſelves therefore our own end, is to deny any Superior, to whom we are to direct our actions. God alone being the Supreme being, can be his own ultimate end: For if there were any thing higher and better than God, the purity and righteouſneſs of his own nature would cauſe him to act for and toward that as his chiefeſt mark: This is the higheſt Sacriledge, to alienate the proper good and rights of God, and employ them for our own uſe; to ſteal from him his own honour, and put it into our own Cabinets; like thoſe birds that raviſht the Sacrifice from the Altar and carried it to their own neſts *: When we love only our ſelves, and act for no other end but our ſelves, we inveſt our ſelves with the Dominion which is the right of God, and take the Crown from his head: For as the Crown belongs to the King; ſo to love his own Will, to Will by his own Will and for himſelf, is the property of God; becauſe he hath no other Will, no other End above him to be the rule and ſcope of his actions.

* Sabunde *tit.* 140.

When therefore we are by ſelf-love transformed wholly into our ſelves, we make our ſelves our own foundation, without God and againſt God; when we mind our own glory and praiſe, we would have a Royal State equal with God, *who Created all things for himſelf.* * What can man do more for God than he naturally doth for himſelf, ſince he doth all thoſe things for himſelf which he ſhould do for God? We own our ſelves to be our own Creators and Benefactors, and fling off all Sentiments of gratitude to him.

* Pro. 16. 4.

2. *It is a vilifying of God.* When we make our ſelves our End, 'tis plain language that God is not our happineſs: We poſt-pone God to our ſelves, as if he were

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not an object so excellent and fit for our love as our selves are: (for it is irrational to make that our end, which is not God, and not the chiefest good.) 'Tis to deny him to be better than we, to make him not to be so good as our selves, and so fit to be our chiefest good as our selves are; that he hath not deserved any such acknowledgment at our hands by all that he hath done for us: We assert our selves his superiors by such kind of acting, tho we are infinitely more inferior to God than any Creature can be to us. Man cannot dishonour God more than by referring that to his own glory, which God made for his own praise, upon account whereof he only hath a right to glory and praise and none else. He thus *changeth the glory of the incorruptible God into a Corruptible Image*; * a perishing fame and reputation, which extends but little beyond the limits of his own habitation; or if it doth, survives but a few years, and perishes at last with the age wherein he lived. * Rom. 1. 23.

3. *'Tis as much as in us lies a destroying of God.* By this temper we destroy that God that made us, because we destroy his intention and his honour. God cannot outlive his Will and his glory: Because he cannot have any other Rule but his own Will, or any other end but his own honour. The setting up *self* as our end, puts a nullity upon the true Deity; by paying to our selves that respect and honour which is due to God, we make the true God as no God. Whosoever makes himself a King of his Princes Rights and Territories, manifests an intent to throw him out of his Government: To chuse our selves as our end is to undeifie God, since to be the last end of a rational Creature is a right inseparable from the nature of the Deity; and therefore not to set God, but *self* always before us is to acknowledge no being but our selves to be God.

Secondly, 2. The second thing, *Man would make any thing his End and happiness rather than God.* An end is so necessary in all our actions, that he deserves not the name of a rational Creature, that proposeth not one to himself. This is the distinction between rational Creatures and others; they act with a formal intention, whereas other Creatures are directed to their end by a natural instinct, and moved by nature to what the others should be moved by reason: When a Man therefore Acts for that end, which was not intended him by the Law of his Creation, nor is suited to the noble faculties of his Soul; He acts contrary to God, overturns his order, and merits no better a title than that of an Atheist.

A man may be said two ways to make a thing his last end and chief good.

1. *Formally.* When he actually Judges this or that thing to be his chiefest good and orders all things to it. So man doth not formally Judge sin to be good, or any object which is the incentive of sin to be his last end: This cannot be while he hath the exercise of his rational faculties.

2. *Vertually and implicitely.* When he loves any thing against the Command of God, and prefers in the stream of his actions the enjoyment of that, before the fruition of God; and lays out more strength and expends more time in the gaining that, than answering the true end of his Creation: When he acts so as if something below God could make him happy without God, or that God could not make him happy without the addition of something else. Thus the Glutton makes a God of his dainties; the ambitious Man of his Honour; the incontinent Man of his lust; and the Covetous Man of his wealth; and Consequently esteems them as his chiefest good, and the most noble end, to which he directs his thoughts: Thus he vilifies and lessens the true God, which can make him happy, in a multitude of false Gods, that can only render him miserable. He that loves pleasure more than God, says in his heart there is no God but his pleasure. He that loves his belly more than God, says in his heart there is no God but his belly: Their happiness is not accounted to lie in that God that made the World, but in the pleasure or profit they make their God.

In this, tho a Created object be the immediate and subordinate term to which we turn, yet principally and ultimately, the affection to it terminates in *self*: nothing is naturally entertained by us, but as it affects our sense or mingles with some promise of advantage to us.

This is seen,

1. *In the fewer thoughts we have of God than of any thing else.* Did we apprehend God to be our chiefest good and highest end, should we grudge him the pains of a few days thoughts upon him? Men in their Travels are frequently thinking

thinking upon their intended ſtage: But our thoughts run upon new acquiſitions to increaſe our wealth, rear up our Families, Revenge our injuries and ſupport our reputation: Trifles poſſeſs us; but *God is not in all our thoughts*, * ſeldom the ſole object of them. We have durable thoughts of tranſitory things, and flitting thoughts of a durable and Eternal good. The Covenant of grace engageth the whole heart to God, and bars any thing elſe from ingroſſing it: But what ſtrangers are God and the Souls of moſt men? Though we have the knowledge of him by Creation, yet he is for the moſt part an unknown God in the Relations wherein he ſtands to us, becauſe a God undelighted in: Hence it is, as one obſerves, * that becauſe we obſerve not the ways of Gods Wiſdom, conceive not of him in his vaſt perfections, nor are ſtricken with an admiration of his goodneſs, that we have fewer good ſacred Poems, than of any other kind. The wits of men hang the wing when they come to exerciſe their reaſons and fancies about God. Parts and ſtrength are given us, as well as Corn and Wine to the *Iſraelites* for the ſervice of God; but thoſe are Conſecrated to ſome Curſed *Baal*. * Like *Venus* in the *Poet*, we forſake Heaven to follow ſome *Adonis*.

* Pſa. 10. 4.

* Jackſon *vol. book* 1. *cap.* 14. *pa.* 48.

* Hoſ. 2. 8.

2. *In the greedy purſuit of the World.* * When we purſue worldly wealth or worldly reputation with more vehemency than the riches of grace, or the favour of God. When we have a fooliſh imagination, that our happineſs conſiſts in them, we prefer Earth before Heaven, broken Ciſterns which can hold no water, before an ever Springing Fountain of glory and bliſs. And, as though there were a defect in God, cannot be content with him as our portion, without an addition of ſomething inferior to him: When we make it our hopes and ſay to the wedge, *thou art my Confidence*; and rejoyce more becauſe it is great, and becauſe *our hand hath gotten much*, than in the priviledge of Communion with God and the promiſe of an everlaſting fruition of him. * This is ſo groſs, that *Job* joyns it with the *Idolatry* of the *Sun* and *Moon*, which he purgeth himſelf of, *ver.* 26. And the *Apoſtle* when he mentions *Covetouſneſs* or Covetous men, paſſes it not over without the title of *Idolatry* to the vice, and *Idolater* to the perſon: * In that it is a preferring Clay and Dirt as an end more deſirable than the original of all goodneſs, in regard of affection and dependence.

* Quod quiſq; præ cæteris petit, ſummum judicat bonum. *Boet. lib.* 3. *pa.* 24.

* Job 31. 24. 25.

* Col. 3. 5. Eph. 5. 5.

3. *In a ſtrong addictedneſs to ſenſual pleaſures*, Phil. 3. 19. Who make their *belly their God*; ſubjecting the truths of God to the maintenance of their Luxury. In debaſing the higher faculties to project for the ſatisfaction of the ſenſitive appetite as their chief happineſs, whereby many render themſelves no better than a rout of ſublimated brutes among men, and groſs Atheiſts to God. When mens thoughts run alſo upon inventing new methods to ſatisfie their beſtial appetite, forſaking the pleaſures which are to be had in God, which are the delights of Angels for the ſatisfaction of brutes: This is an open and unqueſtionable refuſal of God for our end, when our reſt is in them, as if they were the chief good, and not God.

4. *In paying a ſervice upon any ſucceſs in the World, to Inſtruments more than to God the Soveraign Author.* When *they Sacrifice to their Net, and burn incenſe to their Drag.* * Not that the *Aſſyrian* did offer a Sacrifice to his arms, but aſcrib'd to them what was due only to God, and appropriated the Victory to his forces and arms. The Prophet alludes to thoſe that worſhipped their Warlike Inſtruments, whereby they had attained great Victories; and thoſe Artificers who worſhipped the Tools by which they had purchaſed great wealth, in the ſtead of God; preferring them as the cauſes of their happineſs before God who governs the World.

* Hab. 1. 16.

And are not our affections, upon the receiving of good things, more cloſely fixed to the Inſtruments of conveyance, than to the chief benefactor, from whoſe Coffers they are taken? Do we not more delight in them and hug them, with a greater indearedneſs; as if all our happineſs depended on them, and God were no more than a bare ſpectator? Juſt as if when a Man were warmed by a beam, he ſhould adore that and not admire the *Sun*, that darts it out upon him.

5. *In paying a reſpect to man more than God.* When in a publick attendance on his ſervice, we will not laugh, or be gariſh, becauſe Men ſee us: But our hearts ſhall be in a ridiculous poſture, playing with feathers and trifling fancies, tho God ſee us;

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as tho our happineſs conſiſted in the pleaſing of Men, and our miſery in a reſpect to God: There is no fool that ſaith *in his heart* there is *no God*; but he ſets up ſomething in his heart *as a God.*

This is,

1. *A debaſing of God.* 1. *In ſetting up a Creature.* It ſpeaks God leſs amiable than the Creature, ſhort of thoſe perfections, which ſome ſilly ſordid thing which hath engroſſed their affections, is poſſeſſed with: As if the cauſe of all being could be tranſcended by his Creature, and a vile luſt could equal, yea, ſurmount the Lovelineſs of God: 'Tis to ſay to God as the rich to the poor, James 2. 3. *Stand thou there, or ſit here under my foot-ſtool*: 'Tis to ſink him below the mire of the world, to order him to come down from his glorious throne, and take his place below a contemptible Creature, which in regard of its infinite diſtance is not to be compared with him. It ſtrips God of the love that is due to him by the right of his nature and the greatneſs of his Dignity; and of the truſt that is due to him, as the firſt cauſe and the chiefeſt good, as tho he were too feeble and mean to be our bleſſedneſs. This is intolerable, to make that which is Gods foot-ſtool, the Earth to climb up into his throne; to ſet that in our heart which God hath made even below our ſelves and put under our feet; to make that which we trample upon, to diſpoſe of the right God hath to our hearts; * 'Tis worſe than if a *Queen* ſhould fall in love with the little Image of the Prince in the Palace, and ſlight the beauty of his perſon; and as if people ſhould adore the foot-ſteps of a King in the dirt, and turn their backs upon his preſence.

* Noremberg *de adorat. p.* 30.

2. *It doth more debaſe him to ſet up a ſin, a luſt, a carnal affection, as our chief end.* To ſteal away the honour due to God, and appropriate it to that which is no work of his hands, to that which is loathſome in his ſight, hath diſturbed his reſt, and wrung out his juſt breath to kindle a Hell for its Eternal lodging, a God diſhonouring and a Soul Murdering luſt, is worſe than to prefer *Barabbas* before Chriſt. The baſer the thing, the worſe is the injury to him with whom we would aſſociate it. If it were ſome generous principle, a thing uſeful to the world, that we place in an equality with, or a ſuperiority above him; tho it were a vile uſage, yet it were not altogether ſo Criminal: But to gratifie ſome unworthy appetite, with the diſpleaſure of the Creator, ſomething below the rational nature of Man, much more infinitely below the excellent Majeſty of God, is a more unworthy uſage of him. To advance one of the moſt vertuous Nobles in a Kingdom as a mark of our ſervice and ſubjection, is not ſo diſhonourable to a deſpiſed Prince, as to take a Scabby Begger, , or a rotten Carcaſs to place in his throne. Creeping things, abominable beaſts, the *Egyptian Idols*, Cats and Crocodiles, were greater abominations, and a greater deſpite done to God, then the *Image of Jealouſy at the gate of the Altar.* *

* Ezek. 8. 5, 6, 10.

And let not any excuſe themſelves, that 'tis but one luſt or one Creature which is preferred as the end: Is not he an Idolater that worſhips the Sun or Moon, one Idol, as well as he that worſhips the whole hoſt of Heaven?

The inordinancy of the heart to one luſt may imply a ſtronger contempt of him, than if a Legion of luſts did poſſeſs the heart. It argues a greater diſeſteem, when he ſhall be ſlighted for a ſingle vanity. The depth of *Eſaws prophaneneſs* in contemning *his birth-right*, and God in it, is aggravated by his ſelling it for *one morſel of meat*, * and that none of the daintieſt, none of the coſtlieſt, *a meſs of pottage*; implying, had he parted with it at a greater rate, it had been more tolerable, and his prophaneſs more excuſable. And it is reckoned as a high aggravation of the Corruption of the Iſraelite Judges, Amos 2. 6. *That they ſold the poor for a pair of ſhoos*; That is, that they would betray the cauſe of the poor for a bribe of no greater value, than might purchaſe them a pair of ſhoos. To place any one thing as our chief end, tho never ſo light, doth not excuſe: He that will not ſtick to break with God for a trifle, a ſmall pleaſure, will leap the hedge upon a greater temptation.

* Heb. 12. 16.

Nay, and if wealth, riches, friends, and the beſt thing in the world, our own lives be preferred before God, as our chief happineſs and end but one moment, 'tis an infinite wrong; becauſe the infinite goodneſs and excellency of God is denyed: As tho the Creature or luſt we love, or our own life which we prefer in that ſhort moment before him, had a goodneſs in it ſelf, ſuperior to, and more deſirable than

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the bleſſedneſs in God: And though it ſhould be but one Minute, and a Man in all the periods of his days both before and after that Failure, ſhould actually and intentionally prefer God before all other things; yet he doth him an infinite wrong, becauſe God in every moment is infinitely good, and abſolutely deſirable, and can never ceaſe to be good, and cannot have the leaſt ſhadow or change in him and his Perfections.

2. 'Tis a denying of God.

Job 31. 26, 27, 28. *If I beheld the Sun when it ſhined, and the Moon walking in its Brightneſs, and my Heart hath been ſecretly enticed, or my Mouth hath kiſt my Hand; this alſo were Iniquity to be puniſhed by the Judge; for I ſhould have denyed the Lord above.* This Denial of God is not only the act of an open Idolater, but the conſequent of a ſecret confidence, and immoderate joy in worldly Goods: This Denial of God is to be referred to *ver.* 24. 25. When a Man ſaith *to Gold, thou art my confidence*, and rejoyces becauſe his wealth is great; he denies that God which is Superior to all thoſe, and the proper Object of Truſt: Both Idolatries are coupled here together; that which hath Wealth, and that which hath thoſe glorious Creatures in Heaven for its Object: And though ſome may think it a light Sin, yet the Crime being of deeper guilt, a denial of God, deſerves a ſeverer puniſhment, and falls under the Sentence of the juſt Judge of all the Earth; under that Notion; which *Job* intimates in thoſe words; *this alſo were an Iniquity to be puniſhed by the Judge.*

The *kiſſing the hand*, to the *Sun*, *Moon* or any Idol, was an external Sign of Religious Worſhip among thoſe and other Nations: This is far [illegible]an an inward hearty confidence, and an affectionate Truſt: If the motion of the hand be, much more is the affection of the heart to an excrementitious Creature, or a brutiſh Pleaſure is a Denial of God, and a kind of an Abjuring of him, ſince the Supream Affection of the Soul is undoubtedly and ſolely the Right of the Soveraign Creator, and not to be given in common to others, as the outward geſture may in a way of civil reſpect. Nothing that is an Honour peculiar to God, can be given to a Creature, without a plain excluſion of God to be God; it being a diſowning the rectitude and excellency of his Nature. If God ſhould Command a Creature ſuch a Love, and ſuch a confidence in any thing inferior to him; he would deny himſelf his own glory; He would deny himſelf to be the moſt excellent Being. Can the *Romaniſts* be free from this, when they call the Croſs *Spem unicam*, and ſay to the Virgin, *In te Domina ſperavi*, as *Bonaventure*, *&c.*

Good reaſon therefore have Worldlings and Senſualiſts, perſons of immoderate fondneſs to any thing in the world, to reflect upon themſelves; ſince though they own the Being of a God, they are guilty of ſo great diſreſpect to him, that cannot be excuſed from the title of an unworthy Atheiſm: And thoſe that are renewed by the Spirit of God, may here ſee ground of a daily Humiliation for the frequent and too common Excurſions of their Souls in Creature confidences and Affections, whereby they fall under the charge of an act of practical Atheiſm, though they may be free from an habit of it.

3. The third thing is, *Man would make himſelf the end of all Creatures.* Man would ſit in the *Seat of God*, and ſet *his heart as the heart of God*, as the Lord ſaith of *Tyrus*, *Ezek.* 28. 2. What is the conſequence of this; but to be eſteemed the chief Good, and end of other Creatures? A thing, that the heart of God cannot but be ſet upon, it being an inſeparable Right of the Deity; who muſt deny himſelf, if he deny this affection of the heart.

Since it is the nature of Man deriv'd from this Root, to deſire to be equal with God; it follows that he deſires no Creature ſhould be equal with him, but ſubſervient to his ends and his glory. He that would make himſelf God, would have the Honour proper to God: He that thinks himſelf worthy of his own ſupream affection, thinks himſelf worthy to be the object of the ſupream affection of others: Whoſoever counts himſelf the Chiefeſt good and laſt End, would have the ſame place in the thoughts of others. Nothing is more natural to Man, than a deſire to have his own Judgment, the Rule and Meaſure of the Judgments and Opinions of the reſt of Mankind. He that ſets himſelf in the Place of the Prince, doth by that act challenge all the Prerogatives and Dues belonging to the Prince; and apprehending himſelf fit to be a King, apprehends himſelf alſo worthy of the Homage and Fealty

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of the Subjects. He that loves himself chiefly, and all other things and persons for himself, would make himself the end of all Creatures. It hath not been once or twice only in the World, that some vain Princes have assumed to themselves the title of Gods, and caused Divine Adorations to be given to them, and Altars to smoke with Sacrifices for their Honour: What hath been practised by one, is by Nature seminally in all: We would have all pay an Obedience to us, and give to us the Esteem that is due to God.

This is evident,

1. *In Pride.* When we entertain an high Opinion of our selves, and act for our own Reputes, we dispossess God from our own hearts; and while we would have our Fame to be in every mans mouth, and be admired in the hearts of men, we would chase God out of the hearts of others, and deny his Glory a Residence any where else; that our Glory should reside more in their minds than the Glory of God; that their thoughts should be filled with our Atchievements, more than the Works and Excellency of God, with our Image and not with the Divine. Pride would paramount God in the affections of others, and justle God out of their Souls; and by the same reason that man doth thus in the place where he lives, he would do so in the whole world, and press the whole Creation from the Service of their true Lord, to his own Service. Every proud man would be counted by others as he counts himself; the highest, chiefest piece of Goodness; and be adored by others, as much as he adores and admires himself. No proud man in his self-love, and self-admiration, thinks himself in an Error; and if he be worthy of his own admiration, he thinks himself worthy of the highest esteem of others; that they should value him above themselves, and value themselves only for him. What did *Nebuchadnezzar* intend, by setting up a Golden Image, and commanding all his Subjects to worship it, upon the highest Penalty he could inflict; but that all should aim only at the pleasing his Humor?

2. *In using the Creatures contrary to the End God has appointed.* God Created the World and all things in it, as steps whereby men might ascend to a Prospect of him, and the acknowledgment of his Glory; and we would use them to dishonour God, and gratifie our selves: He appointed them to supply our necessities, and support our rational delights; and we use them to cherish our sinful lusts. We wring groans from the Creature in diverting them from their true scope, to one of our own fixing, when we use them not in his service, but purely for our own, and turn those things he created for himself to be instruments of Rebellion against him to serve our turns; and hereby endeavour to defeat the ends of God in them, to establish our own ends by them: This is a high dishonour to God, a Sacrilegious undermining of his Glory; * to reduce what God hath made to serve our own glory, and our own pleasure: It perverts the whole Order of the World, and directs it to another end than what God hath constituted; to another intention contrary to the intention of God; and thus Man makes himself a God by his own Authority. As all things were made by God, so they are for God: But while we aspire to the end of the Creation, we deny and envy God the honour of being Creator. We cannot make our selves the chief end of the Creatures against Gods Order, but we imply thereby, that we were their first Principle: For if we lived under a sense of the Creator of them while we enjoy them for our use, we should return the glory to the right Owner.

* Sabunde *Tit.* 200. *p.* 352.

This is *Diabolical*; though the Devil for his first affecting an Authority in Heaven, has been hurled down from the State of an Angel of Light, into that of Darkness, Vileness and Misery, to be the most accursed Creature living; yet he still aspires to mate God, contrary to the knowledge of the impossibility of success in it: Neither the terrors he feels, nor the future torments he doth expect, do a jot abate his Ambition to be Competitor with his Creator. How often hath he since his first sin, arrogated to himself the Honour of a God from the blind world, and attempted to make the Son of God by a particular Worship, count him as the *chiefest Good and Benefactor of the World?* * Since all Men by Nature are the Devils Children, the Serpents Seed, they have something of this Venom in their Natures, as well as others of his qualities. We see that there may be, and is a prodigious Atheism lurking under the Belief of a God. The Devil knows there is a God, but acts like an Atheist, and so do his Children.

* Matt. 4. 9.

4. *Man would make himſelf the End of God.* This neceſſarily follows upon the former: Whoſoever makes himſelf his own Law and his own End in the place of God, would make God the Subject in making himſelf the Soveraign: He that ſteps into the Throne of a Prince, ſets the Prince at his Foot-ſtool; and while he aſſumes the Princes Prerogative, demands a Subjection from him. The order of the Creation, has been inverted by the entrance of ſin. * God implanted an affection in Man with a double aſpect, the one to pitch upon God, the other to reſpect our ſelves; but with this proviſo, that our affection to God ſhould be infinite, in regard of the Object and Center in him, as the chiefeſt Happineſs and higheſt End: Our affections to our ſelves ſhould be finite, and refer ultimately to God as the Original of our Being: But Sin hath turned Mans affections wholly to himſelf: Whereas he ſhould love God firſt, and himſelf in order to God; he now loves himſelf firſt, and God in order to himſelf: Love to God is loſt, and love to *ſelf* hath uſurpt the Throne. As God by *Creation put all things under the feet of Man*, * reſerving the Heart for himſelf; Man by *Corruption* hath diſpoſſeſſed God of his Heart, and put him under his own feet. We often intend our ſelves, when we pretend the Honour of God, and make God and Religion a Stale to ſome deſigns we have in hand; our Creator a Tool for our own ends.

* Paſcal *Pens.* §. 30. *p.* 294.

* Pſal. 8. 6.

This is evident,

1. *In our loving God, becauſe of ſome ſelf-pleaſing benefits diſtributed by him.* There is in Men, a kind of natural love to God; but it is but a ſecondary one, becauſe God gives them the good things of this world, ſpreads their Table, fills their Cup, ſtuffs their Coffers, and doth them ſome good turns by unexpected Providences: This is not an affection to God for the unbounded Excellency of his own Nature, but for his beneficence, as he opens his hand for them; an affection to themſelves, and thoſe Creatures, their Gold, their Honour, which their hearts are moſt fixed upon; without a ſtrong Spiritual Inclination that God ſhould be glorified by them in the uſe of thoſe Mercies. 'Tis rather a diſowning of God, than any love to him; becauſe it poſtpones God to thoſe things they love him for. This would appear to be no love, if God ſhould ceaſe to be their Benefactor, and deal with them as a Judge; if he ſhould change his outward ſmiles into afflicting frowns; and not only ſhut his hand, but ſtrip them of what he ſent them. The Motive of their love being expired, the affection raiſed by it, muſt ceaſe for want of fewel to feed it: So that God is beholden to ſordid Creatures, of no value, (but as they are his Creatures) for moſt of the Love the Sons of Men pretend to him. The Devil ſpake truth of moſt men, though not of *Job*, when he ſaid, *Job* 1. 10. *They love not God for nought*; but while he makes a hedge about them and their Families, whileſt he bleſſeth the works of their hands, and increaſeth their honour in the Land. 'Tis like *Peter's* ſharp reproof of his Maſter, when he ſpake of the ill uſage, even to death, he was to meet with at *Hieruſalem*; *This ſhall not be unto thee*: It was as much out of love to himſelf, as zeal for his Maſters Intereſt, knowing his Maſter could not be in ſuch a ſtorm without ſome drops lighting upon himſelf. All the Apoſtacies of men in the world are Witneſſes to this: They fawn whileſt they may have a proſperous profeſſion, but will not bear one chip of the Croſs for the Intereſt of God: They would partake of his bleſſings, but not endure the prick of a Launce for him: As thoſe that admired the Miracles of our Saviour, and ſhrunk at his Sufferings. A time of tryal diſcovers theſe Mercenary Souls to be more Lovers of themſelves than their Maker. This is a pretended love of Friendſhip to God, but a real love to a Luſt, only to gain by God: A good mans temper is contrary: *Quench Hell, burn Heaven*, ſaid a holy Man, *I will love and fear my God.*

2. 'Tis evident; *in abſtinence from ſome ſins; not becauſe they offend God, but becauſe they are againſt the Intereſt of ſome other beloved Corruption, or a Bar to ſomething men hunt after in the World.* When temperance is cheriſhed, not to honour God, but preſerve a crazy Carcaſs: Prodigality forſaken, out of a humor of Avarice: Uncleanneſs forſaken, not out of a hatred of Luſt, but love to their mony: Declining a Denial of the Intereſt and Truth of God, not out of affection to them, but an ambitious Zeal for their own Reputation. There is a kind of Converſion from ſin, when God is not made the Term of it, *Jer.* 4. 1. *If thou wilt return oh Iſrael, return unto me ſaith the Lord.* * When we forbear Sin as Dogs do the Meat

* Trap on Gen. *pa.* 148.

they

they love; they forbear not out of a hatred of the Carrion, but fear of the Cudgel: These are as wicked in their abstaining from sin, as others are in their furious committing it. Nothing of the Honour of God and the End of his appointments is indeed in all this, but the conveniences *self* gathers from them. Again, many of the motives the generality of the world uses to their Friends and Relations to draw them from Vices, are drawn from *self*, and used to prop up natural or sinful *self* in them: Come, reform your self, take other courses, you will smut your Reputation and be despicable; you will destroy your Estate and commence a Beggar; your Family will be undone, and you may rott in a Prison: Not laying close to them the Duty they owe to God, the Dishonour which accrues to him by their unworthy courses, and the ingratitude to the God of their mercies: Not that the other motives are to be laid aside and slighted: *Mint* and *Cummin* may be tithed, but the weightier concerns are not to be omitted: But this shews that *self* is the Byas, not only of men in their own course, but in their Dealings with others: What should be subordinate to the Honour of God, and the Duty we owe to him, is made superior.

3. 'Tis evident, *In performing Duties meerly for a selfish interest*: Making our selves the end of Religious Actions, paying a Homage to that, while we pretend to render it to God, *Zach.* 7. 5. *Did you at all fast unto me, even unto me?* Things ordained by God may fall in with carnal ends affected by our selves; and then Religion is not kept up by any interest of God in the Conscience, but the interest of *self* in the Heart: We then sanctifie not the Name of God in the Duty, but gratifie our selves: God may be the Object, *self* is the end; and a Heavenly Object is made subservient to a Carnal design. Hypocrisie passes a Complement on God, and is called Flattery, *Psal.* 78. 36. *They did flatter him with their lips*, &c. They gave him a parcel of good words for their own preservation. Flattery in the old Notion among the Heathens, is a Vice more peculiar to serve our own turn, and purvey for the Belly: They knew they could not subsist without God, and therefore gave him a parcel of good words, that he might spare them, and make Provision for them. Israel *is an empty Vine*, * a Vine say some, with large Branches and few Clusters, but *brings forth fruit to himself*; while they *professed love to God* with their lips: It was that God should promote their covetous designs, and preserve their Wealth and Grandeur: * In which respect, an Hypocrite may be well termed a Religious Atheist, an Atheist maskt with Religion. The chief Arguments which prevail with many men to perform some Duties and appear Religious, are the same that *Hamor* and *Shechem* used to the people of their City to submit to Circumcision, *viz.* the ingrossing of more Wealth, *Gen.* 34. 21, 22. *If every Male among us be Circumcised, as they are Circumcised, shall not their Cattel and their Substance, and every Beast of theirs be ours?*

* Hos. 10. 1.

* Ezek. 33. 31.

This is seen,

1. *In unweildiness to Religious Duties, where* self *is not concern'd.* With what lively thoughts will many approach to God, when a Revenue may be brought in to support their own ends? But when the concerns of God only are in it, the Duty is not the delight, but the Clogg; such feeble Devotions that warm not the Soul, unless there be something of *self* to give strength and heat to them. *Jonah* was sick of his work, and run from God, because he thought he should get no honour by his Message; *Gods Mercy will discredit his Prophecy.* * Thoughts of disadvantage, cut the very sinews of service. You may as well perswade a Merchant to venture all his Estate upon the inconstant Waves without hopes of gain, as prevail with a natural man to be serious in Duty, without expectation of some warm Advantage. *What profit should we have if we pray to him?* is the natural Question, *Job* 21. 15. *What profit shall I have if I be cleansed from my Sin?* Job 35. 3. I shall have more good by my sin than by my service. 'Tis for God that I dance before the Ark, saith *David*, therefore I *will be more vile*, 2 Sam. 6. 2. 'Tis for *self* that I pray saith a natural Man, therefore I will be more warm and quick. Ordinances of God are observed only as a point of interest, and Prayer is often most fervent, when it is least Godly, and most selfish: Carnal Ends and Affections, will pour out lively Expressions. If there be no delight in the means that lead to God, there is no delight in God himself: Because Love is *appetitus unionis*, a desire of Union; and where

* Jonah 4. 2.

the Object is deſireable, the means that brings us to it would be delightful too.

2. *In calling upon God only in a time of neceſſity.* How officious will men be in affliction, to that God whom they neglect in their Proſperity? *When he ſlew them, then they ſought him, and they returned and inquired after God, and they remembred that God was their Rock*, Pſal. 78. 34. They remembred him under the Scourge, and forgate him under his Smiles: They viſit the Throne of Grace, knock loud at Heavens Gates, and give God no reſt for their early and importunate Devotions when under diſtreſs: But when their deſires are anſwered, and the Rod removed; they ſtand aloof from him, and reſt upon their own bottom, as *Jer.* 2. 31. *We are Lords, we will come no more unto thee.* When we have need of him, he ſhall find us Clients at his Gate; and when we have ſerved our turn, he hears no more of us: Like *Noahs* Dove ſent out of the Ark, that returned to him when ſhe found no reſt on the Earth, but came not back when ſhe found a footing elſe where. How often do men apply themſelves to God, when they have ſome buſineſs for him to do for them? And then too, they are loath to put it ſolely into his hand, to manage it for his own honour; but they preſume to be his Directors, that he may manage it for their glory. *Self* ſpurrs men on to the Throne of grace; they deſire to be furniſht with ſome Mercy they want, or to have the Clouds of ſome Judgments which they fear, blown over: This is not affection to God, but to our ſelves: As the *Romans* worſhipped a *Quartane Ague* as a Goddeſs, and *Timorem & Pallorem*, Fear and Paleneſs, as Gods; not out of any affection they had to the Diſeaſe or the Paſſion, but for fear to receive any hurt by them.

Again, when we have gained the Mercy we need, how little do we warm our Souls with the conſideration of that God that gave it, or lay out the Mercy in his ſervice? We are importunate to have him our friend in our neceſſities, and are ungratefully careleſs of him, and his injuries, he ſuffers by us or others: When he hath diſcharged us from the Rock where we ſtuck, we leave him, as having no more need of him, and able to do well enough without him: As if we were petty Gods our ſelves, and only wanted a lift from him at firſt: This is not to glorifie God as God, but as our Servant; not an honouring of God, but a ſelf ſeeking: He would hardly begg at Gods door, if he could pleaſure himſelf without him.

3. *In begging his Aſſiſtance to our own Projects.* When we lay the Plot of our own Affairs, and then come to God, not for Counſel but Bleſſing; *Self* only ſhall give us Counſel how to act; but becauſe we believe there is a God that governs the world, we will deſire him to contribute ſucceſs. God is not conſulted with, till the Counſel of *ſelf* be fixed; then God muſt be the Executor of our Will: *Self* muſt be the Principal, and God the Inſtrument to hatch what we have contrived. 'Tis worſe when we beg of God to favour ſome ſinful aim, the *Pſalmiſt* implies this, Pſal. 66. 18. *If I regard Iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* Iniquity regarded as the aim in Prayer, renders the Prayer ſucceſleſs, and the Suppliant an Atheiſt, in debaſing God to back his Luſt by his holy Providence.

The Diſciples had determined Revenge; and becauſe they could not act it without their Maſter, they would have him be their ſecond in their vindictive paſſion, *Luke* 9. 55. *Call for fire from Heaven.*

We ſcarce ſeek God, till we have modell'd the whole Contrivance in our own Brains, and reſolved upon the Methods of performance; as though there were not a fullneſs of Wiſdom in God to guide us in our reſolves, as well as Power to breath Succeſs upon them.

4. *In impatience upon the refuſal of our deſires.* How often do mens Spirits riſe againſt God, when he ſteps not in with the Aſſiſtance they want? If the glory of God ſwayed more with them than their private intereſt, they would let God be Judge of his own glory, and rather magnifie his Wiſdom, than complain of his want of Goodneſs: Selfiſh hearts will charge God with neglect of them, if he be not as quick in their ſupplies as they are in their deſires; like thoſe in *Iſa.* 58. 3. *Wherefore have we faſted ſay they, and thou ſeeſt not; wherefore have we afflicted our Souls and thou takeſt no knowledge?* When we aim at Gods glory in our importunities, we ſhall fall down in humble Submiſſions when he denies us: whereas *ſelf* riſeth up in bold Expoſtulations, as if God were our Servant, and had neglected the ſervice

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he owed us, not to come at our call. We over-value the satisfactions of self above the honour of God. Besides, if what we desire be a sin, our impatience at a refusal is more intolerable: 'Tis an anger, that God will not lay aside his holiness to serve our corruption.

5. *In the actual aims men have in their Duties.* In Prayer for temporal things, when we desire Health for our own ease, wealth for our own sensuality, strength for our revenge, Children for the increase of our Family, gifts for our applause, as *Simon Magus* did the holy-ghost, or; when some of those ends are aimed at: This is to desire God not to serve himself of us, but to be a Servant to our worldly interest, our vain glory, the greatning of our names, *&c.* In spiritual mercies begged for; When pardon of sin is desired only for our own security from eternal Vengeance; Sanctification desired only to make us fit for everlasting blessedness; Peace of Conscience only that we may lead our lives more comfortably in the world; when we have not actual intentions for the glory of God, or when our thoughts of Gods honour are overtopt by the aims of self advantage: Not but that as God hath prest us to those things by motives drawn from the Blessedness derived to our selves by them, so we may desire them with a respect to our selves; but this respect must be contained within the due banks, in subordination to the glory of God, not above it, nor in an equal ballance with it. * That which is nourishing or medicinal in the first or second degree, is in the fourth or fifth degree meer destructive poyson. *Gurnall.* Part 3. pag. 337.

Let us consider it seriously; though a duty be heavenly, doth not some base end smut us in it?

[1.] *How is it with our Confessions of Sin?* Are they not more to procure our Pardon, than to shame our selves before God, or to be freed from the chains that hinder us from bringing him the glory for which we were Created; or more to partake of his benefits, than to honour him in acknowledging the rights of his Justice? Do we not bewail sin as it hath ruined us, not as it opposed the Holiness of God? Do we not shuffle with God, and confess our sin, while we reserve another; as if we would allure God by declaring our dislike of one, to give us liberty to commit Wantonness with another; not to abhor our selves, but to daub with God?

2. Is it any better in our private and Family Worship? Are not such Assemblies frequented by some, where some upon whom they have a dependance may eye them, and have a better opinion of them, and affection to them? If God were the sole end of our hearts; would they not be as glowing under the sole eye of God, as our tongues or carriages are seemingly serious under the eye of man? Are not Family duties performed by some that their voices may be heard, and their reputation supported among Godly Neighbours?

[3.] *Is not the Charity of many men tainted with this end* self? * as the *Pharisees* were, while they set the miserable object before them, but not the Lord; bestowing Alms, not so much upon the necessities of the people, as the friendship we owe them for some particular respects: Or casting our bread upon those waters which stream down in the sight of the world, that our Doles may be visible to them and commended by them: Or when we think to oblige God to pardon our transgressions; as if we merited it and Heaven too at his hands, by bestowing a few pence upon indigent persons. And * Matt. 6. 1.

[4.] *Is it not the same with the Reproofs of Men?* Is not heat and anger carried out with full Sail when our worldly interest is prejudic'd, and becalm'd in the concerns of God? Do not many Masters reprove their Servants with more vehemency for the neglect of their Trade and Business, than the neglect of Divine Duties; and that upon Religious Arguments, pretending the honour of God that they may mind their own interest? But when they are negligent in what they owe to God, no noise is made, they pass without rebuke. Is not this to make God and Religion a Stale to their own ends? 'Tis a part of Atheism, not to regard the injuries done to God, as *Tiberius*; * *Let Gods wrongs be looked, to or cared for by himself.*

[5.] *Is it not thus in our seeming Zeal for Religion?* As *Demetrius*, and the Craftsmen at *Ephesus* cried up aloud the greatness of *Diana of the Ephesians*; not out of any true zeal they had for her, but their gain, which was increased by the con- * *Dei injuria Deo cura.*

flu-

fluence of her Worſhippers, and the Sale of her own *Shrines*, *Acts* 19. 24, 28.

4. *In making uſe of the Name of God to countenance our Sin.* When we ſet up an opinion that is a Friend to our luſts, and then dig deep into the *Scripture* to find Crutches to ſupport it, and authorize our practices: When men will thank God for what they have got by unlawful means, Fathering the fruit of their cheating craft, and the ſimplicity of their Chapmen upon God: Crediting their Couſenage by his Name, as men do braſs mony, with a thin plate of ſilver, and the ſtamp and image of the Prince. The *Jews* urge the Law of God for the crucifying his Son, *John* 19. 7. *We have a Law, and by that Law he is to die*: And would make him a Party in their private Revenge. * Thus often when we have faultered in ſome actions, we wipe our mouths, as if we ſought God more than our own intereſt, proſtituting the ſacred Name and Honour of God, either to hatch or defend ſome unworthy luſt againſt his Word.

* *Sanderſon's S.* Part. 2. p. 158.

Is not all this a high degree of Atheiſm?

1. *'Tis a vilifying God*, an abuſe of the higheſt good: Other ſins ſubject the Creature and outward things to them; but acting in Religious ſervices for *ſelf*, ſubjects not only the higheſt concernments of Mens Souls, but the Creator himſelf to the Creature: Nay, to make God contribute to that which is the pleaſure of the Devil: A greater ſlight, than to caſt the gifts of a Prince to a Herd of naſty Swine. It were more excuſable to ſerve our ſelves of God upon the higher accounts, ſuch that materially conduce to his glory; but it is an intolerable wrong, to make him and his Ordinances Caterers for our own bellies, as they did: * They *ſacrificed* the נרמת of which the Offerer might eat; not out of any reference to God, but love to their Gluttony; not pleaſe him, but feaſt themſelves. The Belly was truly made the God, when God was ſerved only in order to the Belly: As though the bleſſed God had his Being, and his Ordinances were enjoyned to pleaſure their fooliſh and wanton Appetites: As though the Work of God were only to patronize unrighteous ends, and be as bad as themſelves, and become a *Pander* to their corrupt affections.

* Hoſ. 8. 13. *Vid.* Cocc. *in locum.*

2. Becauſe it is a vilifying of God, *It is an undeifying or dethroning God.* 'Tis an acting, as if we were the Lords, and God our Vaſſal: A ſetting up thoſe ſecular ends in the place of God, who ought to be our ultimate end in every action; to whom a glory is as due, as his mercy to us is utterly unmerited by us. He that thinks to cheat and put the Fool upon God by his pretences, doth not heartily believe there is ſuch a Being. He could not have the Notion of a God, without that of Omniſcience and Juſtice; an eye to ſee the cheat, and an Arm to puniſh it: The Notion of the one would direct him in the manner of his Services, and the Senſe of the other would ſcare him from the cheriſhing his unworthy ends. He that ſerves God with a ſole reſpect to himſelf, is prepared for any Idolatry; his Religion ſhall warp with the times and his intereſt; he ſhall deny the true God for an Idol, when his worldly intereſt ſhall adviſe him to it; and pay the ſame Reverence to the baſeſt Image, which he pretends now to pay to God: As the *Iſraelites* were as real for Idolatry under their baſeſt Princes, as they were Pretenders to the true Religion under thoſe that were Pious.

Before I come to the uſe of this, give me leave to evince this practical Atheiſm by two other Conſiderations.

1. *Unworthy Imaginations of God.*

The fool hath ſaid in his heart there is no God: That is, he is not ſuch a God as you report him to be: This is meant by their being *corrupt*, in the 2. *v.* corrupt being taken for playing the Idolaters, *Exod.* 32. 7. We cannot comprehend God; if we could, we ſhould ceaſe to be finite; and becauſe we cannot comprehend him, we erect ſtrange Images of him in our fancies and affections. And ſince guilt came upon us, becauſe we cannot root out the Notions of God, we would debaſe the Majeſty and Nature of God, that we may have ſome eaſe in our Conſciences, and lie down with ſome comfort in the ſparks of our own kindling.

* Pſal. 10. 4. This is univerſal in men by nature. *God is not in all his thoughts*: * Not in any of his thoughts according to the excellency of his Nature, and greatneſs of his Majeſty. As the Heathen did not glorify God as God, ſo neither do they conceive

of

of God as God: They are all infected with ſome one or other ill opinion of him, thinking him not ſo holy, powerful, juſt, good as he is, and as the natural force of a human underſtanding might arrive to. We joyn a new Notion of God in our vain fancies, and repreſent him not as he is, but as we would have him to be, fit for our own uſe, and ſuted to our own pleaſure: We ſet that active power of imagination on work, and there comes out a God, (*a Calf*) whom we own for a Notion of God.

Adam caſt him into ſo narrow a mould, as to think that himſelf, who had newly ſprouted up by his Almighty power, was fit to be his Corrival in knowledge, and had vain hopes to graſp as much as infiniteneſs: If he in his firſt declining begun to have ſuch a conceit, 'tis no doubt but we have as bad under a maſs of Corruption. When holy *Agur* ſpeaks of God, he crys out that he had not *the underſtanding of a Man, nor the knowledge of the holy:* * He did not think rationally of God as Man might by his ſtrength at his firſt Creation. There are as many Carved Images of God as there are minds of Men, and as monſtrous ſhapes as thoſe Corruptions, into which they would transform him. * Pro. 30. 2, 3

Hence ſprang,

1. *Idolatry. Vain Imaginations* firſt ſet afloat and kept up this in the world. * Vain Imaginations of the God *whoſe glory they changed into the Image of corruptible Man:* They had ſet up vain Images of him in their fancy, before they ſet up Idolatrous repreſentations of him in their Temples; The likening him to thoſe Idols of Wood and Stone, and various metals, were the fruit of an Idea Erected in their own minds: This is a mighty debaſing the Divine nature, and rendring him no better, than that baſe and ſtupid matter they make the viſible object of their adoration; equalling him with thoſe baſe Creatures they think worthy to be the repreſentations of him. Yet how far did this Crime ſpread it ſelf in all Corners of the world, not only among the more barbarous and Ignorant, but the more poliſht and Civilized Nations? *Judea* only, where God had placed the Ark of his preſence, being free from it, in ſome intervals of time only after ſome ſweeping Judgment. And tho they vomited up their Idols under ſome ſharp ſcourge, they licked them up again after the Heavens were cleared over their Heads: The whole Book of *Judges* makes mention of it: And tho an Evangelical light hath chaſed that Idolatry away from a great part of the World; yet the Principle remaining, Coyns more Spiritual Idols in the heart, which are brought before God in acts of Worſhip. * Rom. 1. 21, 23.

2. *Hence all ſuperſtition received its riſe and growth.* When we Mint a God according to our own Complexion, like to us in mutable and various paſſions, ſoon angry and ſoon appeaſed, 'tis no wonder that we invent ways of pleaſing him after we have offended him; and think to expiate the ſin of our Souls, by ſome Melancholy devotions and ſelf Chaſtiſements. Superſtition is nothing elſe but an unſcriptural and unrevealed *dread of God.* * When they imagined him a rigorous, and ſevere Maſter, they caſt about for ways to mitigate him whom they thought ſo hard to be pleaſed: A very mean thought of him, as if a ſlight and pompous Devotion could as eaſily bribe and flatter him out of his rigors, as a few good words or baubling rattles could pleaſe and quiet little Children; And whatſoever pleaſed us, could pleaſe a God infinitely above us. Such narrow conceipts had the *Philiſtins*, when they thought to ſtill the anger of the God of *Iſrael*, whom they thought they poſſeſs'd in the Ark, with the preſent of a few *Golden mice.* * All the Superſtition this day living in the world is built upon this foundation: So natural it is to Man to pull God down to his own Imaginations, rather than raiſe his Imaginations up to God. Hence doth ariſe alſo the diffidence of his mercy, tho they repent; meaſuring God by the contracted Models of their own Spirits; as tho his nature were as difficult to Pardon their offences againſt him, as they are to remit wrongs done to themſelves. * δεισιδαιμονία. * 1 Sam. 6. 3, 4.

3. *Hence Springs all Preſumption, the Common diſeaſe of the world.* All the wickedneſs in the World, which is nothing elſe but preſuming upon God, riſes from the ill interpretations of the goodneſs of God, breaking out upon them in the works of Creation and Providence: The Corruption of Mans nature engendred by thoſe Notions of goodneſs a monſtrous birth of vain imaginations. Not of themſelves primarily, but of God; whence aroſe all that folly and darkneſs in their minds and converſations, *Rom.* 1. 20. 21. They glorified him *not as God*, but according

to

to themſelves, imagined him good that themſelves might be bad; fancyed him ſo indulgent, as to neglect his own honour for their ſenſuality. How doth the unclean perſon repreſent him to his own thoughts, but as a Goat; the Murderer as a Tyger; the ſenſual perſon as a *Swine*; while they fancy a God indulgent to their Crimes without their repentance? As the Image on the Seal is ſtampt upon the wax, ſo the thoughts of the heart are Printed upon the actions. Gods Patience is apprehended to be an approbation of their Vices, and from the Conſideration of his forbearance, they faſhion a God that they believe will ſmile upon their Crimes: They imagine a God that plays with them; and tho he threatens, doth it only to ſcare, but means not as he ſpeaks: A God they fancy like themſelves, that would do as they would do, not be angry for what they count a light offence, Pſal. 50. 21. *Thou thoughteſt I was ſuch a one as thy ſelf*: That God and they were exactly alike as two Tallies. * [Our willful miſapprehenſions of God are the cauſe of our misbehaviour in all his worſhip: Our ſlovenly and lazy ſervices tell him to his face what ſlight thoughts and apprehenſions we have of him.]

* Gurnal *part* 2. *p.* 245. 246.

Compare theſe two together.

Superſtition ariſeth from terrifying miſapprehenſions of God: Preſumption from ſelf pleaſing thoughts: One repreſents him only rigorous, and the other careleſs: One makes us over officious in ſerving him by our own rules; and the other over bold in offending him, according to our humors. The want of a true Notion of Gods Juſtice makes ſome Men ſlight him: And the want of a true apprehenſion of his goodneſs makes others too ſervile in their approaches to him: One makes us careleſs of duties, and the other makes us look on them rather as Phyſick than food; an unſupportable pennance, than a deſirable priviledge. In this Caſe, Hell is the principle of Duty performed to Heaven. The ſuperſtitious Man believes God hath ſcarce mercy to Pardon; the preſumptuous Man believes he hath no ſuch perfection as Juſtice to puniſh. The one makes him inſignificant to what he deſires, kindneſs and goodneſs; the other renders him inſignificant to what he fears, his vindictive Juſtice: What between the Idolater, the ſuperſtitious, the preſumptuous perſon, God ſhould look like no God in the world.

Theſe unworthy imaginations of God are likewiſe,

A vilifying of him: Debaſing the Creator, to be a Creature of their own fancies; putting their own ſtamp upon him; and faſhioning him not according to that beautiful Image he impreſt upon them by Creation; but the defaced Image they inherit by their fall, and which is worſe, the Image of the Devil which ſpread it ſelf over them at their revolt and apoſtacy. Were it poſſible to ſee a Picture of God, according to the fancies of Men, it would be the moſt Monſtrous being, ſuch a God that never was, nor ever can be.

We honour God when we have worthy opinions of him ſutable to his nature; when we conceive of him as a being of unbounded lovelineſs and perfection: We detract from him when we aſcribe to him ſuch qualities as would be a horrible diſgrace to a wiſe and good Man: As injuſtice and Impurity. Thus Men debaſe God when they invert his order, and would Create him according to their Image, as he firſt Created them according to his own: And think him not worthy to be a God, unleſs he fully anſwer the mould they would caſt him into, and be what is unworthy of his nature: Men do not conceive of God as he would have them; but he muſt be what they would have him, one of their own ſhaping.

1. *This is worſe than Idolatry.* The groſſeſt Idolater commits not a Crime ſo hainous, by changing his glory into the Image of Creeping things and ſenſeleſs Creatures, as the imagining God to be as one of our ſinful ſelves, and likening him to thoſe filthy Images, we erect in our fancies: One makes him an earthly God, like an earthly Creature; the other fancies him an unjuſt and impure God, like a wicked Creature: One ſets up an Image of him in the Earth, which is his footſtool; the other ſets up an Image of him in the heart, which ought to be his throne.

2. *'Tis worſe than abſolute Atheiſm, or a denial of God.* *Dignius credimus non eſſe, quodcunque non ita fuerit, ut eſſe deberet*, was the opinion of *Tertullian*. * 'Tis more Commendable to think him not to be, than to think him ſuch a one as is inconſiſtent with his nature. Better to deny his Exiſtence, than deny his perfection. No wiſe Man but would rather have his memory rot, than be accounted infamous; and would be more

* Tertul. *cont. Maxim. lib.* 1. *cap.* 2.

more obliged to him that ſhould deny that ever he had a Being in the world, than to ſay he did indeed live, but he was a Sot, a debaucht Perſon, and a man not to be truſted. When we apprehend God deceitful in his promiſes, unrighteous in his threatnings, unwilling to pardon upon repentance, or reſolved to pardon notwithſtanding impenitency: Theſe are things either unworthy of the Nature of God, or contrary to that Revelation he hath given of himſelf. Better for a man never to have been born, than be for ever miſerable; ſo better to be thought no God, than repreſented impotent or negligent, unjuſt or deceitful; which are more contrary to the Nature of God, than Hell can be to the greateſt Criminal. In this ſenſe perhaps the *Apoſtle* affirms the *Gentiles*, *Eph.* 2. 12. to be ſuch as are *without God in the World*; as being more Atheiſts in adoring God under ſuch Notions, as they commonly did, than if they had acknowledged no God at all.

2. *This is evident by our natural deſire to be diſtant from him, and unwillingneſs to have any acquaintance with him.* Sin ſet us firſt at a diſtance from God; and every new act of groſs Sin eſtrangeth us more from him, and indiſpoſeth us more for him: It makes us both afraid and aſhamed to be near him. Senſual men were of this frame that *Job* diſcourſeth of, *Job* 21. 7, 8, 9, and 14, and 15. *verſes*: Where grace reigns, the neerer to God, the more vigorous the motion; The neerer any thing approaches to us, that is the Object of our deſires, the more eagerly do we preſs forward to it: But our blood riſeth at the approaches of any thing to which we have an averſion: We have naturally a loathing of Gods coming to us, or our return to him: We ſeek not after him as our happineſs; and when he offers himſelf, we like it not, but put a diſgrace upon him in chuſing other things before him. God and we are naturally at as great a diſtance, as Light and Darkneſs, Life and death, Heaven and Hell. The ſtronger impreſſion of God any thing hath, the more we fly from it. The glory of God in reflection upon *Moſes* his face ſcar'd the *Iſraelites*; they who had deſired God to ſpeak to them by *Moſes*, when they ſaw a ſignal impreſſion of God upon his Countenance, were *afraid* to come neer him, as they were before unwilling *to come neer to God* *: Not that the bleſſed God is in his own Nature a frightful object; but our own guilt renders him ſo to us, and our ſelves indiſpoſed to converſe with him. As the light of the Sun is as irkſome to a diſtemper'd eye, as it is in its own Nature deſirable to a ſound one. The Saints themſelves have had ſo much frailty, that they have cried out, that they were undone, if they had any more than ordinary diſcoveries of God made unto them; as if they wiſhed him more remote from them. Vileneſs cannot endure the ſplendor of Majeſty, nor guilt the glory of a Judge.

* Exod. 34. 30.

We have naturally, (1.) *No deſire of rememberance of him*, (2.) or *converſe with him*, (3.) or *thorough return to him*, (4.) or *cloſe imitation of him*: As if there were not any ſuch Being as God in the world; or as if we wiſhed there were none at all; ſo feeble and ſpiritleſs are our thoughts of the Being of a God.

(1.) *No deſire for the remembrance of him.* How delightful are other things in our minds? How burdenſome the Memorials of God, from whom we have our Being? With what pleaſure do we contemplate the Nature of Creatures; even of Flyes and Toads; while our minds tire in the ſearch of him, who hath beſtowed upon us our knowing and meditating Faculties? Though God ſhews himſelf to us in every Creature; in the meaneſt Weed, as well as the higheſt Heavens; and is more apparent in them to our reaſons than themſelves can be to our ſenſe; yet though we ſee them, we will not behold God in them: We will view them to pleaſe our ſenſe, to improve our reaſon in their natural perfections; but paſs by the conſideration of Gods perfections ſo viſibly beaming from them. Thus we play the Beaſts and Atheiſts in the very exerciſe of reaſon, and neglect our Creator to gratifie our ſenſe; as though the pleaſure of that were more deſirable than the knowledge of God: The deſire of our Souls is not towards *his Name and the Remembrance of him*,* when we ſet not our ſelves in a poſture to feaſt our Souls with deep and ſerious meditations of him; have a thought of him, only by the by and away, as if we were afraid of too intimate acquaintance with him.

* Iſa. 26. 8.

Are not the thoughts of God rather our Invaders, than our Gueſts; ſeldome invited to reſide and take up their home in our hearts? Have we not when they have broke in upon us, bid them *depart from us*, * and warned them to come no more

* Job 22. 17.

upon our ground; ſent them packing as ſoon as we could, and were glad when they were gone? And when they have departed, have we not often been afraid they ſhould return again upon us; and therefore lookt about for other inmates, things not good; or if good, infinitely below God, to poſſeſs the room of our hearts before any thoughts of him ſhould appear again? Have we not often been glad of excuſes to ſhake off preſent thoughts of him; and when we have wanted real ones, found out pretences to keep God and our hearts at a diſtance? Is not this a part of Atheiſm to be ſo unwilling to imploy our faculties about the giver of them, to refuſe to exerciſe them in a way of grateful remembrance of him; as though they were none of his gift, but our own acquiſition; as though the God that truly gave them, had no right to them; and he that thinks on us every day in a way of Providence, were not worthy to be thought on by us in a way of ſpecial Remembrance?

Do not the beſt, that love the remembrance of him, and abhor this natural averſneſs, find, that when they would think of God, many things tempt them and turn them to think elſewhere? Do they not find their apprehenſions too feeble, their motions too dull, and the impreſſions too ſlight? This natural Atheiſm is ſpread over humane nature.

(2.) *No deſire of converſe with him.* The word *remember* in the command for keeping holy the *Sabbath day*, including all the duties of the Day, and the choiceſt of our lives; implies our natural unwillingneſs to them, and forgetfulneſs of them: God's preſſing this Command with more reaſons than the reſt, manifeſts that man hath no heart for Spiritual Duties. No Spiritual duty, which ſets us immediately Face to Face with God; but in the attempts of it, we find naturally a reſiſtance, from ſome powerful Principle; ſo that every one may ſubſcribe to the ſpeech of the *Apoſtle*, that *when we would do good, evil is preſent with us.* No reaſon of this can be rendred, but the natural temper of our Souls, and an affecting a diſtance from God under any conſideration: For though our guilt firſt made the breach, yet this averſion to a converſe with him ſteps up without any actual reflections upon our guilt, which may render God terrible to us as an offended Judge: Are we not often alſo in our attendance upon him, more pleaſed with the *modes* of Worſhip which gratifie our fancy, than to have our Souls inwardly delighted with the *Object* of Worſhip, Himſelf?

This is a part of our natural Atheiſm. To caſt ſuch duties off by total neglect,
* Job. 15. 4. or in part, by affecting a coldneſs in them; is to caſt off the *Fear of the Lord.* * *Not to call upon God*, and not *to know him*, are one and the ſame thing. *Jer.* 10. 25. Either we think there is no ſuch Being in the world, or that he is ſo ſlight a one, that he deſerves not the reſpect he calls for; or ſo impotent and poor, that he cannot ſupply what our neceſſities require.

(3.) *No deſire of a thorough return to him.* The firſt man fled from him after his defection, though he had no refuge to fly to, but the grace of his Creator. *Cain* went from his preſence, would be a Fugitive from God, rather than a Supplicant to him; when by Faith in, and application of the promiſed Redeemer, he might have eſcaped the wrath to come for his Brothers blood, and mitigated the ſorrows he was juſtly ſentenced to bear in the World. Nothing will ſeparate prodigal Man from commoning with Swine, and make him return to his Father, but an empty Trough: Have we but huſks to feed on, we ſhall never think of a Fathers preſence. It were well if our ſores and indigence would drive us to him; but when our *ſtrength* is de-
* Hoſ. 7. 10. *voured*, we will not *return to the Lord our God, nor ſeek him for all this.* * Not his drawn Sword as a God of Judgment, nor his mighty Power as a Lord, nor his open Arms as the Lord their God, could move them to turn their eyes and their hearts towards him. The more he invites us to partake of his grace, the further we run from him to provoke his wrath: The louder *God* called them by his *Prophets*, the
* Hoſ. 11. 2. cloſſer they ſtuck to their *Baal.* * We turn our backs when he ſtretches out his hand, ſtop our ears when he lifts up his voice: We fly from him when he courts us, and ſhelter our ſelves in any buſh from his merciful hand, that would lay hold upon us; nor will we ſet our faces towards him, till *our way be hedged up with thorns*, and not a
* Iſ. 2. 6, 7. gap left to creep out any by-way. * Whoſoever is brought to a return, puts the Holy-Ghoſt to the pain of ſtriving; he is not eaſily brought to a ſpiritual ſubjection

to

to God, nor perſwaded to a Surrender at a Summons, but ſweetly over power'd by ſtorm, and victoriouſly drawn into the Arms of God: God ſtands ready, but the heart ſtands off; Grace is full of intreaties, and the Soul full of excuſes: Divine love offers, and Carnal ſelf-love rejects: Nothing ſo pleaſes us, as when we are furtheſt from him; as if any thing were more amiable, any thing more deſirable than himſelf.

(4.) *No deſire of, any cloſe imitation of him.* When our Saviour was to come *as a Refiners fire* to purifie the Sons of *Levi*, the cry is, *who ſhall abide the day of his coming?* Mal. 3. 2, 3. Since we are alienated from the Life of God, we deſire no more naturally to live the life of God, than a Toad or any other Animal deſires to live the Life of a man: No heart that knows God, but hath a holy ambition to imitate him: No Soul that refuſeth him for a Copy, but is ignorant of his Excellency: Of this temper is all Mankind naturally. Man in Corruption is as loth to be like God in Holineſs; as *Adam* after his Creation was deſirous to be like God in Knowledge; his Poſterity are like their Father, who ſoon turned his back upon his original Copy.

What can be worſe than this? Can the denial of his Being be a greater injury than this contempt of him; as if he had not goodneſs to deſerve our remembrance, nor amiableneſs fit for our converſe; as if he were not a Lord fit for our ſubjection, nor had a Holineſs that deſerved our imitation?

For the *uſe* of this. It ſerves,

1. For *Information.*

1. *It gives us occaſion to admire the wonderful patience and mercy of God.* How many Millions of practical Atheiſts breath every day in his Air, and live upon his Bounty, who deſerve to be Inhabitants in Hell, rather than Poſſeſſors of the Earth? An infinite Holineſs is offended, an infinite Juſtice is provoked; yet an infinite Patience forbears the Puniſhment, and an infinite Goodneſs relieves our wants: The more we had merited his Juſtice and forfeited his Favour, the more is his affection inhanc'd, which makes his hand ſo liberal to us.

At the firſt invaſion of his rights, he mitigates the terror of the threatning, which was ſet to defend his Law, with the grace of a *Promiſe* to relieve and recover his rebellious Creature: * Who would have looked for any thing but tearing Thunders, ſweeping Judgments, to raiſe up the foundations of the Apoſtate world? But oh, how great are his Bowels to his aſpiring Competitors? Have we not experimented his Contrivances for our good, though we have refuſed him for our happineſs? Has he not opened his Arms, when we ſpurned with our Feet; held out his alluring mercy, when we have brandiſht againſt him a rebellious ſword? Has he not intreated us while we have invaded him, as if he were unwilling to loſe us, who are ambitious to deſtroy our ſelves? Has he yet denyed us the care of his Providence, while we have denyed him the rights of his Honour, and would appropriate them to our ſelves? Has the Sun forborn ſhining upon us, though we have ſhot our Arrows againſt him? Have not our Beings been ſupported by his Goodneſs, while we have endeavoured to climb up to his Throne; and his mercies continued to charm us, while we have uſed them as weapons to injure him? Our own neceſſities might excite us to own him as our happineſs, but he adds his invitations to the voice of our wants. Has he not promiſed a Kingdom to thoſe that would ſtrip him of his Crown, and proclaimed Pardon upon Repentance to thoſe that would take away his Glory? And hath ſo twiſted together his own end, which is his Honour, and mans true end, which is his Salvation, that a man cannot truly mind himſelf and his own Salvation, but he muſt mind Gods glory; and cannot be intent upon Gods honour, but by the ſame act he promotes himſelf and his own happineſs; So loth is God to give any juſt occaſion of diſſatisfaction to his Creature, as well as diſhonour himſelf. All thoſe wonders of his mercy are inhanc'd by the hainouſneſs of our Atheiſm; a *multitude* of gracious thoughts from him above the multitude of contempts from us. * What Rebels in actual Arms againſt their Prince aiming at his Life, ever found that favour from him, to have all their neceſſaries richly afforded them, without which they would ſtarve, and without which they would be unable to manage their attempts, as we have received from God? Had not God had *riches of goodneſs, forbearance and long ſuffering*, and infinite riches too;

* Gen. 3. 15.

* Pſal. 106. 7.

the deſpight the world hath done him in refuſing him as their *Rule*, *Happineſs*, and *End*, would have emptied him long ago. *

* Rom. 2. 4.

2. *It brings in a Juſtification of the exerciſe of his Juſtice.* If it gives us occaſion loudly to praiſe his Patience; it alſo ſtops our mouths from accuſing any acts of his Vengeance. What can be too ſharp a recompence for the deſpiſing and diſgracing ſo great a Being? The higheſt contempt merits the greateſt anger; and when we will not own him for our happineſs, 'tis equal we ſhould feel the miſery of ſeparation from him. If he that is guilty of Treaſon deſerves to loſe his Life; what puniſhment can be thought great enough for him that is ſo diſingenious as to prefer himſelf before a God ſo infinitely good, and ſo fooliſh as to invade the rights of one infinitely powerful? 'Tis no injuſtice for a Creature, to be for ever left to himſelf, to ſee what advantage he can make of that *ſelf* he was ſo buſily imployed to ſet up in the place of his Creator. The Soul of Man deſerves an infinite puniſhment for deſpiſing an infinite good: And it is not unequitable, that that *ſelf*, which Man makes his Rule and Happineſs above God, ſhould become his Torment and Miſery by the Righteouſneſs of that God whom he deſpiſed.

3. *Hence ariſeth a neceſſity of a new ſtate and frame of Soul, to alter an Atheiſtical Nature.* We forget God: Think of him with reluctancy: Have no reſpect to God in our courſe and acts: This cannot be our original ſtate. God being infinitely good, never let man come out of his hands with this actual unwillingneſs to acknowledge and ſerve him: He never intended to dethrone himſelf for the work of his hands, or that the Creature ſhould have any other end than that of his Creator: As the *Apoſtle* ſaith in the Caſe of the *Galatians* Error, *Gal.* 5. 8. *This perſwaſion came not of him that called you*; ſo this frame comes not from him that created you: How much therefore do we need a reſtoring Principle in us? Inſtead of ordering our ſelves according to the Will of God, we are deſirous to *fulfil the Wills of the Fleſh* *: There is a neceſſity of ſome other principle in us to make us fulfil the Will of God, ſince we were created for God, not for the Fleſh.

* Epheſ. 2. 3.

We can no more be voluntarily ſerviceable to God, while our Serpentine nature, and Devilliſh habits remain in us; than we can ſuppoſe the Devil can be willing to glorifie God, while the nature he contracted by his fall abides powerfully in him. Our Nature and Will muſt be changed, that our actions may regard God as our End, that we may delightfully meditate on him, and draw the motives of our obedience from him. Since this Atheiſm is ſeated in Nature, the change muſt be in our Nature: Since our firſt aſpirings to the rights of God, were the fruits of the Serpents breath, which tainted our Nature; there muſt be a removal of this taint, whereby our Natures may be on the ſide of God againſt Satan, as they were before on the ſide of Satan againſt God. There muſt be a ſupernatural Principle before we can live a ſupernatural Life, *i. e.* live to God, ſince we are naturally alienated from the Life of God: The averſion of our Natures from God, is as ſtrong as our inclinations to evil; we are diſguſted with one, and preſſed with the other; we have no will, no heart, to come to God in any ſervice. This nature muſt be a broken in pieces and new moulded, before we can make God our Rule and our End: While mens *deeds are evil*, they cannot comply with God *; much leſs while their *natures* are evil: Till this be done, all the ſervice a man performs riſeth from ſome *evil imagination of the heart, which is evil, only evil, and that continually* *, from wrong Notions of God, wrong Notions of Duty, or corrupt Motives. All the pretences of Devotion to God, are but the Adoration of ſome golden Image. Prayers to God for the ends of *ſelf*, are like thoſe of the Devil to our Saviour, when he askt leave to go into the Herd of Swine: The Object was right, Chriſt; the end was the deſtruction of the Swine, and the ſatisfaction of their malice to the Owners: There is a neceſſity then that depraved ends ſhould be removed, that that which was Gods end in our framing, may be our end in our acting, *viz. his glory*, which cannot be without a change of Nature. We can never honour him ſupreamly whom we do not ſupreamly love: Till this be, we cannot glorifie God as God, though we do things by his Command and Order; no more, then when God imployed the Devil in afflicting *Job* *: His performance cannot be ſaid to be good, becauſe his end was not the ſame with Gods; he acted out of Malice, what God commanded out of Soveraignty, and for gracious deſigns: Had God imployed an Holy Angel in his

* Joh. 3. 19, 20.

* Gen. 6. 5.

* Job. 1.

de-

design upon *Job*, the action had been good in the Affliction; because his Nature was holy, and therefore his ends holy; but bad in the Devil, because his ends were base and unworthy.

4. We may gather from hence, *the difficulty of Conversion, and Mortification to follow thereupon.* What is the reason men receive no more impression from the Voice of God and the Light of his truth, than a dead man in the Grave doth from the roaring Thunder, or a blind Mole from the Light of the Sun? 'Tis because our Atheism is as great as the deadness of the one, or the blindness of the other. The Principle in the heart is strong to shut the door both of the thoughts and affections against God. If a Friend oblige us, we shall act for him as for our selves: We are won by intreaties, soft words overcome us, but our hearts are as deaf as the hardest Rock at the call of God: Neither the joys of Heaven proposed by him can allure us, nor the flasht terrows of Hell affright us to him; as if we conceived God unable to bestow the one, or execute the other: The true reason is, God and *self* contest for the Deity: The Law of Sin is, God must be at the foot-stool; the Law of God is, Sin must be utterly deposed: Now it is difficult to leave a Law beloved, for a Law long ago discarded. The mind of man will hunt after any thing; the will of man embrace any thing; upon the proposal of mean Objects the Spirit of man spreads its wings, flyes to catch them, becomes one with them: But attempt to bring it under the power of God, the wings flag, the Creature looks liveless, as though there were no spring of Motion in it: 'Tis as much crucified to God, as the holy *Apostle* was to the world: The *sin* of the heart discovers its *strength*, the more God discovers the *holiness of his Will.* * The love of Sin hath been predominant in our Nature, has quasht a love to God, if not extinguisht it.

* Rom. 7. 9, 10, 11, 12.

Hence also is the difficulty of Mortification. This is a work tending to the honour of God, The abasing of that inordinately aspiring humour in our selves. If the Nature of Man be inclin'd to Sin, as it is, it must needs be bent against any thing that opposes it. 'Tis impossible to strike any true blow at any lust, till the true Sense of God be re-entertained in the Soyl where it ought to grow. Who can be naturally willing to crucifie what is incorporated with him, *his flesh*? What is dearest to him, *himself*? Is it an easie thing for man, the Competitor with God, to turn his Arms against himself; that *self* should overthrow its own Empire; lay aside all its pretensions to, and designs for a God-head; to hew off its own members, and subdue its own affections? 'Tis the Nature of man to *cover his sin*, to hide it in his bosom *; not to destroy it; and as unwillingly part with his carnal affections, as the Legion of Devils were with the Man that had been long possessed: And when he is forced and fired from one, he will endeavour to espouse some other Lust, as those Devils desired to possess Swine, when they were chased from their possession of that man.

* Job 13. 33. *If I cover my Transgression, as* Adam.

5. Here we see the reason of unbelief. That which hath most of God in it, meets with most aversion from us: That which hath least of God, finds better and stronger inclinations in us. VVhat is the reason, that the heart of Man is more unwilling to embrace the Gospel, than acknowledge the equity of the Law? Because there is more of Gods Nature and perfection evident in the Gospel than in the Law: Besides there is more reliance on God, and distance from *self* commanded in the Gospel. The *Law* puts a man upon his own strength, the *Gospel* takes him off from his own bottom: The Law acknowledges him to have a power in himself, and to act for his own reward; the Gospel strips him of all his proud and *towring thoughts* *, brings him to his due place, the foot of God; orders him to deny himself as his own Rule, Righteousness and End; *and henceforth not to live to himself.** This is the true reason why men are more against the Gospel than against the Law; because it doth more deifie God, and debase Man. Hence it is easier to reduce men to some moral Vertue, than to faith; to make men blush at their outward Vices, but not at the inward impurity of their Natures. Hence it is observed; that those that asserted, that all happiness did arise from something in a mans self, as the Stoicks and Epicureans did; and that a wise man was equal with God; were greater Enemies to the truths of the Gospel than others, *Acts* 17. 18. because it lays the Axe to the root of their principal Opinion. Takes the one. from their self-sufficiency, and the other from their self-gratification: It opposeth the brutish principle of the one, which placed happiness in the pleasures of the body, and the more noble principle of the other, which placed happiness

* 2 Cor. 10. 5.

* 2 Cor. 5. 15.

in the vertue of the mind: The one was for a ſenſual, the other for a moral *ſelf*; both diſowned by the doctrine of the Goſpel.

6. *It informs us conſequently, who can be the Author of Grace and Converſion, and every other good Work.* No practical Atheiſt ever yet turned to God, but was turned by God; and not to acknowledge it to God, is a part of this Atheiſm, ſince it is a robbing God of the honour of one of his moſt glorious Works. If this practical Atheiſm be natural to man ever ſince the firſt taint of Nature in Paradice, what can be expected from it but a reſiſting of the work of God, and ſetting up all the forces of Nature againſt the operations of Grace, till a day of power dawn and clear up upon the Soul *: Not all the Angels in Heaven, or men upon earth, can be imagined to be able to perſwade a Man to fall out with himſelf. Nothing can turn the Tide of Nature, but a power above Nature. God took away the ſanctifying Spirit from man, as a penalty for the firſt ſin: who can regain it but by his Will and Pleaſure? Who can reſtore it but he that remov'd it? Since every man hath the ſame fundamental Atheiſm in him by Nature, and would be a rule to himſelf, and his own End; he is ſo far from dethroning himſelf, that all the ſtrength of his corrupted Nature is alarm'd up to ſtand to their Arms, upon any attempt God makes to regain the Fort. The Will is ſo ſtrong againſt God, that 'tis like many wills twiſted together, *Eph.* 2. 3. *Wills of the Fleſh*, we tranſlate it the *deſires of the Fleſh*: Like many Threds twiſted in a Cable, never to be ſnapt aſunder by a human Arm; a Power and Will above ours, can only untwiſt ſo many wills in a knot. Man cannot riſe to an acknowledgement of God without God: Hell may as well become Heaven, the Devil be changed into an Angel of light. The Devil cannot but deſire happineſs; he knows the miſery into which he is fallen; he cannot be deſirous of that puniſhment he knows is reſerved for him. Why doth he not ſanctifie God and glorifie his Creator, wherein there is abundantly more pleaſure than in his malicious courſe? Why doth he not petition to recover his ancient ſtanding? He will not; there are *Chains of Darkneſs* upon his faculties; he will not be otherwiſe than he is: His deſire to be God of the World ſways him againſt his own intereſt; and out of love to his malice, he will not ſin at a leſs rate to make a diminution of his puniſhment. Man, if God utterly refuſeth to work upon him, is no better; and to maintain his Atheiſm, would venture a Hell. How is it poſſible for a man to turn himſelf to that God, againſt whom he hath a quarrel in his Nature; the mooſt rooted and ſettled habit in him being to ſet himſelf in the place of God; An Atheiſt by Nature, can no more alter his own temper, and engrave in himſelf the Divine Nature, than a Rock can carve it ſelf into the Statue of a man, or a Serpent, that is an Enemy to man, could or would raiſe it ſelf to the Nobility of the humane Nature. That Soul that by Nature would ſtrip God of his Rights, cannot without a Divine Power be made conformable to him, and acknowledge ſincerely and cordially the Rights and Glory of God.

* Pſal. 110. 3.

7. *We may here ſee the reaſon why there can be no juſtification by the beſt and ſtrongeſt works of Nature.* Can that which hath Atheiſm at the root, juſtifie either the action or perſon? What ſtrength can thoſe works have, which have neither Gods Law for their rule, nor his Glory for their End; that are not wrought by any ſpiritual ſtrength from him, nor tend with any ſpiritual affection to him? Can theſe be a foundation for the moſt holy God to pronounce a Creature righteous? They will juſtifie his Juſtice in condemning, but cannot ſway his Juſtice to an Abſolution. Every natural man in his works, picks and chuſes; he owns the Will of God no further than he can wring it to ſute the Law of his Members; and minds not the honour of God, but as it juſtles not with his own glory and ſecular ends. Can he be righteous that prefers his own Will and his own honour, before the will and Honour of the Creator? However mens actions may be beneficial to others, what reaſon hath God to eſteem them, wherein there is no reſpect to him but themſelves; whereby they dethrone him in their thoughts, while they ſeem to own him in their religious works? Every day reproves us with ſomething different from the Rule: Thouſands of wandrings offer themſelves to our eyes. Can Juſtification be expected from that which in it ſelf is matter of deſpair?

8. *See here the cauſe of all the Apoſtacy in the World.* Practical Atheiſm was never conquered in ſuch: They are ſtill *alienated from the Life of God.* And will not live

to

to God, as he lives to himself and his own honour.* They loath his Rule, and distaste his glory; are loth to step out of themselves to promote the ends of another; find not the satisfaction in him as they do in themselves: They will be Judges of what is good for them and righteous in it self, rather than admit of God to judge for them. When men draw back from Truth to Error; 'tis to such opinions which may serve more to foment and cherish their Ambition, Covetousness, or some beloved Lust that disputes with God for precedency, and is designed to be served before him. *John* 12. 42, 43. *They love the praise of men more than the praise of God.* A preferring man before God was the reason they would not confess Christ, and God in him.

* Eph. 4. 17 18.

9. *This shews us the excellency of the Gospel and Christian Religion.* It sets Man in his due place, and gives to God what the Excellency of his Nature requires It lays man in the dust from whence he was taken, and sets God upon that Throne where he ought to sit. Man by Nature would annihilate God and deifie himself; the Gospel glorifies God and annihilates Man. In our first revolt we would be like him in knowledge; in the means he hath provided for our recovery, he designs to make us like him in grace: The Gospel shews our selves to be an Object of Humiliation, and God to be a glorious Object for our Imitation. The Light of Nature tells us there is a God; the Gospel gives us a more magnificent report of him: The Light of Nature condemns gross Atheism, and that of the Gospel condemns and conquers spiritual Atheism in the hearts of men.

Use 2. Of *Exhortation.*

1. *Let us labour to be sensible of this Atheism in our Nature, and be humbled for it.* How should we lie in the dust, and go bowing under the humbling thoughts of it all our days? Shall we not be sensible of that whereby we spill the blood of our Souls, and give a stab to the heart of our own Salvation? Shall we be worse than any Creature, not to bewail that which tends to our destruction? He that doth not lament it, cannot challenge the Character of a Christian, hath nothing of the divine Life and Love planted in his Soul. Not a Man, but shall one day be sensible, when the Eternal God shall call him out to Examination, and charge his Conscience to discover every Crime, which will then own the Authority whereby it acted; when the heart shall be torn open, and the secrets of it brought to publick view; and the World and Man himself shall see what a viperous Brood of corrupt Principles and Ends nested in his heart. Let us therefore be truly sensible of it, till the consideration draw tears from our Eyes, and sorrow from our Souls: Let us urge the thoughts of it upon our hearts, till the Core of that Pride be eaten out, and our Stubbornness changed into Humility: Till our heads become Waters, and our eyes Fountains of tears, and be a spring of Prayer to God to change the heart, and mortifie the Atheism in it; and consider what a sad thing it is to be a practical Atheist: And who is not so by Nature?

1. *Let us be sensible of it in our selves.* Have any of our hearts been a Soyl wherein the fear and Reverence of God hath naturally grown? Have we a desire to know him, or a will to embrace him? Do we delight in his will, and love the remembrance of his Name? Are our respects to him as God, equal to the speculative knowledge we have of his Nature? Is the heart, wherein he hath stampt his Image, reserved for his Residence? Is not the world more affected than the Creator of the World; as though that could contribute to us a greater happiness than the Author of it? Have not Creatures as much of our love, fear, trust; nay, more than God that framed both them and us? Have we not too often relyed upon our own strength, and made a Calf of our own wisdom, and said of God as the Israelites of *Moses*, *As for this* Moses *we wot not what is become of him*, Exod. 32. 1. And given oftener the glory of our good success to our Drag and our Net, to our Craft and our Industry, than to the wisdom and blessing of God? Are we then free from this sort of Atheism*? 'Tis as impossible to have two Gods at one time in one heart, as to have two Kings at one time in full power in one Kingdom. Have there not been frequent neglects of God? Have we not been deaf whilst he hath knocked at our doors; slept when he hath sounded in our ears, as if there had been no such Being as a God in the World; How many struglings have been against our approaches to him? Hath not folly often been committed with vain imaginations, starting up in the time of Religious Service, which

* Lawson *body of Divinity pa.* 153, 154.

which we would ſcarce vouchſafe a look to at another time, and in another buſineſs, but would have thruſt them away with indignation? Had they ſtept in to interrupt our worldly affairs, they would have been troubleſome Intruders, but while we are with God they are acceptable Gueſts. How unwilling have our hearts been to fortifie themſelves with ſtrong and influencing conſiderations of God, before we addreſt to him? Is it not too often that our lifeleſsneſs in Prayer proceeds from this Atheiſm; a neglect of ſeeing what arguments and Pleas may be drawn from the divine perfections, to ſecond our ſuit in hand, and quicken our hearts in the ſervice? Whence are thoſe indiſpoſitions to any ſpiritual duty, but becauſe we have not due thoughts of the Majeſty, Holineſs, Goodneſs and Excellency of God? Is there any duty which leads to a more perticular inquiry after him, or a more clear viſion of him; but our hearts have been ready to riſe up and call it curſed rather than bleſſed? Are not our minds bemiſted with an ignorance of him, our wills drawn by averſion from him, our affections riſing in diſtaſt of him? More willing to know any thing than his Nature, and more induſtrous to do any thing than his Will? Do we not all fall under ſome one or other of theſe conſiderations? Is it not fit then that we ſhould have a ſenſe of them? 'Tis to be bewail'd by us, that ſo little of God is in our hearts, when ſo many evidences of the love of God are in the Creatures; that God ſhould be ſo little our end, who hath been ſo much our Benefactor; that he ſhould be ſo little in our thoughts, who ſparkles in every thing which preſents it ſelf to our eyes.

2. *Let us be ſenſible of it in others.* We ought to have a juſt execration of the too open iniquity in the midſt of us; and imitate holy *David*, whoſe tears plentifully guſht out, *becauſe men kept not Gods Law.* * And is it not a time to exerciſe this pious lamentation? Hath the wicked Atheiſm of any Age been greater, or can you find worſe in Hell, than we may hear of, and behold on Earth? How is the excellent Majeſty of God, adored by the Angels in Heaven; deſpiſed and reproached by men on Earth; as if his name were publiſht to be matter of their ſport? What a gaſping thing is a natural ſenſe of God among men in the World? Is not the Law of God, accompanied with ſuch dreadful threatnings and curſes, made light of; as if men would place their honour in being above or beyond any ſenſe of that glorious Majeſty? How many wallow in Pleaſures, as if they had been made men, only to turn brutes, and their Souls given them only for Salt to keep their bodies from putrifying? 'Tis as well a part of Atheiſm not to be ſenſible of the abuſes of Gods name and Laws by others, as to violate them our ſelves: What is the language of a ſtupid ſenſeleſsneſs of them, but that there is no God in the World, whoſe glory is worth a vindication and deſerves our regards?

*Pſal.119.136.

That we may be ſenſible of the unworthineſs of neglecting God as our Rule and end; conſider,

1. *The Unreaſonableneſs of it as it concerns God.*

1. Firſt, *'Tis a high contempt of God.* 'Tis an inverting the order of things; a making God the higheſt, to become the loweſt, and *ſelf* the loweſt, to become the higheſt: To be guided by every baſe Companion, ſome idle vanity, ſome carnal intereſt, is to acknowledge an excellency abounding in them which is wanting in God: An equity in their orders and none in Gods precepts: A goodneſs in their promiſes and a falſity in Gods: As if infinite excellency were a meer vanity, and to act for God, were the debaſement of our reaſon; to act for *ſelf* or ſome pitiful Creature or ſordid luſt, were the glory and advancement of it. To prefer any one ſin before the honour of God, is as if that ſin had been our Creator and benefactor, as if it were the original cauſe of our being and ſupport. Do not men pay as great a homage to that as they do to God? Do not their minds eagerly purſue it? Are not the revolvings of it in their fancies as delightful to them, as the remembrance of God to a holy Soul? Do any obey the Commands of God with more readineſs, than they do the orders of their baſe affections? Did *Peter* leap more readily into the Sea to meet his Maſter, than many into the jaws of Hell to meet their *Dalilah's*? How cheerfully did the *Iſraelites* part with their ornaments for the ſake of an Idol, who would not have ſpared a moiety for the honour of their Deliverer? * If to make God our end is the principal duty in nature, then to make our ſelves or any thing elſe our end, is the greateſt vice in the rank of evils.

* Exod 32. 3. *All the people brake off the golden ear-rings*

Secondly

Secondly, *'Tis a contempt of God as the moſt aimable object.* God is infinitely excellent and deſirable, *Zach.* 9. 17. *How great is his goodneſs, and how great is his beauty?* There is nothing in him but what may raviſh our affections; none that knows him but finds attractives to keep them with him: He hath nothing in him which can be a proper object of contempt, no defects or ſhadow of evil; there is infinite excellency to charm us, and infinite goodneſs to allure us; the Author of our beings, the Benefactor of our lives: Why then ſhould Man, which is his Image, be ſo baſe as to ſlight the beautiful original which ſtampt it on him? He is the moſt lovely object, therefore to be ſtudied, therefore to be honoured, therefore to be followed: In regard of his perfection he hath the higheſt right to our thoughts. All other beings were eminently contained in his eſſence, and were produced by his infinite power: The Creature hath nothing but what it hath from God: And is it not unworthy to prefer the Copy before the original, to fall in love with a Picture inſtead of the beauty it repreſents? The Creature, which we advance to be our rule and end, can no more report to us the true amiableneſs of God, than a few Colours mixed and ſuted together upon a piece of cloth, can the moral and intellectual lovelineſs of the Soul of Man. To contemn God one moment is more baſe, than if all Creatures were contemned by us for ever; becauſe the excellency of Creatures is to God, like that of a drop to the Sea, or a ſpark to the glory of unconceivable millions of Suns. As much as the excellency of God is above our conceptions, ſo much doth the debaſing of him admit of unexpreſſible aggravations.

2. Conſider *the ingratitude in it.* That we ſhould reſiſt that God with our hearts, who made us the work of his hands, and count him as nothing, from whom we derive all the good that we are or have: There is no contempt of Man but ſteps in here to aggravate our ſlighting of God; Becauſe there is no relation one man can ſtand in to another, wherein God doth not more highly appear to man. If we abhor the unworthy carriage of a Child to a tender Father, a Servant to an indulgent Maſter, a Man to his obliging Friend; why do men dayly act that towards God, which they cannot ſpeak of without abhorrency, if acted by another againſt man? Is God a being leſs to be regarded than man, and more worthy of contempt than a Creature? [* It would be ſtrange if a benefactor ſhould live in the ſame Town, in the ſame houſe with us, and we never exchange a word with him; yet this is our caſe, who have the works of God in our eyes, the goodneſs of God in our being, the mercy of God in our daily food] yet think ſo little of him, converſe ſo little with him, ſerve every thing before him, and prefer every thing above him? Whence have we our mercies but from his hand. Who, beſides him, maintains our breath this moment? Would he call for our Spirits this moment, they muſt depart from us to attend his Command. There is not a moment wherein our unworthy carriage is not aggravated, becauſe there is not a moment wherein he is not our guardian, and gives us not taſts of a freſh bounty. And it is no light aggravation of our Crime, that we injure him, without whoſe bounty in giving us our being, we had not been capable of caſting contempt upon him: That he that hath the greateſt ſtamp of his Image, Man, ſhould deſerve the Character of the worſt of his Rebels: That he, who hath only reaſon by the gift of God to Judge of the equity of the Laws of God, ſhould ſwell againſt them as grievous, and the Government of the Lawgiver as burdenſome. Can it leſſen the crime to uſe the principle, wherein we excel the beaſts, to the diſadvantage of God, who endowed us with that principle above the beaſts?

* Reynolds.

1. *'Tis a debaſing of God beyond what the Devil doth at preſent.* He is more excuſable in his preſent ſtate of acting, than man is in his preſent refuſing God for his Rule and end. He ſtrives againſt a God that exerciſeth upon him a vindictive Juſtice: We debaſe a God that loads us with his dayly mercies. The deſpairing Devils are excluded from any mercy or divine patience: But we are not only under the long ſuffering of his patience, but the large expreſſions of his bounty. He would not be governed by him when he was only his bountiful Creator. We refuſe to be guided by him after he hath given us the bleſſing of Creation from his own hand, and the more obliging bleſſings of Redemption by the hand and blood of his Son.

It cannot be imagined that the Devils and the damned ſhould ever make God their end, ſince he hath aſſured them he will not be their happineſs; and ſhut up all his perfections from their experimental notice, but thoſe of his power to preſerve

them and his Juſtice, to puniſh them: They have no grant from God of ever having a heart to comply with his Will, or ever having the honour to be actively employed for his glory. They have ſome plea for their preſent contempt of God; not in regard of his nature, for he is infinitely amiable, excellent, and lovely; but in regard of his adminiſtration towards them: But what plea can Man have for his Practical Atheiſm, who lives by his power, is ſuſtained by his bounty, and ſolicited by his Spirit? What an ungrateful thing is it to put off the Nature of Man for that of Devils; and diſhonour God under mercy, as the Devils do under his wrathful anger?

2. *'Tis an ungrateful contempt of God, who cannot be injurious to us.* He cannot do us wrong, becauſe he cannot be unjuſt, Gen. 18. 25. *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* His nature doth as much abhor unrighteouſneſs, as love a Communicative goodneſs: He never Commanded any thing, but what was highly conducible to the happineſs of man. Infinite goodneſs can no more injure man, than it can diſhonour it ſelf: It lays out it ſelf in additions of kindneſs, and whiles we debaſe him, he continues to benefit us: And is it not an unparalleld ingratitude to turn our backs upon an object ſo lovely, an object ſo loving in the midſt of varieties of allurements from him? God did Create intellectual Creatures, Angels and Men, that he might Communicate more of himſelf, and his own goodneſs, and holineſs to man, than Creatures of a lower rank were capable of. What do we do by rejecting him as our Rule and End, but croſs, as much as in us lies, Gods end in our Creation, and ſhut our Souls againſt the Communications of thoſe perfections he was ſo willing to beſtow? We uſe him as if he intended us the greateſt wrong, when 'tis impoſſible for him to do any to any of his Creatures.

3. *Conſider the miſery which will attend ſuch a temper if it continue predominant.* Thoſe that thruſt God away as their happineſs and end, can expect no other, but to be thruſt away by him as to any relief and Compaſſion. A diſtance from God here can look for nothing, but a remoteneſs from God hereafter. When the Devil, a Creature of vaſt Endowments, would advance himſelf above God, and inſtruct man to commit the ſame ſin, he is *Curſed above all Creatures.* * VVhen we will not acknowledge him a God of all glory, we ſhall be ſeparated from him as a God of all comfort: *All they that are afar off ſhall periſh,* Pſa. 73. 27. This is the ſpring of all woe. VVhat the Prodigal ſuffered, was becauſe he would leave his Father and live of himſelf. VVhoſoever is ambitious to be his own Heaven; will at laſt find his Soul to become his own Hell. As it loved all things for it ſelf, ſo it ſhall be grieved with all things for it ſelf. As it would be its own God againſt the right of God, it ſhall thenbe its own tormentor by the Juſtice of God.

*Gen. 3. 14.

2. Duty, *Watch againſt this Atheiſm and be dayly employed in the Mortification of it.* In every action we ſhould make the iniquiry, what is the Rule I obſerve? Is it Gods Will or my own? VVhether do my intentions tend, to ſet up God or *ſelf?* As much as we deſtroy this, we abate the power of ſin: Theſe two things are the head of the Serpent in us, which we muſt be bruiſing by the power of the Croſs. Sin is nothing elſe but a turning from God and centring in *ſelf*, and moſt in the inferior part of *ſelf*: If we bend our force againſt thoſe two, *ſelf*-Will and *ſelf*-Ends, we ſhall intercept Atheiſm at the Spring head, take away that which doth conſtitute and animate all ſin: The ſparks muſt vaniſh, if the fire be quencht which affords them fuel. They are but two ſhort things to ask in every undertaking: Is God my *Rule* in regard of his VVill? Is God my *End* in regard of his glory? All ſin lies in the neglect of theſe, all grace lies in the practice of them.

Without ſome degree of the mortification of theſe, we cannot make profitable and comfortable approaches to God. When we come with *Idols* in our hearts, we ſhall be anſwered according to the *multitude* and the baſeneſs of them too.* What expectation of a good look from him can we have, when we come before him with undeifying thoughts of him; a Petition in our mouths and a Sword in our hearts to ſtab his honour?

*Ezek. 14. 4.

To this purpoſe,

1. *Be often in the views of the excellencies of God.* VVhen we have no intercourſe with God by delightful Meditations, we begin to be eſtranged from him, and prepare our ſelves to live without God in the VVorld. Strangeneſs is the Mother and Nurſe

Nurse of disaffection: We slight men sometimes because we know them not. The very beasts delight in the Company of men, when being tamed and familiar, they become acquainted with their disposition. A dayly converse with God would discover so much of loveliness in his nature, so much of sweetness in his ways, that our injurious thoughts of God would wear off, and we should count it our honour to contemn our selves and magnifie him. By this means *a slavish fear*, which is both a dishonour to God and a *torment* to the Soul, * and the root of Atheism, will be cast out, and an ingenious fear of him wrought in the heart. Exercised thoughts on him would issue out in affections to him, which would engage our hearts to make him both our Rule and our end. This course would stifle any temptations to gross Atheism, wherewith good Souls are sometimes haunted, by confirming us more in the belief of a God; and discourage any attempts, to a deliberate practical Atheism: We are not like to espouse any principle which is confuted by the delightful converse we dayly have with him. The more we thus enter into the presence Chamber of God, the more we cling about him with our affections; the more vigorous and lively will the true Notion of God grow up in us, and be able to prevent any thing which may dishonour him and debase our Souls.

* 1 Joh. 4. 18.

Let us therefore consider him as the only happiness: Set up the true God in our understandings; possess our hearts with a deep sense of his desirable excellency above all other things. This is the main thing we are to do in order to our great business: All the directions in the world with the neglect of this, will be insignificant Ciphers. The neglect of this is Common, and is the basis of all the mischiefs which happen to the Souls of men.

2. To this purpose, *Prize and study the Scripture.* We can have no delight in Meditation on him, unless we know him; and we cannot know him but by the means of his own Revelation: When the Revelation is despised, the Revealer will be of little esteem. Men do not throw off God from being their rule, till they throw off Scripture from being their guide; and God must needs be cast off from being an end, when the Scripture is rejected from being a Rule: Those that do not care to know his Will, that love to be ignorant of his nature, can never be affected to his honour. Let therefore the subtilities of reason vail to the Doctrine of faith, and the humor of the Will to the Command of the word.

3. *Take heed of sensual pleasures*, And be very watchful and cautious in the use of those comforts God allows us. *Job* was afraid when his *Sons feasted, that they should Curse God in their hearts.* * It was not without cause that the *Apostle Peter* joyned sobriety with watchfulness and Prayer, 1 Pet. 4. 7. *The end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober, and watch unto Prayer.* A moderate use of worldly comforts. Prayer is the great acknowledgment of God, and too much sensuality is a hindrance of this, and a step to Atheism. *Belshazzars lifting himself up against the Lord*, and not glorifying of God, is charged upon his sensuality, *Dan.* 5. 23. Nothing is more apt to quench the Notions of God, and root out the Conscience of him, than an addictedness to sensual pleasures. Therefore take heed of that snare.

* Job. 1. 4.

4. *Take heed of sins against knowledge.* The more sins against knowledge are committed, the more careless we are, and the more careless we shall be of God and his honour. We shall more fear his judicial power, and the more we fear that, the more we shall disaffect that God in whose hand vengeance is, and to whom it doth belong. Atheism in conversation proceeds to Atheism in affection, and that will endeavour to sink into Atheism in opinion and Judgment.

The Sum of the Whole.

And now consider in the whole what has been spoken.

1. *Man would set himself up as his own Rule.* He disowns the Rule of God, is unwilling to have any acquaintance with the Rule God sets him, negligent in using the means for the knowledge of his will; and endeavours to shake it off when any notices of it breaks in upon him. When he cannot expel it, he hath no pleasure in the Consideration of it, and the heart swells against it. When the Notions of the *Will* of God are entertained, it is on some other Consideration, or with wavering and unsettled affections. Many times men design to improve some lust by his truth.

This unwillingneſs reſpects Truth as tis moſt Spiritual and holy; as it moſt relates and leads to God; as it is moſt contrary to *ſelf*. He is guilty of Contempt of the Will of God, which is ſeen in every preſumptuous breach of his Law. In the natural averſions to the declaration of his Will and mind which way ſoever he turns. In ſlighting that part of his Will which is moſt for his honour. In the awkwardneſs of the heart, when it is to pay God a ſervice. A conſtraint in the firſt engagement; ſlightneſs in the ſervice in regard of the matter; in regard of the frame, without a natural vigour. Many diſtractions, much wearieneſs; in deſerting the Rule of God, when our expectations are not anſwered upon our ſervice; in breaking promiſes with God.

Man naturally owns any other Rule, rather than that of Gods preſcribing. The Rule of *Satan*, the *Will* of man: In complying more with the dictates of Men than the will of God: In obſerving that which is materially ſo, not becauſe it is his Will, but the injunctions of Men. In obeying the Will of Man, when it is contirary to the Will of God. This man doth in order to the ſetting up himſelf. This is natural to man as he is corrupted. Men are diſſatisfied with their own Conſciences when they contradict the deſires of *ſelf*. Moſt actions in the world are done, more becauſe they are agreeable to *ſelf*, than as they are honourable to God: As they are agreeable to natural and moral *ſelf*, or ſinful *ſelf*. 'Tis evident in neglects of taking Gods directions upon emergent occaſions. In counting the actions of others to be good or bad, as they ſute with, or ſpurn againſt our fancies and humors. Man would make himſelf the Rule of God, and give laws to his Creator: In ſtriving againſt his Law: Diſapproving of his Methods of Government in the World; in impatience in our perticular concerns; envying the gifts and proſperity of others: Corrupt matter or ends of Prayer or praiſe: Bold interpretations of the Judgements of God in the World. Mixing rules in the Worſhip of God with thoſe which have been ordained by him. Suting interpretations of Scripture with our own minds and humors, Falling off from God after ſome fair compliances, when his Will grates upon us and croſſeth ours.

2. *Man would be his own end.* This is natural and univerſal. This is ſeen in frequent *ſelf* applauſes, and inward overweening reflections. In aſcribing the glory of what we do or have to our ſelves. In deſire of ſelf pleaſing Doctrines. In being highly concerned in injuries done to our ſelves, and little or not at all concerned for injuries done to God. In truſting in our ſelves. In working for Carnal *ſelf* againſt the light of our own Conſciences, this is a uſurping Gods prerogative, vilifying God, deſtroying God. Man would make any thing his end or happineſs rather than God. This appears in the fewer thoughts we have of him than of any thing elſe. In the greedy purſuit of the World. In the ſtrong addictedneſs to ſenſual pleaſures. In paying a ſervice upon any ſucceſs in the World to inſtruments more than to God. This is a debaſing God in ſetting up a Creature; but more in ſetting up a baſe luſt: Tis a denying of God. Man would make himſelf the end of all Creatures. In pride; uſing the Creatures contrary to the End God hath appointed. This is to diſhonour God: And it is Diabolical. Man would make himſelf the end of God. In loving God, becauſe of ſome *ſelf* pleaſing benefits diſtributed by him. In abſtinence from ſome ſins, becauſe they are againſt the intereſt of ſome other beloved corruption. In performing duties meerly for a ſelfiſh intereſt which is evident in unwealdineſs in Religious duties where *ſelf* is not concern'd. In calling upon God only in a time of neceſſity. In begging his aſſiſtance to our own projects, after we have by our own Craft laid the Plot. In impatience upon a refuſal of our deſires. In ſelfiſh aims we have in our duties. This is a vilifying God, a dethroning him. In unworthy imaginations of God, univerſal in man by nature. Hence ſprings Idolatry, Superſtition, Preſumption, the common diſeaſe of the World. This is a vilifying God; worſe than Idolatry, worſe than abſolute Atheiſm. Natural deſires to be diſtant from him. No deſires for the remembrance of him. No deſires of converſe with him. No deſires of a through return to him. No deſire of any cloſe imitation of him.

A DISCOURSE UPON GODS BEING A SPIRIT.

JOHN 4. 24.

God is a Spirit, and they that Worſhip him, muſt Worſhip him in Spirit, and in truth.

THE words are part of the Dialogue between our *Saviour*, and the *Samaritan* Woman. Chriſt intending to return from *Judea* to *Galilee*, paſſed through the Country of *Samaria*, a place inhabited not by *Jews*, but a mixt Company of ſeveral Nations, and ſome remainders of the poſterity of *Iſrael*, who eſcaped the Captivity and were returned from *Aſſyria*; and being weary with his Journey, arrived about the ſixth hour or noon (according to the *Jews* reckoning the time of the day) at a Well that *Jacob* had digged, which was of great account among the Inhabitants for the Antiquity of it, as well as the uſefulneſs of it, in ſupplying their neceſſities: He being thirſty, and having none to furniſh him wherewith to draw water, at laſt comes a Woman from the City, whom he deſires to give him *ſome water* to drink. The *Woman* perceiving him by his Language or Habit to be a *Jew*, wonders at the queſtion ſince the hatred the *Jews* bore the *Samaritans* was ſo great, that they would not vouchſafe to have any Commerce with them, not only in Religious, but Civil affairs, and Common Offices belonging to Mankind. Hence our Saviour takes occaſion to publiſh to her the Doctrine of the Goſpel; and excuſeth her rude Anſwer by her ignorance of him: and tells her, that if ſhe had askt him a greater matter, even that which concern'd her Eternal Salvation, he would readily have granted it, notwithſtanding the rooted hatred between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*; and beſtowed a water of a greater vertue, the *water of life*: * The Woman is no leſs aſtoniſhed at his reply, than ſhe was at his firſt demand. It was ſtrange to hear a Man ſpeak of giving living water, to one of whom he beg'd the water of that Spring, and had no Veſſel to draw any to quench his own thirſt. She therefore demands whence he could have this water that he ſpeaks of, * ſince ſhe conceived him not greater than *Jacob*, who had digged that Well and drunk of it. Our *Saviour* deſirous

* Amirant. Paraph. ſur Jean.

* ver. 10. *Or living water.*

* ver. 11.

rous to make a progreſs in that work he had begun, extolls the Water he ſpake of above this of the Well, from its particular vertue, fully to refreſh thoſe that drank of it, and be as a Cooling and Comforting Fountain *within* them, of more efficacy than that *without*. * The *Woman* conceiving a good opinion of our *Saviour*, deſires to partake of this Water, to ſave her pains in coming dayly to the Well, not apprehending the Spirituality of Chriſts diſcourſe to her: * Chriſt finding her to take ſome pleaſure in his diſcourſe, partly to bring her to a ſenſe of *her ſin*, before he did Communicate the excellency of *his grace*, bids her return back to the City and bring her Husband with her to him: * She freely acknowledges that ſhe had no Husband, whether having ſome check of Conſcience at preſent for the unclean life ſhe led, or loath to loſe ſo much time in the gaining this water ſo much deſired by her: Our *Saviour* takes an occaſion from this to lay open her ſin before her, and to make * her ſenſible of her own wicked life, and the prophetick excellency of himſelf; and tells her, ſhe had *had five Husbands* to whom ſhe had been falſe, and by whom ſhe was divorced, and the perſon ſhe now dwelt with was not her lawful Husband, and in living with him ſhe violated the Rights of Marriage, and increaſed guilt upon her Conſcience, * The *Woman* being affected with this diſcourſe, and knowing him to be a ſtranger, that could not be certified of thoſe things but in an extraordinary way, begins to have a high eſteem of him as a *Prophet*. * And upon this opinion ſhe eſteems him able to decide a queſtion which had been Canvaſt between them and the *Jews* about the place of Worſhip.* Their *Fathers Worſhipping in that Mountain*, and the *Jews* affirming *Jeruſalem* to be a place of Worſhip: She pleads the Antiquity of the worſhip in this place: *Abraham* having built an Altar there, *Gen.* 12. 7. And *Jacob* upon his return from *Syria*. And ſurely had the place been capable of an exception, ſuch perſons as they, and ſo well acquainted with the Will of God, would not have pitched upon that place to celebrate their worſhip.

* ver. 13, 14.
* ver. 15.
* ver. 16.
* ver. 17.
* ver. 18.
* ver. 19.
* ver. 20.

Antiquity hath too too often bewitched the minds of Men, and drawn them from the revealed Will of God. Men are more willing to imitate the outward actions of their famous Anceſtors, than conform themſelves to the revealed Will of their Creator. The *Samaritans* would imitate the *Patriarchs* in the place of worſhip, but not in the faith of the worſhippers.

Chriſt anſwers her, that this queſtion would quickly be reſolved by a new ſtate of the Church which was neer at hand, and neither *Jeruſalem* which had not the precedency, nor that Mountain ſhould be of any more value in that concern than any other place in the world: * But yet to make her ſenſible of her ſin, and that of her Country-men, tells her, that their *Worſhip* in that Mountain was *not according to the will of God*, he having long after the Altars built in this place fixed *Jeruſalem* as the place of Sacrifices; beſides, they had not the knowledge of that God which ought to be worſhipped by them, but the *Jews* had the *true object of Worſhip* and the *true manner of Worſhip, according to the declaration God had made of himſelf to them*. * But all that ſervice ſhall vaniſh, the vail of the Temple ſhall be rent in twain, and that Carnal worſhip give place to one more Spiritual; ſhadows ſhall fly before ſubſtance, and truth advance it ſelf above figures, and the worſhip of God ſhall be with the the ſtrength of the Spirit; ſuch a Worſhip, and ſuch Worſhippers doth the *Father Seek*: * For *God is a Spirit, and thoſe that Worſhip him muſt Worſhip him in Spirit and in truth*. The deſign of our *Saviour* is to declare, that God is not taken with external worſhip invented by men, no nor commanded by himſelf; and that upon this reaſon, becauſe he is a *Spiritual eſſence*, infinitely above groſs and Corporeal matter, and is not taken with that pomp which is a pleaſure to our Earthly imaginations.

* ver. 21.
* ver. 22.
* ver. 23.

* *Vulgar lat. Illyrc. Clav.* Πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός. Some tranſlate it juſt as the words lie. *Spirit is God*: * But it is not unuſual both in the old and new Teſtament languages, to put the predicate before the ſubject, as Pſal. 5. 9. *Their throat is an open Sepulchre*, in the Hebrew *a Sepulchre open their Throat*. So Pſa. 111. 3. *His work is honourable and glorious*. Hebr. *Honour and Glory his work*, And their wants not one example in the ſame Evangeliſt, Joh. 1. 1. *And the word was God*. Greek *And God was the word*: In all, the predicate or what is aſcribed, is put before the ſubject to which it is aſcribed,

One tetlsus, and he an head of a party, that hath made a diſturbance in the Church

of

of God, * that this place is not aptly brought to prove God to be a Spirit: And the reason of Christ runs not thus, God is of a Spiritual Essence, and therefore must be worshipped with a Spiritual worship; for the Essence of God is not the Foundation of his worship, but his Will; for then we were not to worship him with a Corporal worship, because he is not a body; but with an invisible and eternal worship, because he is invisible and eternal.

* *Episcop. Institut. lib. 4. cap. 3.*

But the *nature* of God is the *foundation* of worship, the *Will* of God is the *Rule* of worship; the matter and manner is to be performed according to the Will of God. But is the nature of the object of worship to be excluded? No, as the object is, so ought our Devotion to be, Spiritual as he is Spiritual. God in his Commands for worship respected the discovery of his own nature; in the Law he respected the discovery of his mercy and justice, and therefore Commanded a worship by Sacrifices; a Spiritual worship without those institutions would not have declared those Attributes, which was Gods end to display to the world in Christ: And tho the nature of God is to be respected in worship, yet the obligations of the Creature are to be considered. God is a Spirit therefore must have a Spiritual worship: The Creature hath a body as well as a Soul, and both from God; and therefore ought to worship God with the one as well as the other, since one as well as the other is freely bestowed upon him.

The Spirituality of God was the foundation of the change from the Judaical carnal worship to a more Spiritual and Evangelical.

[*God is a Spirit:*]

That is, he hath nothing Corporal, no mixture of matter, not a visible substance, a bodily form. * He is a Spirit, not a bare Spiritual substance: But an understanding willing Spirit, holy, wise, good and just. Before Christ spake of the Father, * the first person in the Trinity: Now he speaks of God Essentially: The word *Father* is personal, the word *God* essential. So that our Saviour would render a reason, not from any one person in the blessed Trinity, but from the Divine nature, why we should worship in Spirit, and therefore makes use of the word God, the being a Spirit being Common to the other persons with the Father.

* Melancton.

* ver. 23.

This is the reason of the proposition, *verse* 23. *Of a Spiritual Worship.* Every nature delights in that which is like it, and distasts that which is most different from it. If God were Corporeal, he might be pleased with the victims of beasts, and the beautiful Magnificence of Temples, and the noyse of Musick: But being a Spirit, he cannot be gratified with carnal things: He demands something better and greater than all those, that Soul which he made, that Soul which he hath endowed, a Spirit of a frame suitable to his nature. He indeed appointed Sacrifices and a Temple, as shadows of those things which were to be most acceptable to him in the *Messiah*, but they were imposed only *till the time of Reformation.* * *

* Heb. 9. 10.

[*Must Worship him.*]

Not they may, or it would be more agreeable to God to have such a manner of worship: But they *must*. Tis not exclusive of bodily worship; for this were to exclude all publick worship in societies, which cannot be performed without reverential postures of the body. * The Gestures of the body are helps to worship and declarations of Spiritual acts. We can scarcely worship God with our Spirits without some tincture upon the outward-man. But he excludes all acts meerly Corporal, all resting upon an external service and devotion, which was the Crime of the *Pharisees*, and the general perswasion of the *Jews* as well as Heathens, who used the outward Ceremonies, not as signs of better things, but as if they did of themselves please God, and render the worshippers accepted with him, without any suitable frame of the inward man: * It is as if he had said, now you must separate your selves from all carnal modes to which the service of God is now tyed, and render a worship chiefly consisting in the affectionate motions of the heart, and accommodated more exactly to the condition of the object, who is a Spirit.

* Terniti.

* Amirald *in loc.*

[*In Spirit and Truth*]

* The Evangelical Service now required, has the advantage of the former; that was a shadow and Figure, this the Body and Truth. * Spirit, say some, is here opposed to the legal Ceremonies; Truth, to hypocritical services; or * rather truth is opposed to shadows, and an opinion of worth in the outward action; 'tis principally

* Amirald. *in loc.* * Muscul. * Chemnit.

oppo-

oppoſed to external Rites, becauſe our Saviour ſaith, *v.* 23. *The hour comes, and now is*, &c. Had it been oppoſed to Hypocriſie, Chriſt had ſaid no new thing: For God always required Truth in the inward parts, and all true Worſhippers had ſerved him with a ſincere Conſcience and ſingle Heart. The old Patriarchs did worſhip God in Spirit and *Truth*, as taken for ſincerity: Such a Worſhip was always, and is perpetually due to God; becauſe he always was, and eternally will be a Spirit.

* Muſcal. * And it is ſaid, *the Father ſeeks ſuch to Worſhip him*; not ſhall ſeek: He always ſought it; it always was performed to him by one or other in the World: And the *Prophets* had always rebuked them, for reſting upon their outward Solemnities, *Iſa.* 58. 7. and *Micah.* 6. 8. But a Worſhip without legal Rites was proper to an Evangelical State and the times of the Goſpel; God having then exhibited Chriſt, and brought into the world the ſubſtance of thoſe ſhadows, and the End of thoſe inſtitutions: There was no more need to continue them, when the true reaſon of them was ceaſed. All Laws do naturally expire, when the true reaſon upon which they were firſt framed, is changed.

Or by *Spirit* may be meant, ſuch a worſhip as is kindled in the heart by the breath of the holy Ghoſt. Since we are dead in ſin, a ſpiritual light and flame in the heart ſutable to the nature of the object of our Worſhip, cannot be raiſed in us without the operation of a ſupernatural Grace: And though the Fathers could not Worſhip God without the Spirit; yet in the Goſpel-times, there being a fuller effuſion of the Spirit, the Evangelical State is called *the adminiſtration of the Spirit*, and

2 Cor. 3. 8. the *newneſs of the Spirit*, in oppoſition to the legal Oeconomy, entitled the *oldneſs*

* Rom. 7. 6. *of the Letter.* * The Evangelical State is more ſuted to the Nature of God than any other: Such a Worſhip God muſt have, whereby he is acknowledged to be the true Sanctifier and Quickner of the Soul. The nearer God doth approach to us, and the more full his manifeſtations are; the more ſpiritual is the Worſhip we return to God. The Goſpel pares off the rugged parts of the Law, and Heaven ſhall remove what is material in the Goſpel, and change the Ordinances of VVorſhip into that of a Spiritual Praiſe.

In the words there is,

1. *A Propoſition* [*God is a Spirit.*] The Foundation of all Religion.
2. *An Inference* [*They that worſhip him*, &c.]

As God, a VVorſhip belongs to him; as a Spirit, a ſpiritual VVorſhip is due to him: In the Inference we have.

1. *The manner of Worſhip* [*in Spirit and in Truth*].
2. *The neceſſity of ſuch a Worſhip* [*muſt*]

The Propoſition declares the Nature of God; the Inference, the Duty of Man.

The *Obſervations* lie plain.

Ob. 1. *God is a pure Spiritual Being.* [He is a Spirit.]

2. *The Worſhip due from the Creature to God, muſt be agreeable to the Nature of God, and purely ſpiritual.*

3. *The Evangelical State is ſuted to the Nature of God.*

For the firſt

D. *God is a pure ſpiritual Being.*

* *Epiſcop.* inſtitut. l. 4. c. 3. 'Tis the obſervation of one,* that the plain aſſertion of Gods being a Spirit is found but once in the whole Bible, and that is in this place; which may well be wondred at; becauſe God is ſo often deſcribed with hands, feet, eyes and ears, in the form and figure of a Man. The Spiritual Nature of God is deducible from many places; but not any where, as I remember, aſſerted *totidem verbis*, but in this Text: Some alledge that place, 2 *Cor.* 3. 17. *the Lord is that Spirit*, for the proof of it; but that ſeems to have a different ſenſe: In the *Text* the Nature of God is deſcribed; in that place, the operations of God in the Goſpel. [*'Tis not the Miniſtry of *Moſes*, or that old Covenant, which communicates to you that Spirit it ſpeaks of; but it is the Lord Jeſus. and the Doctrine of the Goſpel delivered by him whereby this Spirit and Liberty is diſpenſed to you: He oppoſes here the *Liberty* of the Goſpel to the *Servitude* of the Law.] 'Tis from Chriſt, that a Divine Vertue diffuſeth it ſelf by the Goſpel; 'tis by him, not by the Law, that we partake of that Spirit.

* *Amyrald* in *loc.*

* *Suarez de* Deo vol. 1 t. 9. Col. 1. * The Spirituality of God, is as evident as his Being. If we grant that God is,

we

we must necessarily grant that he cannot be corporeal; because a Body is of an imperfect Nature. It will appear incredible to any that acknowledge God the first Being and Creator of all things, that he should be a massie heavy Body, and have Eyes and Ears, Feet and hands as we have.

For the explication of it.

1. *Spirit is taken various ways in Scripture.* It signifies sometimes an aereal substance, as *Psal.* 11. 6. *A horrible Tempest*: Hebr. A *Spirit* of Tempest: Sometimes the breath, which is a thin substance, *Gen.* 6. 17. *All Flesh wherein is the breath of Life*: Hebr. *Spirit* of Life. A thin substance, tho it be material and corporeal, is called *Spirit*: And in the bodies of living Creatures, that which is the principle of their actions is called Spirits; the animal and vital Spirits: And the finer parts extracted from Plants and Minerals, we call Spirits: Those volatile parts separated from that gross matter wherein they were immerst, because they come nearest to the nature of an incorporeal substance: And from this notion of the word, 'tis translated to signifie those substances that are purely immaterial, as Angels, and the Souls of Men. *Angels* are called *Spirits*, Psal. 104. 4. *who makes his Angels Spirits**; And not only good Angels are so called, but *evil Angels*, *Mark* 1. 27. Souls of Men are called Spirits, *Eccl.* 12. And the Soul of Christ is called so, *John* 19. 30. Whence God is called *the God of the Spirits of all Flesh*, *Numb.* 22. 16. and Spirit is opposed to Flesh, *Isa.* 31. 3. *The Ægyptians are Flesh and not Spirit.* And our Saviour gives us the notion of a Spirit to be *something above the nature of a Body*, Luke 24. 39. *Not having flesh and bones*, extended parts, loads of gross matter. 'Tis also taken for those things which are active and efficacious; because activity is of the nature of a Spirit. *Caleb* had another *Spirit*, *Num.* 14. 24. an active affection. The vehement motions of sin are called *Spirit*, Hos. 4. 12. *The Spirit of Whoredoms*, in that sense that *Pro.* 29. 11. *A Fool utters all his mind*, all his *Spirit*, he knows not how to restrain the vehement motions of his mind. So that the notion of a Spirit is, that it is a fine immaterial substance, an active being, that acts it self and other things. A meer Body cannot act it self; as the Body of Man cannot move without the Soul, no more than a Ship can move it self without Wind and Waves.

*Heb. 1. 14.

So God is called a Spirit, as being not a Body, not having the greatness, figure, thickness or length of a Body, wholly separate from any thing of flesh and matter. We find a Principle within us nobler than that of our Bodies; and therefore we conceive the Nature of God, according to that which is more worthy in us, and not according to that which is the vilest part of our Natures. God is a most *Spiritual Spirit*, more Spiritual than all Angels, all Souls: * As he exceeds all in the nature of Being, so he exceeds all in the nature of Spirit: He hath nothing gross, heavy, material in his Essence.

* Gerhard. μονοτερῶς

2. *When we say God is a Spirit, 'tis to be understood by way of Negation.* There are *two ways* of knowing or describing God: By way of *affirmation*, affirming that of him in a way of eminency, which is excellent in the Creature; as when we say God is wise, good: The other, by way of *negation*, when we remove from God in our conceptions, what is tainted with imperfection in the Creature. * The *first ascribes* to him whatsoever is *excellent*; the *other* separates from him whatsoever is *imperfect*. The first is like a Limning, which adds one Colour to another to make a comely Picture; the other is like a Carving, which pares and cuts away whatsoever is superfluous, to make a compleat Statue. This way of *negation* is more easie; we better understand *what God is not*, than *what he is*; and most of our knowledge of God, is by this way: As when we say God is infinite, immense, immutable, they are negatives: He hath no limits, is confined to no place, admits of no change. * When we remove from him what is inconsistent with his Being, we do more strongly assert his Being, and know more of him when we elevate him above all, and above our own capacity. And when we say God is a Spirit, 'tis a negation; he is not a Body; he consists not of various parts, extended one without and beyond another: He is not a Spirit so as our Souls are, to be the form of any Body: A *Spirit*, *not as Angels and Souls are*, but infinitely higher; we call him so, because in regard of our weakness, we have not any other term of excellency to express or conceive of him by: We transfer it to God in honour, because *Spirit* is the highest excellency in our nature: Yet we must apprehend God above any Spirit, since his Nature is so great, that he

* *Gamacheus* Tom. 1. q. 3. Cap. 1. p. 42.

* *Coccei. sum.* Theol. cap. 8.

cannot be declared by human ſpeech, perceived by human ſenſe, or conceived by human underſtanding.

The ſecond thing, *That God is a Spirit.*

* Theſ. Sedan. part. 2. p. 1000. * *Voſſius* Idolol. lib. 2. cap. 1. *Forbes* Inſtrument l. 1. c. 36.

* Some among the *Heathens* imagined God to have a body; ſome thought him to have a body of Air, ſome a heavenly Body, ſome a human Body: * And many of them aſcribed bodies to their Gods; but bodies without blood, without corruption; bodies made up of the fineſt and thinneſt Atomes; ſuch bodies, which if compared with ours, were as no bodies. The *Sadduces* alſo, who denied all Spirits, and yet acknowledged a God muſt conclude him to be a Body and no Spirit. Some among Chriſtians have been of that opinion. *Tertullian* is charged by ſome, and excuſed by others: And ſome *Monks* of *Egypt* were ſo fierce for this Error, that they attempted to kill one *Theophilus* a Biſhop, for not being of that Judgment.

* Οὐκ ἄσεον * *Plutarch.* incorporalis ratio divinus ſpiritus *Seneca.*

But the *wiſer Heathens* were of another mind, and eſteemed it an *unholy thing* to have ſuch imaginations of God. And ſome Chriſtians have thought God only to be free from any thing of body, becauſe he is omnipreſent, immutable, he is only incorporeal and ſpiritual; all things elſe, even the *Angels* are clothed with bodies, though of a neater matter, and a more active frame than ours; a pure ſpiritual Nature they allowed to no Being but God. Scripture and Reaſon meet together to aſſert the Spirituality of God. Had God had the Lineaments of a Body, the *Gentiles* had not fallen under that accuſation of *changing his Glory into that of a Corruptible Man**.

* Rom. 1. 23.

This is ſignified by the name God gives himſelf, *Exod.* 3. 14. *I am that I am*, a ſimple, pure, uncompounded Being, without any Created mixture; as infinitely above the being of Creatures, as above the conceptions of Creatures, *Job* 37. 23. *Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out.* He is ſo much a *Spirit*, that he is the *Father of Spirits*, Heb. 12. 9. The Almighty Father is not of a Nature inferior to his Children: The Soul is a Spirit, it could not elſe exert actions without the aſſiſtance of the Body, as the act of Underſtanding it ſelf, and its own nature, the act of willing, and willing things againſt the incitements and intereſt of the Body: It could not elſe conceive of God, Angels and immaterial ſubſtances: It could not elſe be ſo active, as with one glance to fetch a compaſs from Earth to Heaven, and by a ſudden motion, to elevate the underſtanding from an earthly thought, to the thinking of things as high as the higheſt Heavens. If we have this opinion of our Souls which in the nobleneſs of their acts ſurmount the Body, without which the Body is but a dull unactive piece of clay; we muſt needs have a higher conception of God, than to clog him with any matter, though of a finer temper than ours: We muſt conceive of him by the perfections of our Souls, without the vileneſs of our Bodies. If God made Man according to his Image, we muſt raiſe our thoughts of God according to the nobleſt part of that Image, and imagine the Exemplar or Copy, not to come ſhort, but to exceed the thing copyed by it. God were not the moſt excellent ſubſtance, if he were not a Spirit: Spiritual ſubſtances are more excellent than bodily; the Soul of Man more excellent than other Animals; Angels more excellent than Men: They contain in their own nature, whatſoever dignity there is in the inferior Creatures. God muſt have therefore an excellency above all thoſe, and therefore is intirely remote from the conditions of a Body.

* *Calov.* Socin. Proflig. p. 129, 130.

* 'Tis a groſs conceit therefore to think that God is ſuch a Spirit as the Air is; for that is to be a body as the Air is, though it be a thin one; and if God were no more a Spirit than that, or than Angels, he would not be the moſt ſimple Being: * Yet ſome think that the ſpiritual Deity was repreſented by the Air in the Ark of the Teſtament. It was unlawful to repreſent him by any Image, that God had prohibited: Every thing about the Ark had a perticular ſignification: The Gold and other Ornaments about it ſignified ſomething of Chriſt, but were unfit to repreſent the Nature of God: A thing purely invitible and falling under nothing of ſenſe, could not repreſent him to the mind of Man: The Air in the Ark was the fitteſt, it repreſented the inviſibility of God, Air being imperceptible to our eyes. Air diffuſeth it ſelf through all parts of the World, it glides through ſecret paſſages into all Creatures, it fills the ſpace between Heaven and Earth; there is no place wherein God is not preſent.

* *Amyrald* Sup. Heb. 9. p. 146, &c.

To evidence this,

1. *If*

1. *If God were not a Spirit, he could not be Creator.* All multitude begins in, and is reduced to unity. As above multitude there is an abſolute unity; So above mixt Creatures, there is an abſolute ſimplicity: You cannot conceive number without conceiving the beginning of it in that which was not number, *viz.* a unite: You cannot conceive any mixture, but you muſt conceive ſome ſimple thing to be the Original and Baſis of it. The works of art, done by rational Creatures, have their Foundation in ſomething Spiritual. Every *Artificer*, Watch-maker, Carpenter hath a model in his own mind of the work he deſigns to frame: The material and outward Fabrick is ſquared according to an inward and *Spiritual Idea.* A Spiritual Idea ſpeaks a Spiritual faculty as the ſubject of it. God could not have an Idea of that vaſt number of Creatures he brought into being; if he had not a Spiritual Nature. * The wiſdom whereby the world was Created could never be the fruit of a Corporeal nature; ſuch natures are not capable of underſtanding and comprehending the things which are within the compaſs of their nature, much leſs of producing them: And therefore beaſts which have only Corporeal faculties, move to objects by the force of their ſenſe, and have no knowledg of things as they are comprehended by the underſtanding of Man. All acts of wiſdom ſpeak an intelligent and Spiritual agent: The effects of Wiſdom, goodneſs, power, are ſo great and admirable, that they beſpeak him a more perfect and eminent being, than can poſſibly be beheld under a bodily ſhape. Can a Corporeal ſubſtance put *Wiſdom in the inward parts and give underſtanding to the heart* * ?

* Amyral. *moral Tom.* 1. *pa.* 282.

* Job 38. 16.

2. *If God were not a pure Spirit, he could not be one.* If God had a body conſiſting of diſtinct members, as ours; or all of one nature, as the water and air are, yet he were then capable of diviſion, and therefore could not be entirely one. Either thoſe parts would be finite or infinite; if finite, they are not parts of God; for to be God and finite is a contradiction: If infinite, then there are as many infinites, as diſtinct members, and therefore as many Deities: Suppoſe this body had all parts of the ſame nature as air and water hath, every little part of air is as much air as the greateſt, and every little part of water is as much water as the Ocean; ſo every little part of God would be as much God as the whole; as many particular Deities to make up God, as little Atomes to compoſe a body: What can be more abſurd? If God had a body like a human body, and were compounded of body and Soul, of ſubſtance and quality, he could not be the moſt perfect unity; he would be made up of diſtinct parts, and thoſe of a diſtinct nature, as the members of a human body are: Where there is the greateſt *unity*, there muſt be the greateſt *ſimplicity*; but God is one: As he is free from any change, ſo he is void of any multitude, Deut. 6. 4. *The Lord our God is one Lord:*

3. *If God had a body as we have, he would not be inviſible.* Every material thing is not viſible: The Air is a body yet inviſible, but it is ſenſible; the cooling quality of it is felt by us at every breath, and we know it by our touch, which is the moſt materia ſenſe. Every body, that hath Members like to bodies, is viſible: But God is inviſible. * The Apoſtle reckons it amongſt his other perfections, 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. *Now unto the King, Eternal, Immortal, Inviſible*: He is inviſible to our ſenſe, which beholds nothing but material and coloured things; and incomprehenſible to our underſtanding that conceives nothing but what is finite. God is therefore a Spirit uncapable of being ſeen, and infinitely uncapable of being underſtood. If he be inviſible, he is alſo Spirttual. If he had a body, and hid it from our eyes, he might be ſaid not to be ſeen, but could not be ſaid to be inviſible. When we ſay a thing is viſible, we underſtand that it hath ſuch qualities which are the object of ſenſe, tho we may never ſee that, which in its own nature is to be ſeen. God hath no ſuch qualities as fall under the perception of our ſenſe. His works are viſible to us, but not his *God-head.* * The nature of a human body is to be ſeen and handled, Chriſt gives us ſuch a deſcription of it, *Luke* 24. 39. *Handle me and ſee, for a Spirit hath not fleſh and bones as you ſee me have*: But man hath been ſo far from ſeeing God, *that it is impoſſible he can ſee him*, 1 Tim. 6. 16. There is ſuch a diſproportion between an infinite object and a finite ſenſe and underſtanding, that it is utterly impoſſible either to behold or comprehend him. But if God had a body more luminous and glorious than that of the Sun, he would be as well viſible to us as the Sun, tho the immenſity of that light would dazle our eyes, and forbid any cloſe inſpection into

* Daille. *in Tim.*

* Rom. 1. 20.

him by the vertue of our ſenſe: We have ſeen the ſhape and figure of the Sun, but *no man hath ever ſeen the ſhape of God.* * If God had a body he were viſible, tho he might not perfectly and fully be ſeen by us.* As we ſee the Heavens, tho we ſee not the extenſion, latitude and greatneſs of them. Tho God hath manifeſted himſelf in a bodily ſhape, Gen. 18. 1. *And elſewhere* Jehovah *appeared to* Abraham: Yet the ſubſtance of God was not ſeen, no more than the ſubſtance of Angels was ſeen in their Apparitions to men. A body was formed to be made viſible by them, and ſuch actions done in that body, that ſpake the perſon that did them to be of a higher eminency than a bare Corporeal Creature: Sometimes a repreſentation is made to the inward ſenſe and imagination, as to *Michaiah,* * and to *Iſa. 6. chap.* 1. But they ſaw not the eſſence of God, but ſome Images and figures of him proportioned to their ſenſe or imagination. *The eſſence of God no man ever ſaw,* nor can ſee. Joh. 1. 18.

* Joh. 5. 37.
* Goulart. *de Dieu. pa.* 94.

* 1 King. 22. 19.

* Nor doth it follow, that God hath a body, becauſe *Jacob* is ſaid to *ſee God Face to Face,* Gen. 32. 30. And *Moſes* had the like priviledge, *Deut.* 34. 10. This only ſignifies a fuller and clearer manifeſtation of God, by ſome repreſentations offered to the bodily ſenſe, or rather to the *inward Spirit*: For God tells *Moſes he could not ſee his Face,* Exod. 33. 20. *And that none ever ſaw the ſimilitude of God,* Deut. 4. 15. Were God a Corporeal ſubſtance he might in ſome meaſure be ſeen by Corporeal eyes.

* Goulart. *de Dieu. pa.* 95. 96.

4. *If God were not a Spirit, he could not be Infinite.* All bodies are of a finite nature: Every body is material, and every material thing is terminated. The Sun, a vaſt body hath abounded greatneſs: The Heavens of a mighty bulk, yet have their limits. If God had a body he muſt conſiſt of parts, thoſe parts would be bounded and limited, and whatſoever is limited is of a finite vertue, and therefore below an infinite nature. Reaſon therefore tells us, that the moſt excellent nature, as God is, cannot be of a Corporeal condition; becauſe of the limitation and other actions which belong to every body. God is infinite, *for the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him,* 2 Chron. 2. 6. The largeſt Heavens, and thoſe imaginary ſpaces beyond the world, are no bounds to him. He hath an eſſence beyond the bounds of the World, and cannot be included in the vaſtneſs of the Heavens. If God be infinite, then he can have no parts in him; if he had, they muſt be finite, or infinite: Finite parts can never make up an infinite being. A veſſel of Gold of a pound weight cannot be made of the quantity of an ounce. Infinite parts they cannot be, becauſe then every part would be equal to the whole, as infinite as the whole, which is contradictory. We ſee in all things every part is leſs than the whole bulk that is compoſed of it: As every member of a man is leſs than the whole body of Man: If all the parts were finite, then God in his Eſſence were finite; and a finite God is not more excellent than a Creature: So that if God were not a Spirit, he could not be infinite.

5. *If God were not a Spirit, he could not be an independent being.* Whatſoever is compounded of many parts, depends either eſſentially or integrally upon thoſe parts; as the eſſence of a man depends upon the conjunction and union of his two main parts, his Soul, and Body; when they are ſeparated the eſſence of a man ceaſeth; and the perfection of a man depends upon every Member of the body; So that if one be wanting the perfection of the whole is wanting: As if a man hath loſt a limb, you call him not a perfect man; becauſe that part is gone upon which his perfection, as an intire man, did depend: If God therefore had a body, the perfection of the Deity would depend upon every part of that body; and the more parts he were compounded of, the more his dependency would be multiplyed according to the number of thoſe parts of the body: For that which is compounded of many parts is more dependent than that which is compounded of fewer.

And becauſe God would be a dependent being if he had a body, he could not be the firſt being; for the compounding parts are in order of nature before that which is compounded by them; as the Soul and Body are before the man which reſults from the union of them. If God had parts and bodily Members as we have, or any compoſition, the Eſſence of God would reſult from thoſe parts, and thoſe parts be ſuppoſed to be before God. For that which is a part, is before that whoſe part it is. As in Artificial things you may conceive it: All the parts of a VVatch or Clock, are in time before that VVatch which is made by ſetting thoſe parts together. In natural

tural things, you must suppose the Members of a Body framed, before you can call it a Man: So that the parts of this body are before that which is constituted by them. We can conceive no other of God, if he were not a pure, intire, unmixed Spirit: If he had distinct parts, he would depend upon them; those parts would be before him; his Essence would be the effect of those distinct parts, and so he would not be absolutely and intirely the first Being: But he is so, *Isa.* 44. 6. *I am the first and I am the last.* He is the first; nothing is before him: Whereas if he had bodily parts, and those finite, it would follow, God is made up of those parts which are not God; and that which is not God, is in order of Nature before that which is God. So that we see if God were not a Spirit, he could not be independent.

6. *If God where not a Spirit, he were not immutable and unchangeable.* His immutability depends upon his simplicity. He is unchangeable in his Essence, because he is a pure and unmixed spiritual Being. Whatsoever is compounded of parts, may be divided into those parts, and resolved into those distinct parts which make up and constitute the Nature. Whatsoever is compounded, is changeable in its own nature, though it should never be changed. *Adam*, who was constituted of Body and Soul, had he stood in Innocence, had not died; there had been no separation made between his Soul and Body whereof he was constituted, and his Body had not resolved into those principles of Dust from whence it was extracted. Yet in his own nature he was dissoluble into those distinct parts whereof he was compounded: And so the glorified Saints in Heaven, after the Resurrection, and the happy meeting of their Souls and Bodies in a new Marriage knot, shall never be dissolved; yet in their own nature they are mutable and dissoluble, and cannot be otherwise, because they are made up of such distinct parts that may be separated in their own nature, unless sustained by the grace of God: They are immutable by Will, the Will of God, not by Nature. God is immutable by Nature as well as Will: As he hath a necessary Existence, so he hath a necessary Unchangeableness, *Mal.* 3. 6. *I the Lord change not.* He is as unchangeable in his Essence, as in his Veracity and Faithfulness: They are perfections belonging to his Nature. But if he were not a pure Spirit, he could not be immutable by Nature.

7. *If God were not a pure Spirit, He could not be Omnipresent. He is in Heaven above, and the Earth below:* * *He fills Heaven and Earth.* * The Divine Essence is at once in Heaven and Earth; but it is impossible a Body can be in two places at one and the same time. Since God is every where, he must be Spiritual. Had he a Body, he could not penetrate all things; he would be circumscribed in place. He could not be every where but in parts, not in the whole; one member in one place, and another in another; for to be confined to a particular place, is the property of a Body: But since he is diffused *through the whole World; higher than Heaven, deeper than Hell; longer than the Earth, broader than the Sea*; * he hath not any corporeal matter. If he had a Body wherewith to fill Heaven and Earth, there could be no Body besides his own: 'Tis the Nature of Bodies to bound one another, and hinder the extending of one another. Two Bodies cannot be in the same place in the same point of Earth, one excludes the other: And it will follow hence, that we are nothing, no substances, meer illusions; there could be no place for any Body else.* If his Body were as big as the World; as it must be, if with that he filled Heaven and Earth, there would not be room for him to move a hand or a foot, or extend a finger; for there would be no place remaining for the motion.

* Deut. 4. 39. * Jer. 23. 24.

* Job 11. 8.

* *Gamacheus* Theol. Tom. 1. Quæſt. 3. C. 1.

8. *If God were not a Spirit, he could not be the most perfect Being.* The more perfect any thing is in the rank of Creatures, the more Spiritual and simple it is, as Gold is the more pure and perfect that hath least mixture of other Metals If God were not a Spirit, there would be Creatures of a more excellent Nature than God; as Angels and Souls, which the Scripture calls Spirits, in opposition to Bodies. There is more of perfection in the first notion of a Spirit, than in the notion of a Body. God cannot be less perfect than his Creatures, and contribute an excellency of being to them which he wants himself. If Angels and Souls possess such an excellency, and God want that excellency; he would be less than his Creatures, and excellency of the Effect, would exceed the excellency of the Cause. But every Creature, even the highest Creature, is infinitely short of the perfection of God; for whatsoever excellency they have, is finite and limited; 'tis but a spark from the Sun, a drop

drop from the Ocean; but God is unboundedly perfect in the higheſt manner, without any limitation; and therefore above Spirits, Angels, the higheſt Creatures that were made by him: An infinite ſublimity, a pure act, to which nothing can be added, from which nothing can be taken. *In him there is light and no darkneſs,** ſpirituality without any matter, perfection without any ſhadow or taint of imperfection: Light pierceth into all things, preſerves its own purity, and admits of no mixture of any thing elſe with it.

* 1 John 1. 5.

Queſtion. It may be ſaid, *If God be a Spirit, and it is impoſſible he can be otherwiſe than a Spirit; how comes God ſo often to have ſuch Members as we have in our Bodies, aſcribed to him*; not only a Soul, but particular bodily parts; as *heart, arms, hands, eyes, ears, face* and *back-parts*? And how is it that he is never called a *Spirit* in plain words, but in this Text by our Saviour?

Anſw. 'Tis true, *many parts* of the Body, and natural affections of the human nature, are reported of God in *Scripture*. *Head*, * *Eyes* and *Eye-lids*, * *Apple* of the *Eye*, *Mouth*, &c. our *Affections* alſo, *Grief*, *Joy*, *Anger*, &c. But it is to be conſidered,

* Dan. 7. 9.
* Pſal. 11. 4.

1. *That this is in condeſcenſion to our weakneſs.* God being deſirous to make himſelf known to Man, whom he created for his Glory, humbles as it were his own Nature to ſuch repreſentations, as may ſute and aſſiſt the capacity of the Creature: Since by the condition of our nature nothing erects a notion of it ſelf in our underſtanding, but as it is conducted in by our ſenſe. God hath ſerved himſelf of thoſe things which are moſt expoſed to our ſenſe, moſt obvious to our underſtandings, to give us ſome acquaintance with his own Nature, and thoſe things which otherwiſe we were not capable of having any notion of. As our Souls are linkt with our Bodies, ſo our knowledge is linkt with our ſenſe; that we can ſcarce imagine any thing at firſt but under a corporal form and figure, till we come by great attention to the Object, to make by the help of reaſon, a ſeparation of the ſpiritual ſubſtance from the corporeal fancy, and conſider it in its own nature. We are not able to conceive a Spirit, without ſome kind of reſemblance to ſomething below it; nor underſtand the actions of a Spirit, without conſidering the operations of a human Body in its ſeveral Members. As the Glories of another Life are ſignified to us by the pleaſures of this; ſo the Nature of God, by a gracious condeſcenſion to our capacities, is ſignified to us by a likeneſs to our own. The more familiar the things are to us which God uſes to this purpoſe, the more proper they are to teach us what he intends by them.

* *Loquitur lex ſecund. ling. filiorum hominum*, was the *H.* ſaying.

Anſw. 2. *All ſuch repreſentation are to ſignifie the acts of God, as they bear ſome likeneſs to thoſe, which we perform by thoſe members he aſcribes to himſelf.* So that thoſe members aſcribed to him, rather note his viſible operations to us, than his inviſible Nature; and ſignifie that God doth ſome works like to thoſe which men do, by the aſſiſtance of thoſe organs of their Bodies. * So the wiſdom of God is called his Eye, becauſe he knows that with his mind, which we ſee with our eyes. The efficiency of God is called his Hand and Arm; becauſe as we act with our hands, ſo doth God with his Power. The divine Efficacies are ſignified: By his eyes and ears, we underſtand his Omniſcience; by his face, the manifeſtation of his Favour; by his mouth the revelation of his Will; by his noſtrils, the acceptation of our Prayers; by his bowels, the tenderneſs of his Compaſſion; by his heart, the ſincerity of his Affections; by his hand, the ſtrength of his Power; by his feet, the unbiquity of his Preſence. And in this, he intends inſtruction and comfort: By his *eyes* he ſignifies *his watchfulneſs over us*: By his *ears*, *his readineſs to hear the crys of the oppreſſed*: * By his *Arm*, *his Power*; an Arm to deſtroy his Enemies, and an Arm to relieve his People. * All thoſe attributed to God to ſignifie divine actions, which he doth without bodily organs, as we do with them.

* *Amyral.* de Trin. *p.* 218, 219.

* Pſal. 34. 15.

* Iſa. 51. 9.

3. Conſider alſo, *that only thoſe members which are the inſtruments of the nobleſt actions, and under that conſideration, are uſed by him to repreſent a notion of him to our minds.* Whatſoever is perfect and excellent, is aſcribed to him, but nothing that ſavours of imperfection. * The heart is aſcribed to him, it being the principle of vital actions, to ſignifie the Life that he hath in himſelf: Watchful and diſcerning eyes, not ſleepy and lazy ones: A mouth to reveal his Will, not to take in food. To eat and ſleep

* *Epiſcop.* inſtitu. l. 4. § 3. c. 3.

are

are never aſcribed to him; nor thoſe parts that belong to the preparing or tranſmitting nouriſhment to the ſeveral parts of the body, as ſtomach, liver, reins, nor bowels, under that conſideration, but as they are ſignificant of compaſſion; but only thoſe parts are aſcribed to him whereby we acquire knowledge, as eyes and ears, the Organs of learning and wiſdom: Or to Communicate it to others, as the mouth, lips, tongue, as they are Inſtruments of ſpeaking, not of taſting: Or thoſe parts which ſignifie ſtrength and power, or whereby we perform the actions of Charity for the relief of others: Taſt, and touch, ſenſes that extend no further than to Corporeal things, and are the groſſeſt of all the ſenſes, are never aſcribed to him,

* It were worth conſideration, *whither this deſcribing God by the Members of an human Body were ſo much figuratively to be underſtood, as with reſpect to the incarnation of our Saviour, who was to aſſume the human nature and all the Members of a human body.*

* *Tis* Zanchie's. *obſervation Tom. 2. de natura Dei lib. 1. cap. 4. Theſ. 9.*

Aſaph ſpeaking in the perſon of God, Pſal. 78.1. *I will open my mouth in Parables*: In regard of *God* it is to be underſtood figuratively, but in regard of *Chriſt* literally, *to whom it is applied*, Matt. 13. 34, 35. And that Apparition, *Iſa. 6.* Which was the appearance of *Jehovah*, is applied to *Chriſt*, John 12. 40, 41.

* After the report of the Creation, and the forming of man, we read of Gods ſpeaking to him, but not of Gods appearing to him in any viſible ſhape: A voice might be formed in the air to give man notice of his duty; ſome way of information he muſt have, what poſitive Laws he was to obſerve, beſides that Law which was engraven in his nature, which we call the Law of nature: And without a voice the knowledge of the Divine Will could not be ſo conveniently communicated to man: Tho God was heard in a voice, he was not ſeen in a ſhape: But after the fall we ſeveral times read of his appearing in ſuch a form. Tho we read of his *ſpeaking* before mans committing of ſin, yet not of his *walking*, which is more Corporeal, till afterwards: * [Tho God would not have man believe him to be Corporeal, yet he judged it expedient to give ſome prenotices of that Divine incarnation which he had promiſed.]

* Amyrald. *Moral. Tom. 1. pa. 293, 294.*

* Gen. 3. 8.

* Amyrald.

5. *Therefore we muſt not conceive of the viſible Deity according to the letter of ſuch expreſſions, but the true intent of them.* Tho the *Scripture* ſpeaks of his *eyes* and *arms*, yet it denies them to be *arms of fleſh.* * We muſt not conceive of God according to the Letter, but the deſign of the *Metaphor.* When we hear things deſcribed by Metaphorical expreſſions for the clearing them up to our fancy, we conceive not of them under that garb, but remove the vail by an act of our reaſon: When *Chriſt* is called a *Sun*, a *Vine*, *Bread*, is any ſo ſtupid as to conceive him to be a Vine with material branches and Cluſters; or be of the ſame nature with a Loaf? But the things deſigned by ſuch *Metaphors* are obvious to the conception of a mean underſtanding. If we would conceive God to have a body like a man, becauſe he deſcribes himſelf ſo, we may conceit him to be like a Bird, becauſe he is mentioned with *wings*; * or like a *Lyon* or *Leopard*, becauſe he likens himſelf to them in the Acts of his ſtrength and *fury.* * He is called a *rock*, a *horn*, *fire*, to note his ſtrength and wrath: If any be ſo ſtupid as to think God to be really ſuch, they would make him not only a man, but worſe than a Monſter.

* Job. 10. 4. 2 Chron. 32. 8.

* Pſal. 36. 7. * Hoſ. 13. 7, 8.

* *Onkelos*, the *Chalde Paraphraſt* upon parts of the Scripture, was ſo tender of expreſſing the Notion of any Corporiety in God, that when he meets with any expreſſions of that nature, he tranſlates them according to the true intent of them; as when God is ſaid to *deſcend*, Gen. 11. 5. Which implies a local motion, a motion from one place to another, he tranſlates it, *and God revealed himſelf.* We ſhould conceive of God according to the deſign of the expreſſions: When we read of his eyes, we ſhould conceive his Omniſcience; of his hand his power; of his ſitting, his immutability; of his Throne, his Majeſty; and conceive of him as ſurmounting, not only the groſſneſs of bodies, but the Spiritual excellency of the moſt dignified Creatures; ſomething ſo perfect, great, ſpiritual, as nothing can be conceived higher and purer.

* Maimon. *More Nevoc. par. 1. cap. 27.*

* Chriſt, ſaith one, is truly *Deus figuratus*; and for his ſake, was it more eaſily permitted to the Jews to think of God in the ſhape of a man.

* Mores conjectura cabaliſtica, *pa. 121.*

Uſe. *If God be a pure Spiritual being*, then

1. *Man is not the Image of God, according to his external bodily form and figure.*

The

The image of God in man consisted not in what is seen, but in what is not seen; not in the conformation of the members, but rather in the Spiritual faculties of the Soul; or most of all in the holy endowments of those faculties, Eph. 4. 24. *That ye put on the new man which after God is Created in righteousness and true holiness.* * The image which is restored by redeeming grace, was the image of God by Original nature. The image of God cannot be in that part which is common to us with beasts, but rather in that wherein we excell all living Creatures, in reason, understanding, and an immortal Spirit. God expresly saith, that none *saw a similitude* of him, Deut. 4. 15, 16. which had not been true, if man in regard of his body had been the image and similitude of God; for then a figure of God had been seen every day, as often as we saw a man or beheld our selves. Nor would the *Apostles* argument stand good, *Acts* 17. 29. *That the Godhead is not like to stone graven by art*, if we were not the off-spring of God, and bore the stamp of his nature in our Spirits rather than our bodies. * It was a fancy of *Eugubinus*, that when God set upon the actual Creation of man, he took a bodily form for an Exemplar of that which he would express in his work, and therefore that the words of Moses * are to be understood of the body of man; because there was in Man such a shape which God had then assumed. To let alone Gods forming himself a body for that work as a groundless fancy; Man can in no wise be said to be the image of God, in regard of the substance of his body; but beasts may as well be said to be made in the Image of God, whose bodies have the same Members as the body of Man for the most part, and excell Men in the acuteness of the senses and swiftness of their motion, agility of body, greatness of strength, and in some kind of ingenuities also, wherein Man hath been a Scholar to the brutes, and beholden to their skill. The Soul comes neerest the nature of God, as being a Spiritual substance; yet considered singly in regard of its Spiritual substance, cannot well be said to be the image of God: A beast, because of its Corporiety, may as well be called the image of a Man; for there is a greater similitude between man and a brute in the rank of bodies, than there can be between God and the highest Angels, in the rank of Spirits. If it doth not consist in the substance of the Soul, much less can it in any similitude of the body. This Image consisted partly in the state of man, as he had dominion over the Creatures; partly in the nature of man as he was an intelligent being, and thereby was capable of having a grant of that Dominion; but principally in the conformity of the Soul with God in the frame of his Spirit, and the holiness of his actions. Not at all in the figure and form of his body Physically, tho morally there might be, as there was a rectitude in the body, as an instrument to conform to the holy motions of the Soul, as the holiness of the Soul sparkled in the actions and members of the body. If man were like God because he hath a body, whatsoever hath a body, hath some resemblance to God, and may be said to be in part his image: But the truth is, the essence of all Creatures cannot be an image of the immense essence of God.

2. If God be a pure Spirit; *'Tis unreasonable to frame any Image or picture of God.* * Some Heathens have been wiser in this than some Christians: *Pythagoras* forbad his Scholars to engrave any shape of him upon a Ring, because he was not to be comprehended by sense, but conceived only in our minds; our hands are as unable to fashion him as our eyes to see him. * The ancient *Romans* worshipped their Gods 170. years before any material representations of them; * and the Ancient Idolatrous *Germans* thought it a wicked thing to represent God in a human shape. Yet some, and those no *Romanists*, labour to defend the making Images of God in the resemblance of man; because he is so represented in Scripture, he may be, * saith one conceived so in our minds and figured so to our sense. If this were a good reason, why may he not be pictured as a Lyon, Horn, Eagle, Rock, since he is under such *Metaphors* shadowed to us? The same ground there is for the one as for the other: What tho man be a nobler Creature, God hath no more the body of a man, than that of an Eagle; and some perfections in other Creatures represent some excellencies in his nature and actions, which cannot be figur'd by a human shape, as strength by the Loyn, swiftness and readiness by the wings of the Bird. But God hath absolutely prohibited the making *any Image* whatsoever of him, and that with terrible threatnings, Exod. 20. 5. *I the Lord am a jealous God visiting the iniquites of the Fathers upon their Children*, and Deut. 5. 8, 9. After God had given the *Israelites* the

* Col. 3. 10.

* Petav. *Theol. Dog. Tom.* 1. *lib.* 2. *cap.* 1. *pa.* 104.
* Gen. 1. 26.

* Jamblyc. *protrept. cap.* 21. *Symb.* 24.

* Austin *de Civitat. Dei lib.* 4. *cap.* 31. *out of* Varro.
* Tacitus.
* Gerhard *loc. Comun. vol.* 4. *Exegesis de naturâ Dei cap.* 8. § 1.

the Commandment wherein he forbad them to have any other Gods before him, he forbids all figuring of him by the hand of man; not only Images, but any likneſs of him either by things in Heaven, in the earth, or in the water. How often doth he diſcover his indignation by the Prophets, againſt them that offer to mould him in a Creature form? This Law was not to ſerve a particular diſpenſation or to endure a particular time, but it was a declaration of his Will, invariable in all places and all times; being founded upon the immutable nature of his being, and therefore agreeable to the Law of nature; otherwiſe not chargeable upon the Heathens. And therefore when God had declared his nature and his works in a ſtately and Majeſtick eloquence, he demands of them, *To whom they would liken him, or what likeneſs they would compare unto him?* Iſa. 40. 18. Where they could find any thing that would be a lively image and reſemblance of his infinite excellency? Founding it upon the infiniteneſs of his nature, which neceſſarily implies the Spirituality of it. God is infinitely above any Statue; and thoſe that think to draw God by a ſtroak of a penſil, or form him by the engravings of Art, are more ſtupid than the Statues themſelves.

To ſhew the unreaſonableneſs of it; Conſider,

1. *'Tis impoſſible to faſhion any image of God.* If our more capacious Souls cannot graſp his nature, our weaker ſenſe cannot frame his image: Tis more poſſible of the two, to comprehend him in our minds, than to frame him in an Image to our ſenſe. He inhabits inacceſſible light: As it is impoſſible for the eye of man to ſee him, 'tis impoſſible for the art of man to paint him upon walls, and carve him out of Wood. None knows him but himſelf, none can deſcribe him but himſelf. * Can we draw a figure of our own Souls, and expreſs that part of our ſelves, wherein we are moſt like to God? Can we extend this to any bodily figure and divide it into parts? How can we deal ſo with the Original Copy, whence the firſt draught of our ſouls was taken, and which is infinitely more ſpiritual than Men or Angels? No corporeal thing can repreſent a ſpiritual ſubſtance; there is no proportion in nature between them, God is a ſimple, infinite, immenſe, eternal, inviſible, incorruptable being: A Statue is a compounded, finite, limited, temporal, viſible and corruptible body. God is a living Spirit; but a ſtatue, nor ſees, nor hears, nor perceives any thing. But ſuppoſe God had a body, 'tis impoſſible to mould an Image of it in the true glory of that body: Can the ſtatue of an excellent *Monarch* repreſent the Majeſty and air of his countenance, tho made by the skilfulleſt workman in the World? If God had a body in ſome meaſure ſuted to his excellency, were it poſſible for man to make an exact Image of him, who cannot picture the light, heat, motion, magnitude and dazling property of the ſun? The excellency of any Corporeal nature of the leaſt Creature, the temper, inſtinct, artifice, are beyond the power of a Carving tool; much more is God.

* Cocceius *ſum. Theol. cap.* 9. *pa.* 47. § 35.

2. *To make any Corporeal repreſentation of God is unworthy of God.* 'Tis a diſgrace to his nature. Whoſoever thinks a Carnal corruptible Image to be fit for a repreſentation of God, renders God no better than a Carnal and Corporeal being. Tis a kind of debaſing an Angel, who is a ſpiritual nature, to repreſent him in a bodily ſhape, who is as far removed from any fleſhlineſs as Heaven from Earth? much more to degrade the glory of the Divine nature to the lineaments of a man. The whole ſtock of Images is but a lie of God; Jer. 10. 8, 14. *A Doctrine of vanities and falſhood*: It repreſents him in a falſe * garb to the world, and ſinks *his glory* into that of *a Corruptible Creature.* * It impairs the reverence of God in the minds of men, and by degrees may debaſe mens apprehenſions of God, and be a means to make them believe he is ſuch a one as themſelves; and that not being free from the figure, he is not alſo free from the imperfections of their bodies. Corporeal Images of God were the fruits of baſe imaginations of him; and as they ſprung from them, ſo they contribute to a greater corruption of the notions of the Divine nature: The *Heathens* begun their firſt repreſentations of him by the Image of a corruptible Man, then of birds, till they deſcended, not only to four footed beaſts, but creeping things, even ſerpents, as the *Apoſtle* ſeems to intimate in his *enumeration*, Rom. 1 23. it had been more honourable to have continued in human repreſentation of him, than have ſunk ſo low as beaſts and ſerpents, the baſer Images; tho the firſt had been infinitely

* Rom. 1. 25.

* Rom. 1. 23.

unworthy of him, he being more above a man, though the nobleſt Creature, than Man is above a Worm, a Toad, or the moſt deſpicable creeping thing upon the earth. To think we can make an Image of God of a piece of Marble, or an Ingot of Gold is a greater debaſing of him, than it would be of a great Prince, if you ſhould repreſent him in the ſtatue of a Frog. When the *Iſraelites* repreſented God by a Calf, 'tis ſaid, *they ſinned a great ſin*, Exod. 32. 31. And the ſin of *Jeroboam*, who intended only a repreſentation of God by the Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, is called more emphatically, * *the wickedneſs of your wickedneſs*, the very skum and dregs of wickneſs. As men debaſed God by this, ſo God debaſed men for this; he degraded the *Iſraelites* into Captivity under the worſt of their Enemies, and puniſhed the Heathens with ſpiritual Judgements, as *uncleanneſs* through the luſts of their own hearts, *Rom.* 1 24. Which is repeated again in other expreſſions, *v.* 26, 27. As a meet recompence for their diſgracing the ſpiritual nature of God. Had God been like to man, they had not offended in it: But I mention this, to ſhew a probable reaſon of thoſe baſe luſts which are in the midſt of us, that have ſcarce been exceeded by any Nation. *viz.* the unworthy and unſpiritual conceits of God, which are as much a debaſing of him as material Images were when they were more rife in the world; and may be as well the cauſe of thoſe ſpiritual Judgements upon men, as the worſhipping molten and carved Images were the cauſe of the ſame upon the Heathen.

* Hoſea 10. 15. דעתרעתכם

3. *Yet this is natural to Man.* Wherein we may ſee the contrariety of Man to God. Though *God be a Spirit*, yet there is nothing Man is more prone to, than to repreſent him under a corporeal form. The moſt famous Guides of the Heathen world have faſhioned him, not only according to the more honourable Images of men, but beaſtialized him in the form of a Brute. The *Egyptians*, whoſe Country was the School of Learning to *Greece*, were notoriouſly guilty of this brutiſhneſs in worſhing an *Ox* for an Image of their God; and the *Philiſtines* their *Dagon* in a figure compoſed of the Image of a Woman and a Fiſh: * Such repreſentations were ancient in the oriental parts. The Gods of *Laban* that he accuſeth *Jacob* of ſtealing from him, are ſuppoſed to be little figures of men. * Such was the Iſraelites *Golden-Calf*; their worſhip was not terminated on the Image, but they worſhipped the true God under that repreſentation: They could not be ſo brutiſh as to call a Calf their deliverer, and give to him a great Tittle, (*theſe be thy Gods O* Iſrael, *which brought thee up out of the Land of* Egypt, Exod. 32. 4.) Or that which they knew belonged to the true God, the God of *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*.* They knew the Calf to be formed of their Ear-rings; but they had conſecrated it to God as a repreſentation of him: Though they choſe the form of the *Egyptian* Idol; yet they knew that *Apis*, *Oſiris* and *Iſis* the Gods the *Egyptians* adored in that figure, had not wrought their redemption from Bondage, but would have uſed their force, had they been poſſeſſed of any, to have kept them under the Yoke, rather than have freed them from it: The Feaſt alſo which they celebrated before that Image, is called by *Aaron* the Feaſt of the *Lord*, Exod. 32. 5. *A Feaſt to Jehovah*, the incommunicable name of the Creator of the world: 'Tis therefore evident, that both the Prieſt and the people pretended to ſerve the true God, not any falſe divinity of *Egypt*: That God who had reſcued them from *Egypt* with a mighty hand, divided the Red-ſea before them, deſtroyed their Enemies, conducted them, fed them by miracle, ſpoken to them from Mount *Sinai*, and amazed them by his Thundrings and Lightnings when he inſtructed them by his Law; a God they could not ſo ſoon forget. And with this repreſenting God by that Image, they are charged by the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. 106. 19, 20. *They made a Calf in* Horeb, *and changed their glory into their ſimilitude of an Ox that eateth graſs*: They changed their glory, that is, God the glory of *Iſrael*; ſo that they took this figure for the Image of the true God of *Iſrael*, their own God; not the God of any other Nation in the World. *Jeroboam* intended no other by his Calves, but Symbols of the preſence of the true God, inſtead of the Ark and the propitiatory which remained among the Jews. We ſee the inclination of our Natures in the practice of the *Iſraelites*; a People choſen out the whole World to bear up Gods name, and preſerve his glory: And in that the Images of God were ſo ſoon ſet up in the Chriſtian Church; and to this day, the picture of God in the ſhape of an old man, is viſible in the Temples of the *Romaniſts*.

* *Daille* ſuper Cor. 1.10. Ser. 3.

* Gen. 31. 30, 34.

* Gen. 3. 16, 17.

'Tis prone to the Nature of Man.

4. *To*

4. *To repreſent God by a corporeal Image, and to Worſhip him in and by that Image, is Idolatry.* Though the *Iſraelites* did not acknowledge the *Calf* to be God, nor intended a Worſhip to any of the *Egyptian* Deities by it; but worſhipped that God in it, who had ſo lately and miraculouſly delivered them from a cruel Servitude; and could not in natural reaſon judge him to be clothed with a bodily ſhape, much leſs to be like an *Ox that eateth graſs*; yet the *Apoſtle* brings no leſs a charge againſt them, than that of *Idolatry*, 1 Cor. 10. 7. He calls them *Idolaters, who before that Calf kept a Feaſt to Jehovah*, citing *Exod.* 32. 5. Suppoſe we could make ſuch an Image of God as might perfectly repreſent him; yet ſince God hath prohibited it, ſhall we be wiſer than God? He hath ſufficiently manifeſted himſelf in his Works *without Images*: He is ſeen in the Creatures; more particularly in the Heavens, which declare his Glory. His Works are more excellent repreſentations of him, as being the works of his own hands, than any thing that is the product of the Art of Man. His Glory ſparkles in the Heavens, Sun, Moon and Stars, as being magnificent pieces of his Wiſdom and Power; yet the kiſſing the hand to the ſun or the Heavens, as repreſentative of the excellency and Majeſty of God, is *Idolatry in Scripture account, and a denial of God*; * a proſtituting the glory of God to a Creature: * Either the worſhip is terminated on the Image it ſelf, and then it is confeſſed by all to be Idolatry, becauſe it is a giving that worſhip to a Creature which is the ſole right of God; or not terminated in the Image, but in the Object repreſented by it; 'tis then a fooliſh thing; we may as well terminate our worſhip on the true Object without, as with an Image. An erected ſtatue is no ſign or ſymbol of Gods ſpecial preſence, as the Ark, Tabernacle, Temple were. It is no part of divine inſtitution; has no authority of a Command to ſupport it; no Cordial of a promiſe to encourage it; and the Image being infinitely diſtant from, and below the Majeſty and ſpirituality of God, cannot conſtitute one object of Worſhip with him. To put a Religious Character upon any Image formed by the Corrupt imagination of Man, as a repreſentation of the inviſible and ſpiritual Deity; is to think the *Godhead* to be *like ſilver and gold, or ſtone graven by art and mans device.* *

* Job 31. 26, 27, 28. Chin. Predict. part. 2. p. 252. * *Lawſon.* Body Divin. P. 161.

* Act. 17. 29

3. *This Doctrine will direct us in our conceptions of God*, as a pure perfect ſpirit, than which nothing can be imagined more perfect, more pure, more ſpiritual.

1. *We cannot have an adequate or ſutable conception of God*: He dwells in inacceſſible light; inacceſſible to the acuteneſs of our fancy, as well as the weakneſs of our ſenſe. If we could have thoughts of him, as high and excellent as his Nature; our conceptions muſt be as infinite as his Nature. All our imaginations of him cannot repreſent him, becauſe every created ſpecies is finite; it cannot therefore repreſent to us a full and ſubſtantial notion of an infinite Being. We cannot ſpeak or think worthily enough of him, who is greater than our words, vaſter than our underſtandings. Whatſoever we ſpeak or think of God, is handed firſt to us by the notice we have of ſome perfection in the Creature, and explains to us ſome particular excellency of God rather than the fulneſs of his Eſſence. No Creature, nor all Creatures together, can furniſh us with ſuch a magnificent notion of God, as can give us a clear view of him. Yet God in his word is pleaſed to ſtep below his own excellency, and point us to thoſe excellences in his works, whereby we may aſcend to the knowledge of thoſe excellences which are in his Nature. But the Creatures, whence we draw our leſſons being finite, and our underſtandings being finite, 'tis utterly impoſſible to have a notion of God commenſurate to the immenſity and ſpirituality of his being. [* God is not like to viſible Creatures, nor is there any proportion between him and the moſt ſpiritual.] We cannot have a full notion of a ſpiritual Nature; much leſs can we have of God, who is a ſpirit above ſpirits. No ſpirit can clearly repreſent him: The Angels that are great Spirits, are bounded in their extent, finite in their being, and of a mutable Nature.

* *Amyrald* Moral. Tom. 1. p. 289.

Yet though we cannot have a ſutable conception of God, we muſt not content our ſelves without any conception of him. 'Tis our ſin not to endeavour after a true notion of him: 'Tis our ſin to reſt in a mean and low notion of him, when our reaſon tells us we are capable of having higher: But if we aſcend as high as we can, though we ſhall then come ſhort of a ſutable notion of him; this is not our ſin, but our weakneſs. God is infinitely ſuperior to the choiceſt conceptions; not only of

a ſinner, but of a Creature. If all conceptions of God below the true nature of God were ſin, there is not a holy Angel in Heaven free from ſin; becauſe tho they are the moſt capacious Creatures, yet they cannot have ſuch a notion of an infinite being as is fully ſutable to his nature, unleſs they were infinite as he himſelf is.

2. But however, *we muſt by no means conceive of God under a human or Corporeal ſhape.* Since we cannot have conceptions honourable enough for his nature, we muſt take heed we entertain not any which may debaſe his nature: Tho we cannot comprehend him as he is, we muſt be careful not to fancy him to be what he is not. 'Tis a vain thing to conceive him with human lineaments: We muſt think higher of him, than to aſcribe to him ſo mean a ſhape: We deny his Spirituality when we fancy him under ſuch a form: He is ſpiritual, and between that which is Spiritual and that which is Corporeal, there is no reſemblance. * Indeed *Daniel* ſaw God in a human form, Daniel. 7. 9. *The Ancient of Days did ſit, whoſe garment was white as ſnow, and the hairs of his head like pure Wool*; he is deſcribed as coming to Judgement; 'tis not meant of Chriſt probably, becauſe Chriſt *ver.* 13. is called the *Son of man* coming *near to the Ancient of days.* This is not the proper ſhape of God, for no man hath ſeen his ſhape. It was a viſion wherein ſuch repreſentations were made, as were accommodated to the inward ſenſe of *Daniel*; *Daniel* ſaw him in a rapture or extaſie, wherein outward ſenſes are of no uſe: God is deſcribed, not as he is in himſelf, of a human form, but in regard of his fitneſs to Judge: *White* notes the purity and ſimplicity of the Divine nature: *Ancient of days* in regard of his eternity; *white hair* in regard of his prudence and wiſdom, which is more eminent in age than youth, and more fit to diſcern cauſes and to diſtinguiſh between right and wrong. Viſions are riddles and muſt not be underſtood in a literal ſenſe. We are to watch againſt ſuch determinate conceptions of God. Vain imaginations do eaſily infeſt us; Tinder will not ſooner take fire than our natures kindle into wrong Notions of the Divine Majeſty. We are very apt to faſhion a God like our ſelves: We muſt therefore look upon ſuch repreſentions of God, as accommodated to our weakneſs: And no more think them to be literal deſcriptions of God, as he is in himſelf, than we will think the image of the Sun in the water to be the true ſun in the Heavens. We may indeed conceive of Chriſt as man, who hath in Heaven the veſtment of our nature, and his *Deus figuratus*, tho we cannot conceive the God-head under a human ſhape.

* Epiſc. inſtitut. li. 4. § 2. c. 17.

1. *To have ſuch a fancy is to diſparage and wrong God.* A Corporeal fancy of God is as ridiculous in it ſelf, and as injurious to God as a wooden ſtatue. The capricio's of our imagination are often more monſtrous than the images which are the works of art: 'Tis as irreligious to meaſure Gods eſſence by our line, his perfections by our imperfections, as to meaſure his thoughts and actings by the weakneſs and unworthineſs of our own. This is to limit an infinite eſſence, and pull him down to our ſcanty meaſures, and render that which is unconceivably above us, equal with us. 'Tis impoſſible we can conceive God after the manner of a body, but we muſt bring him down to the proportion of a body, which is to diminiſh his glory, and ſtoop him below the dignity of his nature. God is a pure ſpirit, he hath nothing of the nature and tincture of a body; whoſoever therefore conceives of him as having a bodily form, tho he fancy the moſt beautiful and comely body, inſtead of owning his dignity, detracts from the ſupereminent excellency of his nature and bleſſedneſs. When men fancy God like themſelves in their Corporeal nature, they will ſoon make a progreſs, and aſcribe to him their corrupt nature; and while they cloath him with their bodies, inveſt him alſo in the infirmites of them. God is a *jealous God*, very ſenſible of any diſgrace, and will be as much incenſed againſt an *inward Idolatry* as an outward: That * Command which forbad Corporeal images, would not indulge carnal imaginations, ſince the nature of God is as much wronged by unworthy images erected in the fancy as by ſtatues carved out of ſtone or metals: One as well as the other is a deſerting of our true ſpouſe and committing Adultery, one with a material image, and the other with a carnal Notion of God. Since God humbles himſelf to our apprehenſions, we ſhould not debaſe him in thinking him to be that in his nature, which he makes only a reſemblnnce of himſelf to us.

* Exod. 20. 4.

2. *To have ſuch fancies of God, will obſtruct and pollute our Worſhip of him.* How is it poſſible to give him a right worſhip, of whom we have ſo debaſing a Notion? We

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ſhall never think a corporeal Deity, worthy of a dedication of our Spirits. The hating Inſtruction, and caſting Gods word behind the back, is charged upon the imagination they had, that *God was ſuch a one as themſelves*, Pſal. 50. 17, 21. Many of the wiſer *Heathens* did not judge their Statues to be their Gods, or their Gods to be like their Statues; but ſuted them to their politick deſigns; and judged them a good invention to keep people within the bounds of Obedience and Devotion, by ſuch viſible figures of them, which might imprint a reverence and fear of thoſe Gods upon them: But theſe were falſe meaſures: A deſpiſed and undervalued God, is not an Object of Petition or Affection: Who would addreſs ſeriouſly to a God he has low apprehenſions of? The more raiſed thoughts we have of him, the viler ſenſe we ſhall have of our ſelves: They would make us humble and ſelf abhorrent in our ſupplications to him, *Job* 42. 6. *Wherefore I abhor my ſelf*, &c.

3. [Though we muſt not conceive of God, as of a human or Corporeal ſhape; yet *we cannot think of God, without ſome reflection upon our own being.* We cannot conceive him to be an intelligent being, but we muſt make ſome compariſon between him and our own underſtanding nature, to come to a knowledge of him. Since we are incloſed in bodies, we apprehend nothing but what comes in by ſenſe, and what we in ſome ſort meaſure by ſenſible Objects. And in the conſideration of thoſe things, which we deſire to abſtract from ſenſe, we are fain to make uſe of the aſſiſtances of ſenſe and viſible things: And therefore when we frame the higheſt notion, there will be ſome ſimilitude of ſome corporeal thing in our fancy; and though we would ſpiritualize our thoughts, and aim at a more abſtracted and raiſed underſtanding, yet there will be ſome dregs of matter ſticking to our conceptions; yet we ſtill judge by argument and reaſoning, what the things is we think of under thoſe material Images. * A corporeal Image will follow us, as the ſhadow doth the body: While we are in the body, and ſurrounded with fleſhly matter, we cannot think of things without ſome help from corporeal repreſentations: Something of ſenſe will interpoſe it ſelf in our pureſt conceptions of ſpiritual things; for the faculties which ſerve for contemplation, are either corporeal, as the ſenſe and fancy, or ſo allyed to them, that nothing paſſes into them but by the Organs of the body; ſo that there is a natural inclination to figure nothing but under a corporeal notion, till by an attentive application of the mind and reaſon to the object thought upon, we ſeparate that which is bodily from that which is ſpiritual, and by degrees aſcend to that true notion of that we think upon, and would have a due conception of in our mind. Therefore God tempers the declaration of himſelf to our weakneſs, and the condition of our Natures: He condeſcends to our littleneſs and narrowneſs, when he declares himſelf by the ſimilitude of bodily members. As the light of the Sun is tempered, and diffuſeth it ſelf to our ſenſe through the air and vapours, that our weak eyes may not be too much dazled with it: Without it we could not know or judge of the Sun, becauſe we could have no uſe of our ſenſe, which we muſt have before we can judge of it in our underſtanding: So we are not able to conceive of ſpiritual Beings in the purity of their own nature, without ſuch a temperament, and ſuch ſhadows to uſher them into our minds. And therefore we find the Spirit of God accommodates himſelf to our contracted and teddered capacities, and uſes ſuch expreſſions of God, as are ſuted to us in this ſtate of fleſh wherein we are: And therefore becauſe we cannot apprehend God in the ſimplicity of his own Being, and his undivided Eſſence, he draws the repreſentations of himſelf from ſeveral Creatures and ſeveral actions of thoſe Creatures: As ſometimes he is ſaid to be angry, to walk, to ſit, to fly; not that we ſhould reſt in ſuch conceptions of him, but take our riſe from this foundation, and ſuch perfections in the Creatures, to mount up to a knowledge of Gods nature by thoſe ſeveral ſteps, and conceive of him by thoſe divided Excellencies, becauſe we cannot conceive of him in the purity of his own Eſſence. * We cannot poſſibly think or ſpeak of God, unleſs we transfer the names of created perfections to him; yet we are to conceive of them in a higher manner when we apply them to the Divine Nature, than when we conſider them in the ſeveral Creatures formally, exceeding thoſe perfections and excellencies which are in the Creature, and in a more excellent manner: * [as one ſaith, though we cannot comprehend God without the help of ſuch reſemblances, yet we may without making an Image of him; ſo that inability of ours excuſeth thoſe

* *Nazianzen.*

* *Amirald* Moral Tom. 1. p. 180, &c.

* *Leſſius.*

* *Towerſon* on the Commandments, p. 112.

thoſe apprehenſions of him from any way offending againſt his Divine Nature.] Theſe are not notions ſo much ſuted to the nature of God as the weakneſs of man: They are helps to our meditations, but ought not to be formal conceptions of him. We may aſſiſt our ſelves in our apprehenſions of him, by conſidering the ſubtilty and ſpirituality of Air; and conſidering the members of a body, without thinking him to be Air, or to have any corporeal member. Our reaſon tells us, that whatſoever is a body, is limited and bounded; and the notion of infiniteneſs and bodilineſs, cannot agree and conſiſt together: And therefore what is offered by our fancy ſhould be purified by our reaſon.

4. *Therefore we are to elevate and refine all our notions of God, and ſpiritualize our conceptions of him.* Every man is to have a conception of God; therefore he ought to have one of the higheſt elevation. Since we cannot have a full notion of him we ſhould endeavour to make it as high and as pure as we can. Tho we cannot conceive of God, but ſome corporeal repreſentations or Images in our minds will be converſant with us, as motes in the Air when we look upon the Heavens; yet our conception may and muſt riſe higher: As when we ſee the draught of the Heavens and Earth in a Globe, or a Kingdom in a Map, it helps our conceptions, but doth not terminate them: We conceive them to be of a vaſt extent, far beyond that ſhort deſcription of them: So we ſhould endeavour to refine every repreſentation of God, to riſe higher and higher, and have our apprehenſions ſtill more purified; ſeparating the perfect from the imperfect, caſting away the one, and greatning the other; conceive him to be a Spirit diffuſed through all, containing all, perceiving all. All the perfections of God are infinitely elevated above the excellencies of the Creatures; above whatſoever can be conceived by the cleareſt and moſt piercing underſtanding. The Nature of God as a Spirit, is infinitely ſuperior to whatſoever we can conceive perfect in the notion of a created Spirit. Whatſoever God is, he is infinitely ſo: He is infinite Wiſdom, infinite Goodneſs, infinite Knowledge, infinite Power, infinite Spirit, infinitely diſtant from the weakneſs of Creatures, infinitely mounted above the excellences of Creatures: As eaſie to be known that he is, as impoſſible to be comprehended what he is.

Conceive of him as excellent, without any imperfection: A Spirit without parts; great without quantity; perfect without quality; every where without place; Powerful without members; underſtanding without ignorance; wiſe without reaſoning; light without darkneſs; infinitely more excelling the beauty of all Creatures, than the light in the Sun pure and unviolated exceeds the ſplendor of the Sun diſperſed and divided through a Cloudy and miſty Air: And when you have riſen to the higheſt, conceive him yet infinitely above all you can conceive of Spirit, and acknowledge the infirmity of your own minds. And whatſoever conception comes into your minds, ſay this is not God, God is more than this: If I could conceive him, he were not God; for God is incomprehenſibly above whatſoever I can ſay, whatſoever I can think and conceive of him.

4. Inference. If God be a ſpirit *no corporeal thing can defile him.* Some bring an argument againſt the Omnipreſence of God, that it is a diſparagement to the Divine Eſſence to be every where, in naſty Cottages, as well as beautiful Palaces and garniſht Temples. What place can defile a ſpirit? Is Light, which approaches to the nature of ſpirit polluted by ſhining upon a dung-hill, or a Sun-beam tainted by darting upon a Quag-mire? Doth an *Angel* contract any ſoyl, by ſtepping into a naſty Priſon to deliver *Peter*? What can ſteam from the moſt noyſom body, to pollute the ſpiritual nature of God? As he is *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity**, ſo he is of a more ſpiritual ſubſtance, than to contract any phyſical pollution from the places where he doth diffuſe himſelf. Did our Saviour, who had a true body, derive any taint from the Lepers he touched, the diſeaſes he cured, or the Devils he expell'd? God is a pure Spirit; plungeth himſelf into no filth; is daſht with no ſpot by being preſent with all bodies. Bodies only receive defilement from bodies.

* Heb. 1. 13.

5. Inference. *If God be a Spirit, he is active and communicative.* He is not clogg'd with heavy and ſluggiſh matter, which is cauſe of dulneſs and inactivity. The more ſubtil, thin, and approaching neerer the Nature of a Spirit any thing is, the more diffuſive it is. Air is a gliding ſubſtance; ſpreads it ſelf through all Religions; peirceth

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into all bodies; it fills the ſpace between Heaven and Earth; there is nothing but partakes of the vertue of it. Light, which is an emblem of Spirit, inſinuates it ſelf into all places, refreſheth all things. As Spirits are fuller, ſo they are more overflowing, more piercing, more operative than bodies. The *Ægyptians* Horſes were weak things, becauſe they were *Fleſh and not Spirit* *: The Soul being a Spirit conveys more to the Body, than the Body can to it. What cannot ſo great a Spirit do for us? What cannot ſo great a Spirit work in us? God being a Spirit above all Spirits, can pierce into the Center of all Spirits; make his way into the moſt ſecret receſſes; ſtamp what he pleaſes: 'Tis no more to him to turn our Spirits, than to make a Wilderneſs become Waters, and ſpeak a Chaos into a beautiful frame of Heaven and Earth: He can act our ſouls with infinite more eaſe, than our Souls can act our bodies; he can fix in us what motions, frames, inclinations he pleaſes; he can come and ſettle in our hearts with all his Treaſures. 'Tis an encouragement to confide in him, when we petition him for Spiritual Bleſſings: As he is a Spirit, he is poſſeſſed with *Spiritual Bleſſings.* * A Spirit delights to beſtow things ſutable to its Nature, as Bodies do to Communicate what is agreeable to theirs: As he is a Father of *Spirits*, we may go to him for the *Welfare of our Spirits*; he being a Spirit, is as able to repair our Spirits, as he was to create them.

* Iſa. 31. 3.

* Eph. 1. 3.

As he is a Spirit, he is indefatigable in acting: The members of the body tire and flag; but whoever heard of a Soul wearied with being active? Who ever heard of a *weary Angel*? In the pureſt ſimplicity, there is the greateſt power, the moſt efficacious Goodneſs, the moſt reaching Juſtice to affect the Spirit, that can inſinuate it ſelf every where to puniſh wickedneſs without wearineſs, as well as to comfort goodneſs. God is active, becauſe he is Spirit; and if we be like to God, the more Spiritual we are, the more active we ſhall be.

6. Inference. *God being a Spirit, is immortal.* His being immortal, and being inviſible are joyned together. * Spirits are in their nature incorruptible; they can only periſh by that hand that framed them. Every compounded thing is ſubject to mutation; but God being a pure and ſimple Spirit, is without corruption, without any ſhadow of change. * Where there is compoſition, there is ſome kind of repugnancy of one part againſt the other; and where there is repugnancy, there is a capability of diſſolution. God in regard of his infinite Spirituality, hath nothing in his own nature contrary to it; can have nothing in himſelf which is not himſelf. The world periſhes; friends change and are diſſolved; bodies moulder, becauſe they are mutable. God is a Spirit in the higheſt excellency and glory of Spirits; nothing is beyond him; nothing above him; no contrariety within him: This is our comfort, if we devote our ſelves to him; this God is our God; this Spirit is our Spirit; this is our all, our immutable, our incorruptible ſupport; a Spirit that cannot die and leave us.

* 1 Tim. 1. 17.

* James 1. 17.

7. Inference. If God be a Spirit, *we ſee how we can only converſe with him by our Spirits.* Bodies and Spirits are not ſutable to one another: We can only ſee, know, embrace a Spirit with our Spirits. He judges not of us by our coporeal actions, nor our external devotions, by our masks and diſguiſes: He fixes his eye upon the frame of the heart, bends his ear to the groans of our Spirits: He is not pleaſed with outward pomp: He is not a Body; therefore the beauty of Temples, delicacy of Sacrifices, fumes of Incenſe are not grateful to him; by thoſe or any external action, we have no communion with him: A Spirit when *broken*, is his delightful *Sacrifice* *; We muſt therefore have our Spirits fitted for him, *be renewed in the ſpirit of our minds* *, that we may be in a poſture to live with him, and have an intercourſe with him. We can never be united to God, but in our Spirits: Bodies unite with Bodies, Spirits with Spirits. The more ſpiritual any thing is, the more cloſely doth it unite. Air hath the cloſeſt union, nothing meets together ſooner than that when the parts are divided by the interpoſition of a body.

* Pſal. 51. 17.

* Eph. 4. 23

8. Inference. If God be a Spirit, *he can only be the true ſatisfaction of our Spirits.* Spirit can only be fill'd with a Spirit. Content flows from likeneſs and ſutableneſs: As we have a reſemblance to God in regard of the ſpiritual nature of our Soul, ſo we can have no ſatisfaction but in him. Spirit can no more be really ſatisfied with that which is corporeal, than a beaſt can delight in the company of an Angel. Corporeal things can no more fill a hungry Spirit, than pure Spirit can feed an hungry Body,

Body. God the higheſt Spirit, can only reach out a full content to our ſpirits. Man is Lord of the Creation; nothing below him can be fit for his converſe; nothing above him offers it ſelf to his converſe but God. We have no correſpondence with Angels: The influence they have upon us, the protection they afford us, is ſecret and undiſcern'd; but God the higheſt Spirit offers himſelf to us in his Son, in his Ordinances, is viſible in every Creature, preſents himſelf to us in every providence; to him we muſt ſeek; in him we muſt reſt. God had no reſt from the Creation, till he had made Man; and Man can have no reſt in the Creation, till he reſts in God. God only is *our dwelling place* *; our Souls ſhould *only long for him* *; our Souls ſhould only wait upon him. The Spirit of Man never riſeth to its original glory, till it be carried up on the wings of Faith and Love to its original Copy. The face of the Soul looks moſt beautiful, when it is turned to the face of God the Father of Spirits; when the derived Spirit is fixed upon the original Spirit, drawing from it Life and Glory. Spirit is only the receptacle of Spirit. God as Spirit is our Principle; we muſt therefore live upon him. God as Spirit, hath ſome reſemblance to us as his Image; we muſt therefore only ſatisfie our ſelves in him.

* Pſal. 90. 1.
* Pſal. 63. 1.

9. Inference. If God be a Spirit, *we ſhould take moſt care of that wherein we are like to God.* Spirit is nobler than Body; we muſt therefore value our Spirits above our Bodies: The Soul as Spirit, partakes more of the Divine Nature, and deſerves more of our choyceſt cares. If we have any love to this Spirit, we ſhould have a real affection to our own Spirits, as bearing a ſtamp of the ſpiritual Divinity, the chiefeſt of all the works of God; as it is ſaid of *Behemoth*, *Job.* 40. 19. That which is moſt the Image of this immenſe Spirit, ſhould be our *Darling*: So *David* calls his *Soul*, Pſal. 35. 17. Shall we take care of that wherein we partake not of God, and not delight in the Jewel which hath his own ſignature upon it? God was not only the Framer of ſpirits. and the end of ſpirits; but the Copy and exemplar of Spirits. God partakes of no corporiety, he is pure Spirit. But how do we act, as if we were only matter and body! We have but little kindneſs for this great Spirit as well as our own, if we take no care of his immediate off-ſpring, ſince he is not only Spirit, but the Father of Spirits.*

* Heb. 12. 9.

10. Inference. If God be a Spirit, *let us take heed of thoſe ſins which are ſpiritual.* *Paul* diſtinguiſht between the filth of the *Fleſh*, and that of the *Spirit* *: By the one we defile the Body; by the other we defile the Spirit, which in regard of its Nature is of kin to the Creator. To wrong one who is neer of kin to a Prince, is worſe than to injure an inferiour Subject. When we make our Spirits, which are moſt like to God in their Nature, and framed according to his Image, a ſtage to act vain imaginations, wicked deſires, and unclean affections, we wrong God in the excellency of his Work, and reflect upon the nobleneſs of the Pattern; we wrong him in that part where he hath ſtampt the moſt ſignal Character of his own ſpiritual nature; we defile that whereby we have only converſe with him as a Spirit, which he hath ordered more immediately to repreſent him in this Nature, than all corporeal things in the world can, and make that Spirit with whom we deſire to be joyned, unfit for ſuch a knot. Gods Spirituality is the root of his other perfections. We have already heard, he could not be *Infinite*, *Omnipreſent*, *Immutable* without it. Spiritual ſins are the greateſt root of bitterneſs within us: As grace in our Spirits renders us more like to a ſpiritual God; ſo ſpiritual *ſins* bring us into a conformity to a degraded Devil.* Carnal ſins change us from men to brutes, and ſpiritual ſins deveſt us of the Image of *God* for the Image of *Satan.* We ſhould by no means make our Spirits a Dung-hill, which bear upon them the Character of the ſpiritual Nature of God, and were made for his reſidence: Let us therefore behave our ſelves towards God in all thoſe ways which the ſpiritual nature of God requires us.

* 2 Cor. 7. 1.

* Eph. 2. 2, 3.

A DISCOURSE OF Spiritual Worſhip.

HAVING thus diſpatcht the firſt propoſition, *God is a Spirit*; It will not be amiſs to handle the inference our Saviour makes from that propoſition: Which is the ſecond Obſervation propounded.

Doct. That *the Worſhip due from us to God ought to be Spiritual and Spiritually performed.*

Spirit and Truth are underſtood variouſly. Either we are to Worſhip God,

1. *Not by legal ceremonies.* The Evangelical adminiſtration, being called *Spirit* in oppoſition to the legal ordinances as carnal; and *Truth* in oppoſition to them as typical. As the whole *Judaical* ſervice is called *fleſh*; ſo the whole *Evangelical* ſervice is called *Spirit*. Or *Spirit* may be oppoſed to the worſhip at *Jeruſalem*, as it was *carnal*; *Truth*, to the worſhip on the Mount *Gerizim*, becauſe it was *falſe*. They had not the true object of worſhip, nor the true Medium of worſhip as thoſe at *Jeruſalem* had. Their worſhip ſhould ceaſe, becauſe it was *falſe*; and the *Jewiſh* worſhip ſhould ceaſe, becauſe it was *carnal*.

There is no need of a Candle, when the Sun ſpreads its beams in the Air; no need of thoſe Ceremonies, when the Sun of righteouſneſs appeared: They only ſerved for Candle to inſtruct and direct men till the time of his coming. The ſhadows are chaſed away by the diſplaying the ſubſtance, ſo that they can be of no more uſe in the worſhip of God, ſince the end for which they were inſtituted, is expired; and that is diſcovered to us in the Goſpel which the *Jews* ſought for in vain, among the baggage and ſtuff of their Ceremonies.

2. *With a Spiritual and ſincere frame.* *In Spirit*, *i. e.* with Spirit; with the inward operations of all the faculties of our Souls, and the cream and flower of them: And the reaſon is, becauſe there ought to be a worſhip ſutable to the nature of God. And as the worſhip was to be Spiritual, ſo the exerciſe of that worſhip ought to be in a Spiritual manner. * It ſhall be a worſhip *in Truth*, becauſe the true God ſhall be adored without thoſe vain imaginations, and phantaſtick reſemblances of him, which were common among the blind *Gentiles*, and contrary to the glorious nature of God, and unworthy ingredients in Religious ſervices. It ſhall be a *worſhip in Spirit*, without thoſe carnal rites the degenerate *Jews* reſted on: Such a poſture of Soul which is the life and ornament of every ſervice God looks for at your hands: There muſt be ſome proportion between the object adored, and the manner in which we adore it. It muſt not be a meer Corporeal worſhip, becauſe God is not a body; but it muſt riſe from the Center of our Soul, becauſe God is a Spirit. If he were a body, a bodily worſhip might ſute him, Images might be fit to repreſent him; but being a Spirit, our bodily ſervices enter us not into communion with him. Being a Spirit we muſt baniſh from our minds all carnal imaginations of him, and ſeparate from our Wills all cold and diſſembled affections to him. We muſt not only have a loud voice, but an elevated Soul; not only a bended knee, but a broken heart; not only a ſupplicating tone, but a groaning Spirit; not only a ready ear for the word, but a receiving heart; and this ſhall be of greater value

* Lingend. *Tom.* 2. *p.* 777.
* Taylors *Exemplar Preface* § 30.

with him, than the moſt coſtly outward ſervices offered at *Gerizim* or *Jeruſalem*.

Our *Saviour* certainly meant not by worſhipping in Spirit, only the matter of the Evangelical ſervice, as oppoſed to the legal adminiſtration, without the manner wherein it was to be peformed. Tis true, God always ſought a worſhip in Spirit; he expected the heart of the worſhipper ſhould joyn with his inſtituted rights of adoration in every exerciſe of them: But he expects ſuch a carriage more under the Goſpel adminiſtration, becauſe of the clearer diſcoveries of his nature made in it, and the greater aſſiſtances conveyed by it.

I ſhall therefore,

1. *Lay down ſome general propoſitions.*
2. *Shew what this ſpiritual Worſhip is.*
3. *Why we muſt offer to God a ſpiritual ſervice.*
4. The *Uſe*.

1. *Some general propoſitions.*

Propoſition, 1. Firſt, *The right exerciſe of worſhip is founded upon and riſeth from the Spirituality of God.** The firſt ground of the worſhip we render to God, is the infinite excellency of his nature, which is not only one attribute, but reſults from all: For God, as God, is the object of Worſhip; and the Notion of God conſiſts not in thinking him wiſe, good, juſt, but all thoſe infinitely beyond any conception. And hence it follows that God is an object infinitely to be loved and honoured. His goodneſs is ſometimes ſpoken of in *Scripture* as a motive of our homage. Pſal. 130. 4. *There is forgiveneſs with thee that thou mayeſt be feared. Fear* in the Scripture dialect ſignifies the *whole worſhip of God*. Acts 10. 35. But in every Nation *he that fears* him is accepted of him.* If God ſhould act towards men according to the rigors of his juſtice due to them for the leaſt of their Crimes, there could be no exerciſe of any affection but that of deſpair, which could not ingender a worſhip of God which ought to be joyned with love, not with hatred. The beneficence and patience of God and his readineſs to pardon men is the reaſon of the honour they return to him. And this is ſo evident a motive, that generally the Idolatrous world rankt thoſe Creatures in the number of their Gods, which they perceived uſeful and beneficial to man-kind; as the *Sun* and *Moon*, the *Ægyptians* the *Ox*, &c. And the more beneficial any thing appeared to mankind, the higher ſtation men gave it in the rank of their Deities, and beſtowed a more peculiar and ſolemn worſhip upon it. Men worſhipped God to procure or continue his favour, which would not have been acted by them, had they not conceived it a pleaſing thing to him to be merciful and gracious.

* Ames *medul. lib.* 2. *cap.* 4. § 20.

* So 2 Kings 17. 32, 33.

Sometimes his Juſtice is propoſed to us as a motive of worſhip, Heb. 12. 28, 29. *Serve God with reverence and Godly fear, for our God is a conſuming fire*; which includes his *holineſs*, whereby he doth hate ſin, as well as his wrath, whereby he doth puniſh it. Who but a mad and totally brutiſh perſon, or one that was reſolved to make war againſt heaven, could behold the effects of Gods anger in the world, conſider him in his Juſtice as a *conſuming fire*, and deſpiſe him, and rather be drawn out by that conſideration to blaſphemy and deſpair, than to ſeek all ways to appeaſe him? Now tho the infinite power of God, his unſpeakable wiſdom, his incomprehenſible goodneſs, the holineſs of his nature, the vigilance of his providence, the bounty of his hand ſignifie to man, that he ſhould love and honour him, and are the motives of worſhip; yet the Spirituality of his nature is the rule of worſhip, and directs us to render our duty to him with all the powers of our Soul. As his goodneſs beams out upon us, worſhip is due in Juſtice to him; and as he is the moſt excellent nature, veneration is due to him in the higheſt manner with the choiceſt affections.

So that indeed the ſpirituality of God comes cheifly into conſideration in matter of Worſhip: All his perfections are grounded upon this: He could not be infinite, immutable, omniſcient if he were a Corporeal being: * We cannot give him a worſhip unleſs we judge him worthy, excellent and deſerving a worſhip at our hands: And we cannot judge him worthy of a worſhip, unleſs we have ſome apprehenſions and admirations of his infinite vertues: And we cannot apprehend and admire thoſe perfections, but as we ſee them as cauſes ſhining in their effects. When we ſee therefore the frame of the world to be the work of his power; the order of

* Amirald *diſſert.* 6. *diſp.* 1. *pa.* 12.

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the world to be the fruit of his wiſdom, and the uſefulneſs of the world to be the product of his goodneſs: We find the motives and reaſons of worſhip; and weighing that this power, wiſdom, goodneſs, infinitely tranſcend any corporeal nature; we find a rule of worſhip, that it ought to be offered by us in a manner ſutable to ſuch a nature, as is infinitely above any bodily Being. His being a Spirit declares what he is, his other perfections declare what kind of Spirit he is. All Gods perfections ſuppoſe him a ſpirit; all center in this: His wiſdom doth not ſuppoſe him merciful, or his mercy ſuppoſe him omniſcient: There may be diſtinct notions of thoſe, but all ſuppoſe him to be of a ſpiritual nature. How cold and frozen will our devotions be, if we conſider not his omniſcience, whereby he diſcerns our hearts? How carnal will our ſervices be, if we conſider him not as a pure ſpirit? In our offers to, and tranſactions with men, we deal not with them as meer Animals, but as rational Creatures; and we debaſe their natures if we treat them otherwiſe: And if we have not raiſed apprehenſions of Gods ſpiritual nature in our treating with him, but allow him only ſuch frames as we think fit enough for men; we debaſe his ſpirituality to the littleneſs of our own Being: We muſt therefore poſſeſs our Souls with this, we ſhall elſe render him no better than a fleſhly ſervice. We do not much concern our ſelves in thoſe things, of which we are either utterly ignorant, or have but ſlight apprehenſions of.

* *Amirant de Relig.*

That is the firſt Propoſition; the right exerciſe of worſhip is grounded upon the ſpirituality of God.

Propoſ. 2. *This ſpiritual worſhip of God is manifeſt by the light of nature, to be due to him.* In reference to this, conſider,

1. *The outward means or matter of that worſhip which would be acceptable to God, was not known by the light of Nature.* The Law for a worſhip, and for a ſpiritual worſhip, by the faculties of our Souls was natural, and part of the Law of Creation; though the determination of the particular acts, whereby God would have this homage teſtified, was of poſſitive inſtitution, and depended not upon the Law of Creation. Though *Adam* in Innocence knew God was to be worſhipped; yet by nature he did not know by what outward acts he was to pay this reſpect, or at what time he was more ſolemnly to be exerciſed in it than at another: This depended upon the directions God as the ſoveraign Governour and Law-giver ſhould preſcribe. You therefore find the poſitive inſtitutions of the *Tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil*, and the determination of the time of worſhip, *Gen.* 2. 3, 17. Had there been any ſuch notion in *Adam* naturally, as ſtrong as that other, that a worſhip was due to God there would have been found ſome reliques of theſe modes univerſally conſented to by mankind, as well as of the other: But though all Nations have by an univerſal conſent concurred in the acknowledgment of the being of God, and his right to adoration, and the obligation of the Creature to it; and that there ought to be ſome publick rule and polity in matters of Religion; (for no Nation hath been in the world without a worſhip, and without external acts and certain ceremonies to ſignifie that worſhip) yet their modes and rites have been as various as their climates, unleſs in that common notion of ſacrifices, not deſcending to them by nature, but tradition from *Adam*; and the various ways of worſhip have been more provoking than pleaſing: Every Nation ſuted the kind of worſhip to their particular ends and polities they deſigned to rule by. How God was to be worſhipped, is more difficult to be diſcerned by Nature with its eyes out, than with its eyes clear. * The pillars upon which the worſhip of God ſtands, cannot be diſcerned without revelation, no more than blind *Sampſon* could tell where the pillars of the *Philiſtians Theatre* ſtood, without one to conduct him. What *Adam* could not ſee with his ſound eyes, we cannot with our dim eyes; He muſt be told from Heaven, what worſhip was fit for the God of Heaven. Tis not by nature that we can have ſuch a full proſpect of God as may content and quiet us; This is the noble effect of divine revelation; he only knows himſelf, and can only make himſelf known to us. It could not be ſuppoſed, that an infinite God ſhould have no perfections but what were viſible in the works of his hands; and that theſe perfections ſhould not be infinitely greater, than as they were ſenſible in their preſent effects: This had been to apprehend God a limited being, meaner than he is. Now tis impoſſible to honour God as we ought, unleſs we know him as he is; and we could not know him as he is, with-

* *King on Jonah. P. 63.*

out divine Revelation from himſelf; for none but God can acquaint us with his own nature: And therefore the Nations void of this conduct, heap up modes of worſhip from their own imaginations, unworthy of the Majeſty of God, and below the nature of man: A rational man would ſcarce have owned ſuch for ſigns of honour, as the Scripture mentions in the ſervices of *Baal* and *Dagon*. Much leſs an infinitely wiſe and glorious God: And when God had ſignified his mind to his own people, how unwilling were they to reſt ſatisfied with Gods determination, but would be warping to their own inventions, and make Gods, and ways of worſhip to themſelves? * As in the matter of the *Golden Calf*, as was lately ſpoken of.

* Amos 5. 26.

2. *Tho the outward manner of Worſhip acceptable to God, could not be known without revelation, and thoſe revelations might be various; yet the inward manner of worſhip with our Spirits was manifeſt by nature.* And not only manifeſt by nature to *Adam* in Innocence, but after his Fall, and the Scales he had brought upon his underſtanding by that Fall. When God gave him his poſitive inſtitutions before the Fall, or whatſoever additions God ſhould have made, had he perſiſted in that ſtate; or when he appointed him after his Fall to teſtifie his acknowledgement of him by Sacrifices, there needed no Command to him to make thoſe acknowledgments by thoſe outward wayes preſcribed to him, with the intention and prime affection of his ſpirit: This nature would inſtruct him in without revelation: For he could not poſſibly have any ſemblance of reaſon to think, that the offering of beaſts, or the preſenting the firſt fruits of the increaſe of the ground, as an acknowledgment of Gods Soveraignty over him, and his bounty to him, was ſufficient without devoting to him that part wherein the *Image* of his Creator did Conſiſt: He could not but diſcern by a reflection upon his own being, that he was made for God as well as by God: [For it is a natural principle, of which the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, Rom. 11. 36. *For of him* and *through him and to him are all things*, &c.] That the whole, whereof he did conſiſt was due to God; and that his body, the dreggy and duſty part of his nature, was not fit to be brought alone before God, without that nobler principle, which he had by Creation linkt with it. Nothing in the whole law of nature, as it is informed of Religion, was clearer next to the being of God, than this manner of worſhipping God with the mind and ſpirit. And as the *Gentiles* never ſunk ſo low into the mud of Idolatry, as to think the Images they worſhipped were really their Gods, but the repreſentations, or habitations of their Gods; ſo they never deſerted this principle in the Notion of it, that God was to be honoured with the beſt they were, and the beſt they had: As they never denied the being of a God in the Notion, tho they did in the practice; ſo they never rejected this principle in Notion, tho they did, and now moſt men do, in the inward obſervation of it: It was a maxime among them that God was *mens*, *animus*, mind and ſpirit, and therefore was to be honoured with the mind and ſpirit: That religion did not conſiſt in the Ceremonies of the body, but the work of the ſoul; whence, the ſpeech of one of them; * *Sacrifice tot he Gods not ſo much clothed with purple garments as a pure heart*: And of another*, *God regards not the multitude of the Sacrifices, but the diſpoſition of the Sacrificer.* Tis not fit we ſhould deny God the Cream and Flower, and give him the flotten part and the ſtalks. And with what Reverence and intention of mind they thought their Worſhip was to be performed, is evident by the Prieſts crying out often, *hoc age*, Mind this, let your Spirits be intent upon it.

* Menander. Grot. *de veritat relig. lib* 4. § 12.

* Jamblick

This could not but reſult

(1.) *From the knowledge of our ſelves.* Tis a natural principle, *God hath made us and not we our ſelves*, Pſal. 100. 1, 2. Man knows himſelf to be a rational Creature: As a Creature he was to ſerve his Creator, and as a rational Creature with the beſt part of that rational nature he derived from him. By the ſame act of reaſon that he knows himſelf to be a Creature, he knows himſelf to have a Creator: That this Creator is more excellent than himſelf, and that an honour is due from him to the Creator for framing of him; and therefore this honour was to be offered to him by the moſt excellent part which was framed by him. Man cannot conſider himſelf as a thinking underſtanding being; but he muſt know that he muſt give God the honour of his thoughts, and worſhip him with thoſe faculties whereby he Thinks, Wills, and Acts. * He muſt know his faculties were given him to act, and to act for the glory of that God who gave him his Soul and the faculties of it; and he could

* Amyrald. *Mor. Tom.* 1. *pa.* 309. 310.

could not in reaſon think they muſt be only active in his own ſervice, and the ſervice of the Creature, and idle and unprofitable in the ſervice of his Creator. With the ſame Powers of our Soul whereby we contemplate God, we muſt alſo worſhip God: We cannot think of him but with our Minds, nor love him but with our Will; and we cannot worſhip him without the acts of thinking and loving, and therefore cannot worſhip him without the exerciſe of our inward faculties: How is it poſſible then for any man that knows his own nature, to think that extended hands, bended knees and lifted up eyes were ſufficient acts of worſhip, without a quickned and active Spirit?

(2.) *From the knowledge of God.* As there was a knowledge of God by nature, ſo the ſame nature did dictate to Man that God was to be glorified as God: The *Apoſtle* implies the inference in the charge he brings againſt them for neglecting it. *We ſhould ſpeak of God as he is*, ſaid one *; and the ſame reaſon would inform them that they were to act towards God as he is. The excellency of the Object required a worſhip according to the dignity of his Nature; which could not be anſwered but by the moſt ſerious inward affection, as well as outward decency; and a want of this, cannot but be judged to be unbecoming the Majeſty of the Creator of the world, and the excellency of Religion. No Nation, no perſon did ever aſſert, that the vileſt part of man was enough for the moſt excellent Being, as God is: That a bodily ſervice could be a ſufficient acknowledgment of the greatneſs of God, or a ſufficient return for the bounty of God. * Man could not but know that he was to act in Religion, conformably to the Object of Religion, and to the excellency of his own Soul: The notion of a God was ſufficient to fill the mind of man with admiration and reverence, and the firſt concluſion from it would be to honour God, and that he have all the affection placed on him, that ſo infinite and ſpiritual a Being did deſerve: The progreſs then would be, that this excellent Being was to be honoured with the motions of the Underſtanding and Will; with the pureſt and moſt ſpiritual powers in the nature of man; becauſe he was a ſpiritual Being, and had nothing of matter mingled with him. Such a brutiſh imagination, to ſuppoſe that blood and fumes, beaſts and incenſe could pleaſe a Deity without a ſpiritual frame, cannot be ſuppoſed to befall any but thoſe that had loſt their reaſon in the rubbiſh of ſenſe. Meer rational nature could never conclude, that ſo excellent a Spirit would be put off with a meer animal ſervice; and attendance of matter and body without Spirit, when they themſelves of an inferior nature, would be loath to ſit down contented with an outſide ſervice from thoſe that belong to them: So that this inſtruction of our Saviour, that God is to be worſhipped in Spirit and Truth, is conformable to the ſentiments of nature, and drawn from the moſt undeniable principles of it. The excellency of Gods nature, and the excellent conſtitution of human faculties, concur naturally to ſupport this perſwaſion: This was as natural to be known by men, as the neceſſity of Juſtice and Temperance for the ſupport of human ſocieties and bodies. 'Tis to be feared that if there be not among us ſuch brutiſh apprehenſions, there are ſuch brutiſh dealings with God in our ſervices againſt the light of nature; when we place all our worſhip of God in outward attendances and drooping countenances, with unbelieving frames and formal devotions; when Prayer is muttered over in private ſlightly, as a Parrot learns leſſons by rote, not underſtanding what it ſpeaks, or to what end it ſpeaks it; not glorifying God in thought and Spirit, with underſtanding and will.

* Rom. 1. 21. * Bias.

* Amyrald *Ib.*

3. *Spiritual Worſhip therefore was always required by God, and always offered to him by one or other.* Man had a perpetual obligation upon him to ſuch a worſhip from the nature of God, and what is founded upon the nature of God is unvariable. This and that particular mode of worſhip may *wax old as a Garment, and as a Veſture may be folded up and changed*, as the expreſſion is of the Heavens *: But God endures for ever; his ſpirituality fails not, therefore a worſhip of him in Spirit muſt run through all ways and rites of Worſhip. God muſt ceaſe to be Spirit, before any ſervice but that which is ſpiritual, can be accepted by him. The light of Nature is the light of God; the light of nature being unchangeable, what was dictated by that, was always and will always be required by God. The worſhip of God being perpetually due from the Creature, the worſhipping him as God is as perpetually his right. Though the outward expreſſions of this Honour were different, one way

* Heb. 1. 11, 12

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in Paradice (for a worſhip was then due, ſince a ſolemn time for that worſhip was appointed) another under the Law, another under the Goſpel; the *Angels* alſo worſhip God in Heaven, and fall down before his Throne; yet tho they differ in rites, they agree in this neceſſary ingredient: All rites though of a different ſhape, muſt be offered to him not as Carcaſſes, but animated with the affections of the Soul. *Abels Sacrifice* had not been ſo excellent in Gods Eſteem, without thoſe gracious habits and affections working in his Soul *. Faith works by Love; his heart was on fire as well as his Sacrifice. *Cain* reſted upon his Preſent, perhaps thought he had obliged God; he depended upon the outward Ceremony, but ſought not for the inward purity: It was an offering brought to the Lord *; he had the right object but not the right manner, *Gen.* 4. 7. *If thou doſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted?* And in the Command afterwards to *Abraham*, *Walk before me, and be thou perfect*, was the direction in all our religious acts and walkings with God. A ſincere act of the Mind and Will, looking above and beyond all Symbolls; extending the Soul to a pitch far above the Body, and ſeeing the day of Chriſt through the vail of the Ceremonies, was required by God: And tho *Moſes* by Gods order had inſtituted a multitude of carnal Ordinances, Sacrifices, Waſhings, Oblations of ſenſible things, and recommended to the people the diligent obſervation of thoſe Statutes by the allurements of promiſes, and denouncing of threatnings; as if there were nothing elſe to be regarded, and the true workings of Grace were to be buried under a heap of Ceremonies; yet ſometimes he doth point them to the inward worſhip, and by the Command of God, requires of them the *Circumciſion* of the *Heart*, Deut. 10. 16. the turning to God with *all their heart*, and *all their Soul*, Deut. 30. 10. whereby they might recollect, that it was the engagement of the Heart, and the worſhip of the Spirit that was moſt agreeable to God; and that he took not any pleaſure in their obſervance of Ceremonies, without true piety within, and the true purity of their thoughts.

* Heb. 11. 4.

* Gen. 4. 5.

4. *'Tis therefore as much every mans duty to worſhip God in Spirit, as it is their duty to worſhip him.* Worſhip is ſo due to him as God, as that he that denies it, diſowns his Deity: And ſpiritual worſhip is ſo due, that he that waves it denies his ſpirituality. 'Tis a debt of Juſtice we owe to God to worſhip him, and it is as much a debt of Juſtice to worſhip him according to his Nature. Worſhip is nothing elſe but a rendring to God the honour that is due to him; and therefore the right poſture of our Spirits in it, is as much or more due, than the material worſhip in the modes of his own preſcribing; that is grounded both upon his Nature, and upon his Command; this only upon his Command; that is perpetually due, whereas the Channel wherein outward worſhip runs may be dryed up, and the River diverted another way: Such a worſhip wherein the mind thinks of God, feels a ſenſe of God, has the Spirit conſecrated to God, the Heart glowing with affections to God: 'Tis elſe a mocking God with a feather. A rational Nature muſt worſhip God with that wherein the Glory of God doth moſt ſparkle in him. God is moſt viſible in the frame of the Soul, 'tis there his Image glitters: He hath given us a Jewel as well as a Caſe, and the Jewel as well as the Caſe we muſt return to him: The *Spirit* is Gods *gift*, and muſt *return to him* *: It muſt return to him in every ſervice morally, as well as it muſt return to him at laſt phyſically. 'Tis not fit we ſhould ſerve our Maker only with that which is the Brute in us, and withold from him that which doth conſtitute us reaſonable Creatures; we muſt give him our bodies, but a *living Sacrifice* *. If the Spirit be abſent from God when the Body is before him, we preſent a dead Sacrifice; 'Tis morally dead in the duty, though it be naturally alive in the poſture and action. 'Tis not an indifferent thing whether we ſhall worſhip God or no, nor is it an indifferent thing whether we ſhall worſhip him with our Spirits or no: As the excellency of mans knowledge conſiſts in knowing things as they are in Truth; ſo the excellency of the Will in willing things as they are in goodneſs. As it is the excellency of Man to know God as God; ſo it is no leſs his excellency, as well as his duty, to honour God as God. As the obligation we have to the Power of God for our Being, binds us to a worſhip of him; ſo the obligation we have to his bounty for faſhioning us according to his own Image, binds us to an exerciſe of that part wherein his Image doth conſiſt. God hath *made all things for himſelf*, Prov. 16. 4. that is, for the evidence of his own goodneſs and wiſdom: We are therefore to render him

* Eccl. 12. 7.

* Rom. 12. 1.

a glory according to the excellency of his nature, diſcovered in the frame of our own. 'Tis as much our ſin not to glorifie God as God, as not to attempt the glorifying of him at all: Tis our ſin not to worſhip God as God, as well as to omit the teſtifying any reſpect at all to him. As the Divine Nature is the object of worſhip, ſo the Divine Perfections are to be honoured in worſhip: We do not honour God if we honour him not as he is; we honour him not as a Spirit, if we think him not worthy of the ardors and raviſhing admirations of our Spirits. If we think the Devotions of the body are ſufficient for him, we contract him into the condition of our own being; and not only deny him to be a ſpiritual nature, but daſh out all thoſe perfections which he could not be poſſeſſed of, were he not a ſpirit.

5. *The Ceremonial law was aboliſht to promote the Spirituality of Divine Worſhip.* That ſervice was groſs, carnal, calculated for an infant and ſenſitive Church: It conſiſted in rudiments, the Circumciſion of the fleſh, the blood and ſmoke of Sacrifices, the ſteams of incenſe, obſervation of days, diſtinction of meats, Corporal purefications; every leaf of the law is clogged with ſome rite to be perticularly obſerved by them: The Spirituality of worſhip lay veild under a thick cloud, that the people could not behold the glory of the Goſpel, which lay covered under thoſe ſhadows, 2 Cor. 3. 13. *They could not ſtedfaſtly look to the end of that which is aboliſhed*: They underſtood not the Glory and Spiritual intent of the law, and therefore came ſhort of that Spiritual frame in the worſhip of God, which was their duty. And therefore in oppoſition to this adminiſtration, the worſhip of God under the Goſpel is called by our Saviour in the *Text*, *a worſhip in Spirit*; more ſpiritual for the matter, more ſpiritual for the motives, and more ſpiritual for the manner and frames of worſhip.

(1.) *This legal ſervice is called fleſh in Scripture, in oppoſition to the Goſpel, which is called Spirit.* The ordinances of the Law, tho of Divine inſtitution, are dignified by the *Apoſtle* with no better a title than *Carnal Ordinances*, * and *a Carnal Command* *: But the Goſpel is called *the Miniſtration of the Spirit*, as being attended with a ſpecial and ſpiritual efficacy on the minds of men. *: And when the degenerate *Galatians*, after having taſted of the pure ſtreams of the Goſpel, turned about to drink of the thicker ſtreams of the Law, the *Apoſtle* tells them, that they begun *in the Spirit* and would not be *made perfect in the fleſh*. * They would leave the righteouſneſs of faith for a juſtification by works. The moral law which is in its own nature *Spiritual* *, in regard of the abuſe of it, in expectation of juſtification by the outward works of it, is called *fleſh*: Much more may the Ceremonial adminiſtration, which was never intended to run parallel with the moral, nor had any foundation in nature as the other had.

* Heb. 9. 10.
* Heb, 7. 16.
* 2 Cor. 3. 8.
* Gal 3. 3.
* Rom. 7. 14.

That whole Oeconomy conſiſted in ſenſible and material things which only touched the fleſh; 'Tis called *the Letter* and the *oldneſs of the Letter*; * as Letters which are but empty ſounds of themſelves, but put together and formed into words, ſignifie ſomething to the mind of the hearer or reader: An old letter, a thing of no efficacy upon the Spirit, but as a law written upon paper. The Goſpel hath an efficacious Spirit attending it, ſtrongly working upon the mind and will; and moulding the Soul into a ſpiritual frame for God, according to the Doctrin of the Goſpel; the one is old and decays, the other is new and increaſeth dayly.

* Rom. 7. 6.

And as the Law it ſelf is called *fleſh*, ſo the obſervers of it and reſters in it are called *Iſrael after the fleſh*, * And the Evangelical worſhipper is called a *Jew after the Spirit*. Rom. 2. 29. They were *Iſrael* after the fleſh as born of *Jacob*, not *Iſrael after the Spirit as born of God*; and therefore the *Apoſtle* calls them *Iſrael* and not *Iſrael*. * *Iſrael* after a carnal birth, not *Iſrael* after a Spiritual: *Iſrael* in the Circumciſion of the fleſh, not *Iſrael* by a regeneration of the heart.

* 1 Cor. 10. 18.
* Rom. 9. 6.

(2.) *The legal Ceremonies were not a fit means to bring the heart into a Spiritual frame.* They had a ſpiritual intent; the *Rock* and *Manna* prefigured the Salvation and ſpiritual nouriſhment by the Redeemer. The ſacrifices were to point them to the Juſtice of God in the puniſhment of ſin, and the mercy of God in ſubſtituting them in their ſteads, as types of the Redeemer and the ranſome by his blood. The Circumciſion of the fleſh was to inſtruct them in the Circumciſion of the heart: They were fleſh in regard of their matter, weakneſs and cloudineſs: Spiritual in regard of their intent and ſignification: They did inſtruct, but not efficaciouſly

* 1 Cor. 10. 3, 4.

ciouſly work ſtrong Spiritual affections in the Soul of the Worſhipper. They were * Gal. 4. 9. *weak and beggerly elements*; * had neither wealth to inrich nor ſtrength to nouriſh the Soul: They could not *perfect* the Comers to them, or put them into a frame * Heb. 10. 1. Heb. 9. 9. * Heb. 9. 15. agreeable to the nature of God, * nor *purge the Conſcience from thoſe dead* and dull diſpoſitions which were by nature in them: * Being carnal they could not have an efficacy to purifie the Conſcience of the offerer, and work ſpiritual effects: Had * Burges *vind. pa.* 256. they continued without the exhibition of Chriſt, they could never have wrought any *change* in us or purchaſed any *favour* for us. * At the beſt they were but ſhadows, and came unexpreſſibly ſhort of the efficacy of that perſon and ſtate whoſe ſhadows they were. The ſhadow of a man is too weak to perform what the man himſelf can do, becauſe it wants the Life, Spirit, and activity of the ſubſtance: The whole pomp and ſcene was ſuted more to the ſenſitive than the intellectual nature; and like pictures pleaſed the fancy of Children, rather than improved their reaſon. The *Jewiſh* * Gal 5. 2. ſtate, was a ſtate of *Child-hood*, * and that adminiſtration a *Pedagogy*. * The Law was * Gal. 4. 24. a Schoolmaſter fitted for their weak and Childiſh capacity, and could no more Spiritualize the heart, than the teachings in a Primer-School can enable the mind, and make it fit for affairs of State: And becauſe they could not better the Spirit, they were inſtituted only for a time, as elements delivered to an Infant age, which naturally lives a Life of ſenſe, rather than a life of reaſon. It was alſo a ſervile ſtate, which doth rather debaſe than elevate the mind; rather Carnalize than Spiritualize the heart: Beſides, 'tis a ſenſe of mercy that both melts and elevates the heart into a * Pſa. 130. 4. Spiritual frame: * *There is forgiveneſs with thee that thou mayeſt be feared*: And they had in that ſtate but ſome glimmerings of mercy in the dayly bloody intimations of Juſtice: There was no Sacrifice for ſome ſins, but a cuting off without the leaſt hints of pardon; and in the yearly remembrance of ſin, there was as much to ſhiver them with fear, as to poſſeſs them with hopes: And ſuch a ſtate which always held them under the Conſcience of ſin, could not produce a free Spirit, which was neceſſary for a worſhip of God according to his nature.

(3.) *In their uſe they rather hindred than furthered a Spiritual worſhip.* In their own nature they did not tend to the obſtructing a Spiritual worſhip; for then they had been contrary to the nature of Religion, and the end of God who appointed them: Nor did God cover the Evangelical Doctrin under the clouds of the legal adminiſtration, to hinder the people of *Iſrael* from perceiving it; but becauſe they were not yet capable to bear the ſplendor of it, had it been clearly ſet before them. The ſhining of the face of *Moſes* was too dazling for their weak eyes, and therefore there was a neceſſity of a *veil*, not for the things themſelves, but * 2 Cor. 3. 13, 14. the *weakneſs of their eyes*. * The carnal affections of that people ſunk down into the things themſelves; ſtuck in the outward pomp, and pierced not through the veil to the ſpiritual intent of them. And by the uſe of them without rational conceptions they beſotted their minds and became ſenſeleſs of thoſe Spiritual motions required of them. Hence came all their expectations of a carnal *Meſſiah*; the veil of Ceremonies was ſo thick, and the film upon their eyes ſo condenſed, that they could not look through the veil to the Spirit of Chriſt. They beheld not the Heavenly *Canaan* for the beauty of the earthly, nor minded the regeneration of the ſpirit, while they reſted upon the purifications of the fleſh: The prevalency of ſenſe and ſenſitive affections diverted their minds from enquiring into the intent of them. Senſe and matter are often clogs to the mind, and ſenſible objects are the ſame often to ſpiritual motions. Our ſouls are never more raiſed, than when they are abſtracted from the intanglements of them. A pompous worſhip made up of many ſenſible objects, weakens the ſpirituality of Religion: Thoſe that are moſt zealous for outward, are uſually moſt cold and indifferent in inward obſervances: And thoſe that overdo in carnal modes, uſually underdo in ſpiritual affections.

This was the *Jewiſh* ſtate. * The nature of the ceremonies being pompous and * Illyric. *de velam. Moſis pa.* 221. *&c.* earthly by their ſhow and beauty, meeting with their weakneſs and Childiſh affections, filled their eyes with an outward luſtre; allured their minds, and detained them from ſeeking things higher and more ſpiritual: The kernel of thoſe rites lay concealed in a thick ſhell, the ſpiritual glory was little ſeen, and the ſpiritual ſweetneſs little taſted: Unleſs the *Scripture* be diligently ſearched, it ſeems to transfer the worſhip of God from true faith and the ſpiritual motions of the heart, and ſtake it down

down to outward obſervances, and the *opus operatum*. Beſides, the voice of the Law did only declare Sacrifices, and invited the Worſhipper to them, with a promiſe of the atonement of ſin, turning away the wrath of God. It never plainly acquainted them, that thoſe things were Types and ſhadows of ſomething future, that they were only outward purifications of the Fleſh: It never plainly told them at the time of appointing them, that thoſe ſacrifices could not aboliſh ſin, and reconcile them to God. Indeed we ſee more of them ſince their death and diſſection, in that one Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, than can be diſcern'd in the *five Books* of *Moſes*, Beſides, Man naturally affects a carnal Life, and therefore affects a carnal Worſhip; He deſigns the gratifying his ſenſe, and would have a Religion of the ſame nature. Moſt men have no mind to buſie their reaſon above the things of ſenſe, and are naturally unwilling to raiſe them up to thoſe things which are allyed to the ſpiritual nature of God; and therefore the more ſpiritual any Ordinance is, the more averſe is the heart of man to it. There is a *ſimplicity of the Goſpel* from which our minds are eaſily corrupted by things that pleaſure the ſenſe, as *Eve* was by the curioſity of her eye, and the liquoriſhneſs of her Palate*. From this principle hath ſprung all the Idolatry in the world. The Jews knew they had a God who had delivered them, but they would have a ſenſible God to go before them*: And the Papacy at this day, is a Witneſs of the truth of this natural Corruption.

* 2 Cor. 11. 3.

* Exod. 32. 1.

4. *Upon theſe accounts therefore God never teſtified himſelf well pleaſed with that kind of Worſhip.* He was not diſpleaſed with them as they were his own inſtitution, and ordained for the repreſenting (though in an obſcure manner) the glorious things of the Goſpel; nor was he offended with thoſe peoples obſervance of them: For ſince he had commanded them, it was their duty to perform them, and their ſin to neglect them: But he was diſpleaſed with them as they were practiſed by them, with Souls as morally carnal in the practices, as the Ceremonies were materially carnal in their ſubſtance. It was not their diſobedience to obſerve them; but it was a diſobedience, and a contempt of the end of the inſtitution to reſt upon them; to be warm in them, and cold in morals: They fed upon the Bone, and neglected the Marrow; pleaſed themſelves with the Shell, and ſought not for the Kernel: They joyned not with them the internal Worſhip of God, Fear of him, with Faith in the promiſed ſeed, which lay vail'd under thoſe Coverings, *Hoſ. 6. 6. I deſired Mercy, and not Sacrifice; and the Knowledge of God, more than burnt Offerings*; And therefore he ſeems ſometimes weary of his own inſtitutions, and calls them not his own, but *their* Sacrifices, *their* Feaſts, *Iſa.* 1. 11, 14. They were *his* by appointment, *theirs*, by abuſe: The Inſtitution was from his goodneſs and condeſcenſion, therefore *his*; the corruption of them was from the vice of their Nature; therefore *theirs*. He often blamed them for their carnality in them; ſhew'd his diſlike of placing all their Religion in them; gives the ſacrificers upon that account, no better a title, than that of the Princes of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah**: And compares the ſacrifices themſelves to the *cutting off a Dogs Neck*, *Swines Blood*, and the *Murder of a Man.** And indeed God never valued them, or expreſt any delight in them: He deſpiſed the *Feaſts* of the Wicked, *Amos* 5. 21. and had no eſteem for the material Offerings of the Godly, *Pſal.* 50. 13. *Will I eat the fleſh of Bulls, or drink the blood of Goats?* Which he ſpeaks to his Saints and People, before he comes to reprove the wicked; which he begins *v.* 16. *But to the Wicked, God ſaid*, &c. So ſlightly he eſteemed them, that he ſeems to diſown them to be any part of his Command, when he brought his People out of the Land of *Egypt*, Jer. 7. 21. *I ſpake not to your Fathers, nor commanded them concerning burnt Offerings and Sacrifices.* He did not value nor regard them, in compariſon of that inward frame which he had required by the moral Law; that being given before the Law of Ceremonies, obliged them in the firſt place, to an obſervance of thoſe Precepts. They ſeemed to be below the Nature of God, and could not of themſelves pleaſe him. None could in reaſon perſwade themſelves, that the death of a Beaſt, was a proportionable Offering for the ſin of a Man, or ever was intended for the expiation of Tranſgreſſion. In the ſame rank are all our bodily ſervices under the Goſpel: A loud voice without Spirit; bended bulruſhes without inward affections, are no more delightful to God, than the Sacrifices of Animals: 'Tis but a change of one Brute for another of a higher ſpecies; a meer Brute, for that part of man which hath an agree-

* Iſa. 1. 10.

* Iſa. 66. 3.

ment with Brutes: Such a ſervice is a meer animal ſervice, and not ſpiritual.

5. *And therefore God never intended that ſort of worſhip to be durable, and had often mentioned the change of it for one more ſpiritual.* It was not good or evil in it ſelf; whatſoever goodneſs it had, was ſolely deriv'd to it by inſtitution, and therefore it was mutable: It had no conformity with the ſpiritual nature of God, who was to be worſhipped; nor with the rational nature of man, who was to worſhip: And therefore he often ſpeaks of taking away the *New-Moons*, and *Feaſts*, and *Sacrifices*, and all the ceremonial Worſhip, as things he took no pleaſure in; to have a Worſhip more ſuted to his excellent Nature: But he never ſpeaks of removing the Goſpel Adminiſtration, and the worſhip preſcribed there, as being more agreeable to the nature and perfections of God, and diſplaying them more Illuſtriouſly to the World.

The *Apoſtle* tells us, it was to be *diſannul'd becauſe of its weakneſs* *: A determinate time was fixed for its duration, till the accompliſhment of the truth figured under that *Pedagogy* *. Some of the modes of that worſhip being only typical, muſt naturally expire and be inſignificant in their uſe, upon the finiſhing of that by the Redeemer, which they did prefigure: And other parts of it, though God ſuffered them ſo long becauſe of the weakneſs of the Worſhipper; yet becauſe it became not God to be always worſhipped in that manner, he would reject them, and introduce another more ſpiritual and elevated. *Incenſe and a pure Offering* ſhould be offered every where unto his Name.*

* Heb. 7. 18.
* Gal. 4. 2.
* Mal. 1. 11.
* *Paſcal.* Pen. 142.

* He often told them he would make a *New Covenant* by the *Meſſiah*, and the Old ſhould be rejected; that the *former things ſhould not be remembred, and the things of old no more conſidered*, when he ſhould do *a new thing in the Earth* *: Even the Ark of the Covenant, the ſymbol of his preſence, and the glory of the Lord in that Nation ſhould not any more be remembered and viſited *; That the Temple and ſacrifices ſhould be rejected, and others eſtabliſhed; That the Order of the *Aaronical Prieſt-hood* ſhould be aboliſht, and that of *Melchiſedeck* ſet up in the ſtead of it in the Perſon of the *Meſſiah* to endure for *ever* *: That *Jeruſalem* ſhould be changed; a new Heaven and Earth created; a Worſhip more conformable to Heaven, more advantagious to Earth. God had proceeded in the removal of ſome part of it, before the time of taking down the whole furniture of this Houſe: The Pot of *Manna* was loſt; *Urim* and *Thummim* ceaſed; the glory of the Temple was diminiſh'd; and the ignorant people wept at the ſight of the one, without raiſing their Faith and hope in the conſideration of the other, which was promiſed to be filled with a ſpiritual glory. And as ſoon as ever the Goſpel was ſpread in the World, God thundred out his Judgments upon that place in which he had fixed all thoſe legal Obſervances, ſo that the *Jews* in the Letter and Fleſh, could never practice the main part of their worſhip, ſince they were expelled from that place where it was only to be celebrated. 'Tis one thouſand ſix hundred years ſince they have been deprived of their *Altar*, which was the foundation of all the Levitical-worſhip, and have wandred in the world *without a Sacrifice, a Prince* or *Prieſt, an Ephod* or *Teraphim.**

* Iſa. 43. 18, 19.
* Jer. 3. 16.
* Pſal. 110.
* Hoſ. 3. 4.

And God fully put an end to it in the Command he gave to the *Apoſtles*, and in them to us, in the preſence of *Moſes* and *Elias*, to hear his Son only, *Matth.* 17. 5. *Behold a voice out of the Cloud, which ſaid, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed, hear him.* And at the death of our Saviour, teſtified it to that whole Nation and the world, by the rending in twain the vail of the Temple.

The whole frame of that ſervice, which was carnal, and by reaſon of the corruption of Man, weakned, is nulled; and a ſpiritual worſhip is made known to the world, that we might now ſerve God in a more ſpiritual manner, and with more ſpiritual frames.

6. Propoſition, *The Service and worſhip the Goſpel ſettles, is ſpiritual, and the performance of it more ſpiritual.* Spirituality is the Genius of the Goſpel, as Carnality was of the Law; the Goſpel is therefore called *Spirit*: We are abſtracted from the imployments of ſenſe, and brought neerer to a Heavenly State. The *Jews* had Angels Bread poured upon them; we have Angels ſervice preſcribed to us; the Praiſes of God; Communion with God in Spirit, through his Son *Jeſus Chriſt*, and ſtronger foundations for ſpiritual affections. 'Tis called a *reaſon-*

able

able ſervice, * tis ſuted to a rational nature, tho it finds no friendſhip from the corruption of reaſon. It preſcribes a ſervice fit for the reaſonable faculties of the Soul, and advanceth them while it employs them. The word *reaſonable* may be tranſlated, *word ſervice*, * as well as reaſonable ſervice; an Evangelical ſervice in oppoſition to a Law ſervice. All Evangelical ſervice is reaſonable, and all truly reaſonable ſervice is Evangelical.

* Rom. 12. 1.

* V. Hammond *in loc.*

The *matter* of the worſhip is Spiritual; it conſiſts in love of God, faith in God, recourſe to his goodneſs, Meditation on him, and Communion with him. It lays aſide the Ceremonal, Spiritualizeth the Moral: The Commands that concerned our duty to God, as well as thoſe that concerned our duty to our Neighbour, were reduced by Chriſt to the ſpiritual intention.

The *Motives* are Spiritual; 'tis a ſtate of more *grace* as well as of more *truth*, * ſupported by Spiritual promiſes, beaming out in Spiritual priviledges; Heaven comes down in it to Earth, to Spiritualize Earth for Heaven.

* John 1. 17.

The *manner* of worſhip is more Spiritual; higher flights of the Soul, ſtronger ardours of affections, ſincerer aims at his glory; miſts are removed from our minds, Cloggs from the Soul, more of love than fear; faith in Chriſt kindles the affections and works by them.

The *aſſiſtances* to Spiritual worſhip are greater. The Spirit doth not drop, but is plentifully poured out. It doth not light ſometimes upon, but dwells in the heart. Chriſt ſuted the Goſpel to a Spiritual heart, and the Spirit changeth a carnal heart to make it fit for a Spiritual Goſpel. He blows upon the Garden and cauſes the ſpices to flow forth. And often makes the Soul in worſhip like the Chariots of *Aminadab* in a quick and nimble motion: Our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour by his death diſcovered to us the nature of God; and after his aſcenſion ſent his Spirit to fit us for the worſhip of God and converſe with him.

One Spiritual Evangelical believing breath is more delightful to God, than millions of Altars made up of the richeſt pearls, and ſmoaking with the coſtlieſt oblations, becauſe it is Spiritual: And a mite of Spirit is of more worth than the greateſt weight of fleſh. One Holy Angel is more excellent than a whole world of meer bodies.

7. Propoſition. *Yet the Worſhip of God with our bodies is not to be rejected upon the account that God requires a Spiritual worſhip.* Tho we muſt perform the weightier duties of the Law, yet we are not to omit and leave undone the lighter precepts. Since both the *Magnalia* and *minutula legis*, the greater, and the leſſer duties of the Law, have the ſtamp of Divine authority upon them.

As God under the Ceremonial Law did not command the worſhip of the body, and the obſervation of outward rites without the engagement of the Spirit; ſo neither doth he command that of the Spirit, without the peculiar attendance of the body.

The *Schwelkfendians* denied bodily worſhip. And the indecent poſtures of many in publick attendance, intimate no great care either of compoſing their Bodies or Spirits. A morally diſcompoſed body intimates a tainted heart.

Our *Bodies* as well as our *Spirits* are to be preſented to God. * Our bodies in lieu of the Sacrifices of Beaſts, as in the Judaical inſtitutions; Body for the whole man; a living Sacrifice, not to be ſlain, as the Beaſts were, but living a new life, in a holy poſture, with Crucified affections: This is the inference the Apoſtle makes of the priviledges of Juſtification, Adoption, Coheirſhip with Chriſt, which he had before diſcourſed of; Priviledges conferred upon the perſon and not upon a part of man.

* Rom. 12. 1.

1. *Bodily worſhip is due to God.* He hath a right to an Adoration by our bodies as they are his by Creation; his right is not diminiſht but increaſed by the bleſſing of *Redemption*, 1 Cor. 6. 20. *For you are bought with a price, therefore glorifie God in your Bodies and your Spirits, which are Gods.* The Body as well as the Spirit is redeemed, ſince our Saviour ſuffered Crucifixion in his body, as well as Agonies in his Soul: Body is not taken here for the whole man, as it may be in *Rom.* 12. But for the material part of our nature, it beng diſtinguiſht from the Spirit: If we are to render to God an obedience with our bodies, we are to render him ſuch Acts of worſhip with our bodies, as they are capable of. As God is *the Father of Spirits*,

ſo he is the *God of all fleſh:* Therefore the fleſh he hath framed of the Earth, as well as the noble portion he hath breathed into us, cannot be denyed him without a palpable injuſtice: The ſervice of the body we muſt not deny to God, unleſs we will deny him to be the author of it, and the exerciſe of his providential care about it. The mercies of God are renewed every day upon our bodies as well as our Souls, and therefore they ought to expreſs a fealty to God for his bounty every day; [* both are from God, both ſhould be for God. Man conſiſts of Body and Soul, the ſervice of Man is the ſervice of both. The body is to be Sanctified as well as the Soul, and therefore to be offered to God as well as the Soul. Both are to be glorified, both are to glorifie: As our Saviours Divinity was manifeſted in his body, ſo ſhould our ſpirituality in ours. To give God the ſervice of the body and not of the Soul, is hypocriſie; to give God the ſervice of the Spirit and not of the body is ſacriledge; to give him neither, Atheiſm.] If the only part of man that is viſible were exempted from the ſervice of God, there could be no viſible Teſtimonies of piety given upon any occaſion: Since not a moiety of man, but the whole is Gods Creature, he ought to pay a homage with the whole, and not only with a moiety of himſelf.

* Sherman's *Greek in the Temple*, pa. 61, 62.

2. *Worſhip in ſocieties is due to God, but this cannot be without ſome bodily expreſſions.* The law of nature doth as much direct men to combine together in publick ſocieties for the acknowledgment of God, as in Civil Communities for ſelf preſervation and order. And the notice of a ſociety for Religion is more Ancient than the mention of Civil aſſociations for Politick Government, *Gen.* 4. 26. *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord*, viz. In the time of *Seth.* No queſtion but *Adam* had worſhipped God before as well as *Abel*, and a Family-Religion had been preſerved; but as mankind increaſed in diſtinct Families, they knit together in Companies to ſolemnize the worſhip of God. * Hence, as ſome think, thoſe that incorporated together for ſuch ends, were called the *Sons of God:* Sons by profeſſion, tho not Sons by Adoption: As thoſe of *Corinth* were Saints by profeſſion, tho in ſuch a corrupted Church they could not be all ſo by regeneration; yet Saints, as being of a Chriſtian ſociety, and calling upon the name of Chriſt, that is, worſhipping God in Chriſt, tho they might not be all Saints in Spirit and Practice. So *Cain* and *Abel* met together to worſhip, Gen. 4. 3. *At the end of the days*, at a ſet time. God ſetled a publick worſhip among the *Jews*, inſtituted Synagogues for their Convening together, whence call'd the *Synagogues of God.* * The Sabbath was inſtituted to acknowledge God a Common Benefactor. Publick worſhip keeps up the Memorials of God in a world prone to Atheiſm, and a ſenſe of God in a heart prone to forgetfulneſs. The *Angels* ſung in Company, not ſingly at the *Birth* of Chriſt, * and praiſed God not only with a ſimple elevation of their Spiritual nature, but audibly by forming a voice in the air? Affections are more lively, Spirits more raiſed in publick than private; God will credit his own ordinance. Fire increaſeth by laying together many Coals on one place; ſo is devotion inflamed by the union of many hearts, and by a joynt preſence: Nor can the approach of the laſt day of Judgment, or particular Judgments upon a Nation give a Writ of eaſe from ſuch aſſemblies. Heb. 10. 25. *Not forſaking the aſſembling our ſelves together, but ſo much the more as you ſee the day approaching*: Whether it be underſtood of the day of Judgment, or the day of the *Jewiſh* deſtruction and the Chriſtian perſecution, the *Apoſtles* uſes it as an argument to quicken them to the obſervance, not to encourage them to a neglect. Since therefore natural light informs us, and Divine inſtitution commands us publickly to acknowledge our ſelves the ſervants of God, it implies the ſervice of the body: Such acknowledgments cannot be without viſible Teſtimonies, and outward exerciſes of devotion, as well as inward affections. This promotes Gods honour, checks others prophaneſs, allures men to the ſame expreſſions of duty. And tho there may be hypocriſie, and an outward garb without an inward frame; yet better a moiety of worſhip, than none at all; better acknowledge Gods right in one than diſown it in both.

* Stillingfleet's *Irenicum cap.* 1. § 1. *pa.* 23.

* Pſa. 47. 8.

* Luke 2. 13.

3. *Jeſus Chriſt the moſt Spiritual worſhipper, worſhipt God with his body.* He Prayed orally, and kneeled, *Father if it be thy Will, &c.* * He bleſſed with his mouth, *Father I thank thee.* * He lifted up his eyes as well as elevated his Spirit, when he praiſed his Father for mercy received, or begged for the bleſſings his Diſciples wanted. * The ſtrength of the Spirit muſt have vent at the outward members.

* Luke 22. 41, 42.

* Mat. 11. 26.

* John 11. 41.

John 12. 1.

The

The holy men of God have employed the body in ſignificant expreſſions of Worſhip: *Abraham* in falling on his face, *Paul* in kneeling, employing their Tongues, lifting up their hands. Tho *Jacob* was bed-rid, yet he would not Worſhip God without ſome devout expreſſion of Reverence; tis in one place *leaning upon his ſtaff** ; in another *bowing himſelf upon his beds head* * : The reaſon of the diverſity is in the *Hebrew* word, which without vowels may be read *Mittah* a bed, or *Matteh* a ſtaff; howſoever, both ſignifie a Teſtimony of adoration by a reverent geſture of the body. Indeed in Angels and ſeparated Souls a Worſhip is performed purely by the Spirit; but whiles the Soul is in conjunction with the body, it can hardly perform a ſerious act of worſhip without ſome tincture upon the outward man, and reverential compoſure of the body: Fire cannot be in the cloaths, but it will be felt by the members; nor flames be pent up in the Soul without burſting out in the body: The heart can no more reſtrain it ſelf from breaking out, than *Joſeph* could incloſe his affections, without expreſſing them in tears to his brethren*. We *Believe*, and *therefore ſpeak* *.

* Heb. 11. 21.
* Gen. 47. 31.
* Gen. 45. 1, 2.
* 2 Cor. 4. 13.

To conclude; God hath appointed ſome parts of Worſhip which cannot be performed without the body, as Sacraments; we have need of them becauſe we are not wholly ſpiritual and incorporeal Creatures.

The Religion, which conſiſts in externals only, is not for an intellectual nature: A worſhip purely intellectual is too ſublime for a nature allyed to ſenſe and depending much upon it: The Chriſtian mode of Worſhip is proportioned to both; It makes the ſenſe to aſſiſt the mind, and elevates the ſpirit above the ſenſe: Bodily worſhip helps the ſpiritual: The members of the body reflect back upon the heart, the voice bars diſtractions, the tongue ſets the heart on fire in good as well as in evil. Tis as much againſt the light of nature to ſerve God without external ſignifications, as to ſerve him only with them without the intention of the mind. As the inviſible God declares himſelf to men by viſible works and ſigns, ſo ſhould we declare our inviſible frames by viſible expreſſions: God hath given us a ſoul and body in conjunction, and we are to ſerve him in the ſame manner he hath framed us.

2. The ſecond thing I am to ſhew, is, *what Spiritual worſhip is.* In general, the whole Spirit is to be employed: The name of God is not ſanctified but by the engagement of our Souls.

Worſhip is an Act of the underſtanding, applying it ſelf to the knowledge of the excellency of God, and actual thoughts of his Majeſty, recognizing him as the ſupreme Lord and Governour of the world, which is natural knowledge; beholding the glory of his Attributes in the Redeemer, which is Evangelical knowledge: This is the ſole act of the Spirit of Man. The ſame reaſon is for all our worſhip as for our thankſgiving: This muſt be done with underſtanding, Pſal. 47. 7. *Sing ye praiſe with underſtanding*, with a knowledge and ſenſe of his greatneſs, goodneſs and Wiſdom. Tis alſo an act of the Will, whereby the Soul adores and reverenceth his Majeſty, is raviſht with his amiableneſs, embraceth his goodneſs, enters it ſelf into an intimate Communion with this moſt lovely object, and pitcheth all his affections upon him.

We muſt worſhip God underſtandingly; tis not elſe a reaſonable ſervice: The nature of God and the Law of God abhor a blind offering; we muſt Worſhip him heartily, elſe we offer him a dead Sacrifice: A reaſonable ſervice is that wherein the mind doth truly act ſomething with God. All ſpiritual acts muſt be acts of reaſon, otherwiſe they are not human acts, becauſe they want that principle which is conſtitutive of man, and doth difference him from other Creatures: Acts done only by ſenſe are the acts of a brute; acts done by reaſon are the acts of a man; That which is only an act of ſenſe, cannot be an act of Religion: The ſenſe without the conduct of reaſon is not the ſubject of Religious acts, for then beaſts were capable of Religion as well as men: There cannot be Religion where there is not reaſon; and there cannot be the exerciſe of Religion, where there is not an exerciſe of the rational faculties. Nothing can be a Chriſtian act, that is not a human act: Beſides, all worſhip muſt be for ſome end; the worſhip of God muſt be for God; tis by the exerciſe of our rational faculties, that we only can intend an end: An Ignorant and Carnal worſhip is a brutiſh worſhip,

Particularly,

1. *Spiritual Worſhip is a Worſhip from a ſpiritual Nature.* Not only Phyſically ſpiritual, ſo our Souls are in their frame; but morally ſpiritual, by a renewing principle. The heart muſt be firſt caſt into the Mould of the Goſpel, before it can perform a Worſhip required by the Goſpel. *Adam* living in Paradice, might perform a ſpiritual Worſhip; but *Adam* fallen from his rectitude, could not: We being Heirs of his Nature, are Heirs of his Impotence: Reſtoration to a ſpiritual Life, muſt precede any act of ſpiritual Worſhip. As no work can be good, ſo no worſhip can be ſpiritual, till we are created in Chriſt*. Chriſt is our Life*. As no natural action can be performed without life in the root or heart, ſo no ſpiritual act without Chriſt in the Soul: Our being in Chriſt, is as neceſſary to every ſpiritual act, as the union of our Soul with our Body is neceſſary to natural action. Nothing can exceed the limits of its nature; for then it ſhould exceed it ſelf in acting, and do that which it hath no principle to do. A Beaſt cannot act like a Man, without partaking of the nature of a Man; nor a Man act like an *Angel*, without partaking of the Angelical nature: How can we perform ſpiritual acts, without a ſpiritual principle. Whatſoever worſhip proceeds from the corrupted nature, cannot deſerve the title of ſpiritual worſhip, becauſe it ſprings not from a ſpiritual habit. If thoſe that are *evil cannot ſpeak good things*, thoſe that are carnal cannot offer a ſpiritual ſervice. Poyſon is the fruit of a *Vipers* nature, *Mat.* 12. 34. *Oh, Generation of Vipers, how can you being evil ſpeak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaks.* As the root is, ſo is the fruit. If the Soul be habitually carnal, the worſhip cannot be actually ſpiritual: There may be an intention of ſpirit, but there is no ſpiritual principle as a root of that intention. A heart may be ſenſibly united with a duty, when it is not ſpiritually united with Chriſt in it. Carnal motives, and carnal ends may fix the mind in an act of worſhip, as the ſenſe of ſome preſſing affliction may enlarge a mans mind in Prayer. Whatſoever is agreeable to the nature of God, muſt have a ſtamp of Chriſt upon it; a ſtamp of his grace in performance, as well as of his Meditation in the acceptance. The *Apoſtle lived not*, but *Chriſt lived in him** ; the Soul worſhips not, but Chriſt in him: Not that Chriſt performs the act of Worſhip; but enables us ſpiritually to worſhip, after he enables us ſpiritually to live. As God counts not any Soul living but in Chriſt, ſo he counts not any a ſpiritual Worſhipper but in Chriſt. The goodneſs and fatneſs of the fruit comes from the fatneſs of the Olive wherein we are engrafted: We muſt find healing in Chriſts wings, before God can find ſpirituality in our ſervices. All worſhip iſſuing from a dead nature, is but a dead ſervice: A living action cannot be performed, without being knit to a living root.

* Eph. 2. 10.
* Col. 3. 4.
* Gal. 2. 20.

2. *Spiritual Worſhip is done by the influence, and with the aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God.* A Heart may be ſpiritual, when a particular act of Worſhip may not be ſpiritual. The Spirit may dwell in the heart, when he may ſuſpend his influence on the act. Our worſhip is then ſpiritual, when the fire that kindles our affections comes from Heaven, as that fire upon the Altar wherewith the Sacrifices were conſumed. God taſtes a ſweetneſs in no ſervice, but as it is dreſt up by the hand of the Mediator, and hath the Air of his own Spirit in it: They are but natural acts, without a ſupernatural aſſiſtance: Without an actual influence, we cannot act from ſpiritual motives, nor for ſpiritual ends, nor in a ſpiritual manner. We cannot *mortifie* a Luſt without the *Spirit**, nor quicken a ſervice without the Spirit. Whatſoever corruption is killed, is ſlain by his Power; whatſoever duty is ſpiritualized, is refined by his Breath. He *quickens our dead bodies* in our Reſurrection *; He renews our dead Souls in our Regeneration; He quickens our carnal ſervices in our adorations: The choiceſt acts of worſhip are but *infirmities*, without his auxiliary *help**. We are Loggs, unable to move our ſelves, till he raiſe our faculties to a pitch agreeable to God; puts his hand to the duty, and lifts that up and us with it. Never any great act was performed by the *Apoſtles* to God, or for God, but they are ſaid to be filled with the Holy-Ghoſt. Chriſt could not have been conceived immaculate as that *holy thing*, without the Spirits overſhadowing the Virgin; nor any ſpiritual act conceived in our heart, without the Spirits moving upon us, to bring forth a living Religion from us. The acts of worſhip are ſaid to be in the Spirit, *ſupplication in the Spirit** ; not only with the ſtrength and affection of our own Spirits, but with the mighty operation of the Holy-Ghoſt, if *Jude* may be the Interpreter*. The Holy-Ghoſt exci-

* Rom. 8. 13.
* Rom. 8. 11.
* Rom. 8. 26.
* Eph. 6. 18.
* Jude 20.

exciting us; impelling us, and firing our Souls by his divine flame; raiſing up the affections, and making the Soul cry, with a holy importunity, *Abba*, Father. To render our worſhip ſpiritual, we ſhould, before every ingagement in it, implore the actual preſence of the Spirit, without which we are not able to ſend forth one ſpiritual breath or groan; but be Wind-bound like a ſhip without a Gale, and our worſhip be no better than carnal. How doth the Spouſe ſolicite the Spirit with an *awake oh North-wind, and come thou South-wind*, &c. * Cant. 4. 16.

3. *Spiritual Worſhip is done with Sincerity:* When the heart ſtands right to God, and the Soul performs what it pretends to perform: When we ſerve God with our Spirits, as the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 1. 9. *God is my Witneſs, whom I ſerve with my Spirit in the Goſpel of his Son*: This is not meant of the Holy-Ghoſt; for the *Apoſtle* would never have called the Spirit of God, his own Spirit; but with *my Spirit*, that is a ſincere frame of heart. A Carnal-worſhip, whether under the Law or Goſpel, is when we are buſied about external rites, without an inward compliance of Soul. God demands the heart;* *My Son give me thy heart*; not give me thy tongue, or thy lips, or thy hands; theſe may be given without the heart, but the heart can never be beſtowed without theſe as its attendants. A heap of ſervices can be no more welcome to God, without our Spirits, than all *Jacobs* Sons could be to *Joſeph*, without the *Benjamin* he deſired to ſee. God is not taken with the Cabinet, but the Jewel: He firſt reſpected *Abels* Faith and ſincerity, and then his Sacrifice; he diſreſpected *Cains* Infidelity and Hypocriſie, and then his Offering. [For this cauſe he rejected the Offerings of the *Jews*, the Prayers of the *Phariſees*, and the Alms of *Ananias* and *Saphira*, becauſe their hearts and their duties were at a diſtance from one another. In all ſpiritual ſacrifices, our Spirits are Gods portion. Under the Law, the Reins were to be conſumed by the Fire on the Altar, becauſe the ſecret intentions of the heart were ſignified by them, *Pſal.* 7. 9. *The Lord trieth the Heart and the Reins.* It was an ill *Omen* among the Heathen, if a *Victim* wanted a heart. The Widows Mites with her heart in them, were more eſteemed than the richer Offerings without it.] Not the quantity of ſervice, but the will in it, is of account with this infinite Spirit. All that was to be brought for the framing of the Tabernacle, was to be offered *willingly with the heart.** The more of Will, the more of Spirituality and Acceptableneſs to God, *Pſal.* 119. 108. *Accept the Free-will-offering of my lips.* Sincerity is the ſalt which ſeaſons every ſacrifice. The heart is moſt like to the object of worſhip: The heart in the body is the ſpring of all vital actions; and a ſpiritual Soul is the ſpring of all ſpiritual actions. How can we imagine God can delight in the meer ſervice of the Body, any more than we can delight in converſe with a Carcaſs?

* Pro. 23. 26.

* *Moulin. Sermons Decad.* 4. *Ser.* 4. p. 80.

* Exod. 25. 2.

Without the heart 'tis no worſhip: 'Tis a ſtage-play; an acting a part without being that perſon really which is acted by us: A Hypocrite in the notion of the word, is a ſtage-player. We may as well ſay a man may believe with his body, as worſhip God only with his body. Faith, is a great ingredient in Worſhip; and it is *with the heart* Man *believes unto Righteouſneſs.** We may be truly ſaid to worſhip God, though we want perfection; but we cannot be ſaid to worſhip him, if we want ſincerity: A Statue upon a Tomb, with eyes and hands lifted up, offers as good and true a ſervice; it wants only a voice, the geſtures and poſtures are the ſame; nay, the ſervice is better; 'tis not a mockery; it repreſents all that it can be framed to: But to worſhip without our Spirits, is a preſenting God with a Picture, an Eccho, Voice and nothing elſe; a Complement; a meer Lye; a *compaſſing him about with Lyes**. Without the heart, the tongue is a Lyar, and the greateſt Zeal, diſſembling with him. To preſent the Spirit, is to preſent with that which can never naturally die; to preſent him only the Body, is to preſent him that which is every day crumbling to duſt, and will at laſt lie rotting in the Grave: To offer him a few Rags eaſily torn; a ſkin for a ſacrifice, a thing unworthy the Majeſty of God; a fixed eye and elevated hands, with a ſleepy Heart and earthly Soul are pitiful things for an ever bleſſed and glorious Spirit: Nay, it is ſo far from being ſpiritual, that it is Blaſphemy; To pretend to be a *Jew outwardly*, without being ſo *inwardly*, is in the Judgment of Chriſt to Blaſpheme*. And is not the ſame title to be given with as much reaſon to thoſe that pretend a worſhip and perform none? Such a one is not a ſpiritual Worſhipper, but a blaſpheming Devil in *Samuel's* Mantle.

* Rom. 10. 10.

* Hoſ. 11. 12.

* Revel. 2. 9.

4. *Spiri-*

4. *Spiritual Worſhip is performed with an unitedneſs of heart.* The heart is not only now and then with God, but *united to fear* or worſhip *his name.* * A ſpiritual duty muſt have the engagement of the Spirit, and the thoughts tyed up to the ſpiritual Object: The union of all the parts of the heart together with the body, is the life of the body; and the moral union of our hearts, is the life of any duty. A heart quickly flitting from God, makes not God his treaſure; he ſlights the worſhip, and therein affronts the Object of Worſhp. All our thoughts ought to be raviſhed with God; bound up in him as in a bundle of life: But when we ſtart from him to gaze after every feather, and run after every bubble; we diſown a full and affecting excellency, and a ſatisfying ſweetneſs in him. When our thoughts run from God, 'tis a Teſtimony we have no ſpiritual affection to God: Affection would ſtake down the thoughts to the Object affected: 'Tis but a *Mouth-love*, as the *Prophet* phraſeth it *: But their hearts go *after their Covetouſneſs:* Covetous Objects pipe, and the heart danceth after them; and thoughts of God are ſhifted off, to receive a multitude of other imaginations: The heart and the ſervice ſtayed a while together, and then took leave of one another. The *Pſalmiſt* * ſtill found his heart with God when he *awak'd*; ſtill with God in ſpiritual affections, and fixed Meditations. A carnal heart is ſeldom with God, either in or out of worſhip: If God ſhould knock at the heart in any duty, it would be found not at home, but ſtraying abroad. Our worſhip is ſpiritual, when the door of the heart is ſhut againſt all Intruders, as our Saviour commands *in Cloſet-duties* *: It was not his meaning, to command the ſhutting the Cloſet-door, and leave the Heart-door open for every thought that would be apt to haunt us. Worldly affections are to be laid aſide, if we would have our worſhip ſpiritual. This was meant by the Jewiſh cuſtom of wiping or waſhing off the duſt of their feet, before their entrance into the Temple; and of not bringing mony in their girdles. To be ſpiritual in worſhip, is to have our Souls gathered and bound up wholly in themſelves, and offered to God. Our Loyns muſt be girt, as the faſhion was in the Eaſtern Countries, where they wore long Garments, that they might not waver with the Wind, and be blown between their leggs, to obſtruct them in their travel: Our faculties muſt not hang looſe about us. He is a carnal Worſhipper, that gives God but a piece of his heart, as well as he that denies him the whole of it; that hath ſome thoughts pitch'd upon God in worſhip, and as many willingly upon the World. *David* ſought God, not with a moiety of his heart, but with *his whole heart*; with his intire frame*: He brought not half his heart, and left the other in the poſſeſſion of another Maſter. It was a good leſſon *Pythagoras* gave his Scholars*, *Not to make the obſervance of God a work by the by.* If theſe Gueſts be invited, or entertained kindly, or if they come unexpected, the ſpirituality of that worſhip is loſt; the Soul kicks down what is wrought before: But if they be Brow-beaten by us, and our grief, rather than our pleaſure; they divert our ſpiritual intention from the work in hand, but hinder not Gods acceptance of it as ſpiritual; becauſe they are not the acts of our Will, but offences to our Wills.

* Pſal. 86. 11.

* Ezek. 33.31.

* Pſal. 39. 12.

* Mat. 6. 6.

* Pſal. 119.10.

* Οὐ γὰρ παρέργον δεῖ ποιεῖσθαι τὸν Θεὸν *Jamblich* l. 1. c. 51. p. 87.

5. *Spiritual Worſhip is performed with a ſpiritual activity and ſenſibleneſs of God.* With an active Underſtanding to meditate on his excellency; and an active Will to embrace him when he drops upon the Soul. If we underſtand the amiableneſs of God, our affections will be raviſht; if we underſtand the immenſity of his goodneſs, our Spirits will be enlarged. We are to act with the higheſt intention, ſutable to the greatneſs of that God with whom we have to do, *Pſal.* 150. 2. *Praiſe him according to his excellent greatneſs*: Not that we can worſhip him equally, but in ſome proportion, the frame of the heart is to be ſuted to the excellency of the Object: Our ſpiritual ſtrength is to be put out to the utmoſt, as Creatures that act naturally do: The Sun ſhines, and the Fire burns to the utmoſt of their natural power. This is ſo neceſſary, that *David* a ſpiritual Worſhipper prays for it before he ſets upon acts of adoration, *Pſal.* 86. 18. *quicken us, that we may call upon thy Name:* As he was loth to have a drowzy faculty, he was loth to have a drowzy inſtrument, and would willingly have them as lively as himſelf, *Pſal.* 57. 8. *Awake up my glory; awake Pſaltery and Harp; I my ſelf will awake early*: How would this Divine Soul ſcrew himſelf up to God, and be turned into nothing but a holy flame? Our Souls muſt be boyling hot when we ſerve the Lord *. The heart doth no leſs

* Rom. 12. 11. Ζέοντες

burn

burn when it ſpirituality comes to God, than when God doth ſpiritually *approach* to it. * A *Nabals* heart, one as cold as a ſtone, cannot offer up a ſpiritual ſervice. * Luke 24.32.

Whatſoever is enjoyned us as our duty, ought to be performed with the greateſt intenſneſs of our Spirit. As it is our duty to pray, ſo it is our duty to pray with the moſt fervent importunity. Tis our duty to love God, but with the pureſt and moſt ſublime affections: Every Command of God requires the whole ſtrength of the Creature to be imployed in it. That love to God, wherein all our duty to God is ſummed up, is to be with all our ſtrength, with all our might, &c. * Tho in the Covenant of grace he hath mitigated the ſeverity of the Law, and requires not from us ſuch an elevation of our affections as was poſſible in the ſtate of innocence, yet God requires of us the utmoſt moral induſtry to raiſe our affections to a pitch, at leaſt equal to what they are in other things: What ſtrength of affection we naturally have, ought to be as much and more excited in acts of Worſhip than upon other occaſions, and our ordinary works. As there was an inactivity of Soul in worſhip and a quickneſs to ſin, when ſin had the dominion; ſo when the Soul is Spiritualized, the temper is changed; there is an inactivity to ſin and an ardor in duty: The more the Soul is *dead to ſin* the more it is *alive to God*, * and the more lively too in all that concerns God and his honour. For grace being a new ſtrength added to our natural, determines the affections to new objects, and excites them to a greater vigor. And as the hatred of ſin is more ſharp, the love to every thing that deſtroys the dominion of it, is more ſtrong. And acts of Worſhip may be reckoned as the chiefeſt batteries againſt the power of this inbred enemy, When the ſpirit is in the Soul, like the Rivers of waters flowing out of the belly, the Soul hath the activity of a River, and makes haſte to be ſwallowed up in God, as the ſtreams of the River in the Sea. Chriſt makes his people *Kings and Prieſts to God*; * Firſt Kings, then Prieſts: Gives firſt a royal temper of heart, that they may offer ſpiritual ſacrifices as Prieſts: Kings and Prieſts to God acting with a magnificent Spirit in all their Motions to him: We cannot be ſpiritual Prieſts, till we be Spiritual Kings. The Spirit appeared in the likeneſs of fire, and where he reſides, Communicates, like fire, purity and activity.

* Lady Falklands *life*, p. 130.

* Rom. 6. 11.

* Revel. 1. 6.

Dulneſs is againſt the light of Nature. I do not remember that the *Heathen* ever offered a Snail to any of their falſe Deities, nor an Aſs, but to *Priapus* their unclean Idol; but the *Perſians* Sacrificed to the *Sun* a *Horſe*, a ſwift and generous Creature. God provided againſt thoſe in the Law, Commanding an Aſſes Firſtling, the off-ſpring of a ſluggiſh Creature, to be *Redeemed*, or his *neck broke*; but by no means to be offered to him *. God is a ſpirit infinitely active, and therefore frozen and benummed frames are unſutable to him: He *rides upon a Cherub* and flies, he comes upon the *Wings of the Wind*, he rides upon a *ſwift Cloud*; * and therefore demands of us not a dull reaſon, but an active Spirit: God is a living God, therefore muſt have a lively ſervice. Chriſt is life, and ſlothful adorations are not fit to be offered up in the name of life. The worſhip of God is called wreſtling in Scripture, and *Paul* was a *ſtriver* in the ſervice of his Maſter, * *in an agony*. * Angels worſhip God ſpiritually with their Wings on; and when God Commands them to worſhip Chriſt, the next Scripture quoted is, that he makes them *flames of fire* *.

* Exod. 13. 13.

* Iſa. 19. 1.

* Col. 1. 29.

* ἀγωνιζόμενος

* Heb. 1. 7.

If it be thus, how may we charge our ſelves? What *Paul* ſaid of the ſenſual *Widow*,* that ſhe is *dead while ſhe lives*, we may ſay often of our ſelves, we are dead while we worſhip. Our hearts are in duty as the *Jews* were in deliverances, as thoſe *in a dream* *; by which unexpectedneſs, God ſhewed the greatneſs of his care and mercy; and we attend him as men in a dream whereby we diſcover our negligence and folly. This activity doth not conſiſt in outward acts. The body may be hot and the heart may be faint; but in an inward ſtirring, meltings, flights. In the higheſt raptures the body is moſt inſenſible. Strong Spiritual affections are abſtracted from outward ſenſe.

* 1 Tim. 5. 6.

* Pſa. 126. 1.

6. *Spiritual worſhip is performed with acting Spiritual habits.* When all the living ſprings of Grace are opened, as the Fountains of the deep were in the deluge, the Soul and all that is within it, all the ſpiritual impreſſes of God upon it, erect themſelves to *bleſs his holy name* *.

* Pſa. 103. 1.

This is neceſſary to make a Worſhip Spiritual. As natural agents are determined

to act ſutable to their proper nature; So rational agents, are to act conformable to a rational being: When there is a conformity between the act and the nature whence it flows, tis a good act in its kind; if it be rational, tis a good rational act, becauſe ſutable to its principle: As a *Man* endowed with *reaſon* muſt act ſutable to that endowment, and exerciſe his reaſon in his acting; So a *Chriſtian* endued with *Grace* muſt act ſutable to that nature, and exerciſe his Grace in his acting. Acts done by a natural inclination are no more human acts, than the natural acts of a beaſt may be ſaid to be human; Tho they are the acts of a Man, as he is the efficient cauſe of them, yet they are not human acts, becauſe they ariſe not from that principle of reaſon which denominates him a man. So acts of Worſhip performed by a bare exerciſe of reaſon, are not Chriſtian and ſpiritual acts, becauſe they come not from the principle which conſtitutes him a Chriſtian; Reaſon is not the principle, for then all rational Creatures would be Chriſtians: They ought therefore to be acts of a higher principle; Exerciſes of that Grace whereby Chriſtians are what they are: Not but that rational acts in worſhip are due to God; for Worſhip is due from us as men; and we are ſetled in that rank of being by our reaſon. Grace doth not exclude reaſon, but ennobles it, and calls it up to another form: But we muſt not reſt in a bare rational Worſhip, but exert that principle whereby we are Chriſtians. To Worſhip God with our reaſon, is to worſhip him as Men: To worſhip God with our grace, is to worſhip him as Chriſtians, and ſo ſpiritually: But to worſhip him only with our bodies, is no better than Brutes.

Our deſires of the word ere to iſſue from the regenerate principle, 1 Pet. 2. 2. *As new born babes deſire the ſincere milk of the word*: It ſeems to be not a compariſon but a reſtriction. All worſhip muſt have the ſame ſpring, and be the exerciſe of that principle; otherwiſe we can have no Communion with God. Friends that have the ſame habitual diſpoſitions, have a fundamental fitneſs for an agreeable converſe with one another; but if the temper wherein their likeneſs conſiſts, be languiſhing, and the ſtring out of tune, there is not an actual fitneſs; and the preſent indiſpoſition breaks the converſe, and renders the Company troubleſome. Tho we may have the habitual graces which compoſe in us a reſemblance to God, yet for want of acting thoſe ſutable diſpoſitions, we render our ſelves unfit for his converſe, and make the worſhip, which is fundamentally ſpiritual; to become actually carnal. As the Will cannot naturaly act to any object, but by the exerciſe of its affections, ſo the heart cannot ſpiritually act towards God, but by the exerciſe of Graces. This is Gods Muſick: Eph. 5. 19. *Singing and making melody to God in your hearts.* Singing and all other acts of Worſhip are outward, but the ſpiritual melody is *by grace in the heart*, Col. 3. 16. This renders it a ſpiritual Worſhip; for it is an effect of the fulneſs of the ſpirit in the ſoul, as *v.* 19. *But be filled with the Spirit:* The overflowing of the ſpirit in the heart, ſetting the ſoul of a believer thus on work to make a ſpiritual melody to God, ſhews that ſomething higher than bare reaſon is put in tune in the heart. Then is the fruit of the Garden pleaſant to Chriſt, when the holy ſpirit, *the North and South wind blow upon the ſpices*, and ſtrike out the fragrancy of them. * Since God is the Author of graces and beſtows them to have a glory from them, they are beſt employed about him and his ſervice. Tis fit he ſhould have the Cream of his own gifts. Without the exerciſe of grace we perform but a work of nature, and offer him a few dry bones without marrow.

* Cant. 4. 16.

The whole ſet of graces muſt be one way or other exerciſed. If any treble be wanting in a Lute, there will be a great defect in the Muſick. If any one ſpiritual ſtring be dull, the ſpiritual harmony of Worſhip will be ſpoiled.

And therefore,

1. Firſt, *Faith muſt be acted in worſhip. A confidence in God.* A naturnl worſhip cannot be performed without a natural confidence in the goodneſs of God. Whoſoever comes to him, muſt regard him as a *Rewarder* and a faithful Creator. * A Spiritual worſhip cannot be performed without an Evangelical confidence in him as a gracious Redeemer. To think him a Tyrant meditating revenge, damps the Soul; to regard him as a gracious King full of tender bowels, Spirits the affections to him. The *mercy* of God is the proper object of truſt, Pſal. 33. 18. *The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy.* The Worſhip of God in the old Teſtament is moſt deſcribed by *fear*: In the new Teſtamen by *faith*. Fear, or the worſhip of God and hope in his mercy are linkt together;

* Heb. 11. 6.

ther; when they go hand in hand, the accepting eye of God is upon us: When we do not truſt, we do not Worſhip. Thoſe of *Judah* had the Temple worſhip among them, eſpecially in *Joſiah*'s time, *Zeph.* 3. 2. the time of that Prophecy; yet it was accounted no worſhip, becauſe no *truſt* in the Worſhippers. Intereſt in God, cannot be improved without an exerciſe of Faith. The Goſpel worſhip is propheſied of, to be a confidence in God, as in a *Husband* more than in a Lord, *Hoſ.* 2. 16. *Thou ſhalt call me* Iſhi, *and ſhalt call me no more* Baali: *Thou ſhalt call me*, that is, thou ſhalt Worſhip me. Worſhip being often comprehended under Invocation. More confidence is to be exerciſed in a Husband or Father, than in a Lord or Maſter. * Zeph. 3. 2.

If a Man have not Faith, he is without Chriſt; and though a Man be in Chriſt by the habit of Faith, he performs a duty out of Chriſt without an act of Faith: Without the habit of Faith, our perſons are out of Chriſt; and without the exerciſe of Faith, the duties are out of Chriſt. As the want of Faith in a perſon is the death of the Soul; ſo the want of Faith in a ſervice, is the death of the Offering. Though a Man were at the coſt of an Ox; yet to kill it without bringing it to the *door of the Tabernacle*, was not a Sacrifice, but a Murder. The Tabernacle was a Type of Chriſt; and a look to him is neceſſary in every ſpiritual Sacrifice. As there muſt be faith to make any act, an act of obedience; ſo there muſt be Faith to make any act of Worſhip, ſpiritual. That ſervice is not ſpiritual, that is not vital; and it cannot be vital, without the exerciſe of a vital Principle: All ſpiritual *life* is *hid in Chriſt*, and drawn from him by *Faith**. Faith, as it hath relation to Chriſt, makes every act of worſhip, a living act, and conſequently a ſpiritual act. Habitual unbelief cuts us off from the Body of Chriſt, *Rom.* 11. 20. *Becauſe of unbelief they were broken off*; and a want of actuated belief breaks us off from a preſent communion with Chriſt in Spirit. As unbelief in us hinders Chriſt from doing any mighty work, ſo unbelief in us hinders us from doing any mighty ſpiritual duty. * Levit. 17. 3, 4. * Gal. 2. 20.

So that the exerciſe of Faith, and a confidence in God, is neceſſary to every duty.

2. *Love muſt be acted to render a worſhip ſpiritual.* Though God commanded love in the Old-Teſtament; yet the manner of giving the Law, beſpoke more of Fear than Love. The diſpenſation of the Law was with *Fire*, *Thunder*, &c. proper to raiſe horror, and benum the Spirit; which effect it had upon the *Iſraelites*, when they deſired that God would ſpeak no more to them. Grace is the Genius of the Goſpel, proper to excite the affection of *Love*. The Law was given by the *diſpoſition of Angels*, with ſigns to amaze; the Goſpel was uſher'd in with the *ſongs of Angels*, compoſed of peace and good will, calculated to raviſh the Soul. Inſtead of the terrible voice of the Law, *Do this and live*: The comfortable voice of the Goſpel is *Grace*, *Grace*: Upon this account, the principle of the Old-Teſtament was Fear; and the Worſhip often expreſt by the Fear of God. The principle of the New-Teſtament is Love. The *Mount* Sinai *gendreth to Bondage**; Mount *Sion*, from whence the Goſpel or Evangelical Law goes forth, gendreth to Liberty; and therefore the *Spirit of Bondage unto Fear*, as the Property of the Law is oppoſed to the ſtate of *Adoption*, the principle of Love, as the property of the Goſpel*: And therefore the worſhip of God under the Goſpel, or New-Teſtament, is oftener expreſt by Love than fear; as proceeding from higher principles, and acting nobler paſſions. In this ſtate, we are to *ſerve him without fear* *; without a Bondage-fear; not without a fear of unworthy treating him; with a *fear of his goodneſs* as it is propheſied of*: Goodneſs is not the object of terror, but reverence. God in the Law, had more the Garb of a Judge; in the Goſpel, of a Father: The name of a Father is ſweeter, and beſpeaks more of affection. As their ſervices were with a feeling of the thunders of the Law in their Conſciences; ſo is our worſhip to be with a ſenſe of Goſpel-Grace in our Spirits: Spiritual worſhip is that therefore, which is exerciſed with a Spiritual and heavenly affection, proper to the Goſpel. The heart ſhould be enlarged, according to the liberty the Goſpel gives of drawing neer to God as a Father: As he gives us the nobler relation of Children, we are to act the nobler qualities of Children. Love ſhould act according to its nature, which is deſire of Union; deſire of a moral union by Affections, as well as a myſtical union by Faith; as flame aſpires to reach flame, and become one with it. In every act of worſhip, * Gal. 4. 44. * Rom. 8. 15. * Luke 1. 74. * Hoſ. 9. 5.

we ſhould endeavour to be united to God, and become one Spirit with him: This Grace doth ſpiritualize Worſhip: In that one word *Love*, God hath wrapt up all the devotion he requires of us: 'Tis the total ſum of the firſt Table, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God.* 'Tis to be acted in every thing we do: But in Worſhip, our hearts ſhould more ſolemnly riſe up and acknowledge him amiable and lovely, ſince the Law is ſtript of its curſing power, and made ſweet in the blood of the Redeemer. Love is a thing acceptable of it ſelf; but nothing acceptable without it. The gifts of one Man to another are ſpiritualized by it. We would not value a Preſent, without the affection of the Donor: Every Man would lay claim to the love of others, though he would not to their Poſſeſſions. Love is Gods right in every ſervice, and the nobleſt thing we can beſtow upon him in our adorations of him. Gods gifts to us are not ſo eſtimable, without his love; nor our ſervices valuable by him, without the exerciſe of a choice affection. *Hezekiah* regarded not his deliverance, without the love of the Deliverer; *In love to my Soul thou haſt delivered me**: So doth God ſay, in love to my honour thou haſt Worſhipped me.

* Iſa. 38. 17.

So that Love muſt be acted, to render our worſhip ſpiritual.

3. *A ſpiritual ſenſibleneſs of our own weakneſs, is neceſſary to make our worſhip ſpiritual.* Affections to God cannot be without relentings in our ſelves. When the eye is ſpiritually fixed upon a ſpiritual God, the heart will mourn, that the worſhip is no more ſpiritually ſutable. The more we act love upon God, as amiable and gracious, the more we ſhould exerciſe grief in our ſelves, as we are vile and offending. Spiritual worſhip is a melting worſhip, as well as an elevating worſhip; It exalts God, and debaſeth the Creature. The Publican was more ſpiritual in his humble addreſs to God, when the Phariſee was wholly carnal with his ſwelling language. A ſpiritual love in worſhip will make us grieve, that we have given him ſo little, and could give him no more. 'Tis a part of ſpiritual duty to bewail our carnality mixed with it; as we receive mercies ſpiritually, when we receive them with a ſenſe of Gods goodneſs and our own vileneſs; in the ſame manner we render a ſpiritual worſhip.

4. *Spiritual deſires for God render the ſervice ſpiritual.* When the Soul *follows hard after him** ; purſues after God as a God of Infinite communicative goodneſs, with ſighs and groans unutterable. A ſpiritual Soul ſeems to be transformed into hunger, and thirſt, and becomes nothing but deſire. A carnal Worſhipper is taken with the beauty and magnificence of the Temple; a ſpiritual Worſhipper deſires to ſee the glory of God in the Sanctuary *; He *pants* after God: As he came to worſhip, to find God, ſo he boyls up in deſires for God, and is loth to go from it without God, *the living God*, Pſal. 42. 2. He would ſee the *Urim* and the *Thummim*; the unuſual ſparkling of the ſtones upon the High-prieſts Breaſt-plate. That deſerves not the title of ſpiritual worſhip, when the Soul makes no longing inquiries; *ſaw you him whom my Soul loves?* A ſpiritual worſhip is, when our deſires are chiefly for God in the worſhip: As *David* deſires to dwell in the Houſe of the Lord; but his deſire is not terminated there, but to behold the *beauty* of the Lord*, and taſte the raviſhing ſweetneſs of his preſence. No doubt but *Elijah*'s deſires for the enjoyment of God, while he was mounting to Heaven, were as fiery as the Chariot wherein he was carried. Unutterable groans acted in worſhip are the fruit of the Spirit, and certainly render it a ſpiritual ſervice*. Strong appetites are agreeable to God, and prepare us to eat the fruit of worſhip. A ſpiritual *Paul* preſſeth forward to know Chriſt, and the power of his Reſurrection; and a ſpiritual Worſhipper actually aſpires in every duty to know God, and the power of his Grace. To deſire worſhip as an end, is carnal; to deſire it as a means, and act deſires in it for communion with God in it, is ſpiritual, and the fruit of a ſpiritual life.

* Pſa. 63. 8.

* Pſal. 63. 2.

* Pſal. 27. 4.

* Rom. 8. 26.

5. *Thankfulneſs, and admiration are to be exerciſed in ſpiritual ſervices.* This is a worſhip of Spirits. *Praiſe* is the adoration of the *bleſſed Angels**, and of glorified Spirits, *Rev.* 4. 11. *Thou art worthy O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power:* And *Rev.* 5. 13, 14. they worſhip him, aſcribing *Bleſſing, Honour, Glory and Power to him that ſits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.* Other acts of worſhip are confined to this Life, and leave us as ſoon as we have ſet our foot in Heaven; There no notes but this of Praiſe are warbled out: The Power, Wiſdom, Love and Grace in the diſpenſation of the Goſpel, ſeat themſelves in the thoughts and tongues of bleſ-

* Iſa. 6. 3.

bleſſed Souls. Can a worſhip on Earth be ſpiritual, that hath no mixture of an eternal heavenly duty with it? The worſhip of God in Innocence had been chiefly an admiration of him in the works of Creation; and ſhould not our Evangelical worſhip be an admiration of him in the work of Redemption, which is a reſtoration to a better ſtate? After the petitioning for pardoning Grace*, there is a rendring the *Calves* or Heifers *of our lips*, alluding to the Heifers uſed in Euchariſtical Sacrifices. The praiſe of God is the choiceſt Sacrifice and worſhip, under a diſpenſation of redeeming Grace; This is the prime and eternal part of worſhip under the Goſpel. The *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. 149. and 150. ſpeaking of the Goſpel-times, ſpurs on to this kind of worſhip; *Sing to the Lord a new Song*; *Let the Children of Zion be joyful in their King*; *Let the Saints be joyful in glory, and ſing aloud upon their beds*; *Let the high praiſes of God be in their mouths*: He begins and ends both *Pſalms* with *praiſe ye the Lord.* That cannot be a ſpiritual and evangelical worſhip, that hath nothing of the praiſe of God in the heart. The conſideration of Gods adorable perfections diſcovered in the Goſpel, will make us come to him with more ſerioufneſs; beg bleſſings of him with more confidence; fly to him with a winged Faith and Love, and more ſpiritually glorifie him in our attendances upon him. * Hoſ. 14. 2.

7. *Spiritual Worſhip is performed with delight.* The Evangelical worſhip is prophetically ſignified by keeping the Feaſt of Tabernacles; *they ſhall go up from year to year, to worſhip the King the Lord of Hoſts, and to keep the Feaſt of Tabernacles*: Why that Feaſt, when there were other Feaſts obſerved by the *Jews*? That was a Feaſt celebrated with the greateſt joy; typical of the gladneſs which was to be under the exhibition of the *Meſſiah*, and a thankful commemoration of the Redemption wrought by him. It was to be celebrated five days after the *ſolemn day of Atonement*, Levit. 23. 34. compared with *v.* 27. wherein there was one of the ſolemneſt types of the Sacrifice of the death of Chriſt. In this Feaſt they commemorated their exchange of *Egypt* for *Canaan*; the Manna wherewith they were fed; the Water out of the Rock wherewith they were refreſht: In remembrance of this, they poured water on the ground, pronouncing thoſe words in *Iſaiah*, they ſhall *draw waters out of the Wells of Salvation*, which our Saviour refers to himſelf, *John* 7. 37. inviting them to him, to drink, *upon the laſt day, the great day of the Feaſt* of Tabernacles, wherein this ſolemn Ceremony was obſerved. Since we are freed by the death of the Redeemer from the Curſes of the Law, God requires of us a Joy in ſpiritual priviledges. A ſad frame in worſhip, gives the lye to all Goſpel-liberty; to the Purchaſe of the Redeemers Death; The Triumphs of his Reſurrection: 'Tis a carriage, as if we were under the influences of the legal Fire and Lightning, and an entring a Proteſt againſt the Freedom of the Goſpel. The Evangelical worſhip is a Spiritual worſhip; and *Praiſe*, *Joy* and *Delight* are propheſied of, as great ingredients in attendance on Goſpel Ordinances, *Iſa.* 12. 3, 4, 5. What was occaſion of terror in the Worſhip of God under the Law, is the occaſion of delight in the worſhip of God under the Goſpel. The Juſtice and Holineſs of God ſo terrible in the Law, becomes comfortable under the Goſpel, ſince they have feaſted themſelves on the active and paſſive obedience of the Redeemer. The approach is to God as gracious, not to God as unpacified; as a Son to a Father, not as a Criminal to a Judge. Under the Law God was repreſented as a Judge, remembring their Sin in their Sacrifices, and repreſenting the puniſhment they had merited; in the Goſpel as a Father, accepting the Atonement, and publiſhing the Reconciliation wrought by the Redeemer. Delight in God, is a Goſpel frame; therefore the more joyful, the more ſpiritual: The *Sabbath is to be a delight*; not only in regard of the Day, but in regard of the Duties of it*; in regard of the marvellous work he wrought on it; raiſing up our bleſſed Redeemer on that day, whereby a foundation was laid for the rendring our perſons and ſervices acceptable to God, *Pſal.* 118. 24. *This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will be glad and rejoyce in it.* A lumpiſh frame becomes not a day and a duty, that hath ſo noble and ſpiritual a mark upon it. * Zach. 14. 16. * Iſa. 58. 13.

The *Angels* in the firſt act of worſhip after the Creation, were highly joyful, *Job.* 38. 7. They *ſhouted for joy*, &c.

The Saints have perticularly acted this in their Worſhip. *David* would not content

tent himſelf with an approach to the Altar, without going to God as his *exceeding joy*, Pſal. 43. 4. My triumphant joy: When he danced before the Ark, he ſeems to be transformed into delight and pleaſure, 2 *Sam.* 6. 14, 16. He had as much delight in Worſhip, as others had in their Harveſt and Vintage. And thoſe that took joyfully the ſpoiling of their Goods, would as joyfully attend upon the Communications of God. Where there is a fulneſs of the Spirit, there is a *making melody to God in the heart* *; and where there is an acting of love, (as there is in all ſpiritual ſervices) the proper fruit of it is joy in a neer approach to the Object of the Souls affection. Love is *appetitus unionis*: The more love, the more delight in the approachings of God to the Soul, or the out-goings of the Soul to God. As the Object of Worſhip is amiable in a ſpiritual eye, ſo the means tending to a communion with this Object are delightful in the exerciſe: Where there is no delight in a duty, there is no delight in the Object of the duty; The more of grace, the more of pleaſure in the actings of it: As the more of nature there is in any natural Agent, the more of pleaſure in the act; So the more Heavenly the Worſhip, the more ſpiritual. Delight is the frame and temper of Glory. A heart filled up to the brim with joy, is a heart *filled* up to the brim *with the Spirit*: *Joy* is the fruit of the Holy-Ghoſt. *

* Eph. 5. 18, 19.

* Gal. 5. 22.

1. *Not the joy of Gods diſpenſation flowing from God, but a gracious active joy ſtreaming to God.* There is a joy, when the Comforts of God are dropt into the Soul, as Oyle upon the Wheel; which indeed makes the faculties move with more ſpeed and activity in his ſervice, like the *Chariots of Aminadab*: And a Soul may ſerve God in the ſtrength of this taſte, and its delight terminated in the ſenſible comfort. This is not the joy I mean, but ſuch a joy that hath God for its Object, delighting in him as the term, in worſhip as the way to him: The firſt is Gods diſpenſation, the other is our duty; The firſt is an act of Gods favour to us, the ſecond a ſprout of habitual grace in us. The Comforts we have from God, may elevate our duties; but the grace we have within, doth ſpiritualize our duties.

2. *Nor is every delight an argument of a ſpiritual ſervice.* All the requiſites to worſhip muſt be taken in. A man may invent a worſhip, and delight in it; as *Micah* in the adoration of his Idol, when he was glad he had got both an *Ephod* and a *Levit* *. As a man may have a contentment in ſin, ſo he may have a contentment in Worſhip; not becauſe it is a worſhip of God, but the worſhip of his own invention, agreeable to his own humor and deſign, as *Iſa.* 58. 2. 'tis ſaid, they *delighted in approaching to God*, but it was for carnal ends. Novelty ingenders Complacency; but it muſt be a worſhip wherein God will delight; and that muſt be a worſhip according to his own Rule and infinite Wiſdom, and not our ſhallow fancies.

* Judges 17.

God requires a cheerfulneſs in his ſervice, eſpecially under the Goſpel, where he ſits upon a Throne of Grace; diſcovers himſelf in his amiableneſs, and acts the Covenant of Grace, and the ſweet relation of a Father. The Prieſts of old were not to ſully themſelves with any ſorrow, when they were in the exerciſe of their functions. God put a bar to the natural affections of *Aaron* and his Sons, when *Nadab* and *Abihu* had been cut off by a ſevere hand of God *. Every true Chriſtian in a higher order of Prieſt-hood, is a perſon dedicated to joy and peace, offering himſelf a lively Sacrifice of praiſe and thankſgiving: And there is no Chriſtian duty, but is to be ſet off and ſeaſoned with cheerfulneſs: He that loves a cheerful Giver in acts of Charity, requires no leſs a cheerful Spirit in acts of Worſhip: As this is an ingredient in worſhip, ſo it is the means to make your Spirits intent in worſhip. When the heart triumphs in the conſideration of Divine excellency and goodneſs, it will be angry at any thing that offers to jog and diſturb it.

* Lev. 10. 6.

8. *Spiritual worſhip is to be performed*, though with a delight in God; yet *with a deep reverence of God.* The Goſpel in advancing the ſpirituality of worſhip, takes off the terror, but not the reverence of God; which is nothing elſe in its own nature, but a due and high eſteem of the excellency of a thing according to the nature of it: And therefore the Goſpel preſenting us with more illuſtrious notices of the glorious nature of God, is ſo far from indulging any diſeſteem of him, that it requires of us a greater reverence ſutable to the height of its diſcovery, above what could be ſpell'd in the Book of Creation: The Goſpel worſhip is therefore expreſt by trembling, *Hoſ.* 11. 10. *They ſhall walk after the Lord; he ſhall roar like a Lion; when he ſhall roar*

roar, then the Children ſhall tremble from the Weſt. When the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah* ſhall lift up his powerful voice in the Goſpel, the Weſtern *Gentiles* ſhall run trembling to walk after the Lord. God hath alway attended his greateſt manifeſtations with remarkable Characters of Majeſty, to create a reverence in his Creature: He cauſed the *wind to March before him*; to cut the Mountain, when he manifeſted himſelf to *Elijah*, 1 Kings 19. 11. *A Wind and a Cloud of Fire*, before that magnificent viſion to *Ezekiel*, Ezek. 1. 4, 5. *Thunders and Lightnings* before the giving the Law, *Exod.* 19. 18. And a *mighty wind* before the giving the Spirit, *Acts* 2. God requires of us an aw of him in the very act of performance. The Angels are pure, and cannot fear him as Sinners, but in *reverence they cover their Faces* when they ſtand before him *: His power ſhould make us reverence him, as we are Creatures; His Juſtice as we are Sinners; His goodneſs as we are reſtored Creatures. *[God is cloathed with unſpeakable Majeſty; the glory of his face ſhines brighter than the Lights of Heaven in their beauty. Before him the Angels tremble, and the Heavens melt; we ought not therefore to come before him with the Sacrifice of Fools, nor tender a duty to him, without falling low upon our faces, and bowing the knees of our hearts in token of reverence.] Not a ſlaviſh fear, like that of Devils; but a *Godly fear*, like that of Saints*, joyned with a ſenſe of an *unmoveable Kingdom* becometh us: And this the *Apoſtle* calls a grace neceſſary to make our ſervice acceptable: And therefore the grace neceſſary to make it ſpiritual, ſince nothing finds admiſſion to God, but what is of a ſpiritual nature. The conſideration of his glorious nature, ſhould imprint an awful reſpect upon our Souls to him: His goodneſs ſhould make his Majeſty more adorable to us, as his Majeſty makes his goodneſs more admirable in his condeſcenſions to us. As God is a ſpirit, our worſhip muſt be ſpiritual; and being he is the ſupream ſpirit, our worſhip muſt be reverential: We muſt obſerve the State he takes upon him in his Ordinances; *He is in Heaven, we upon the Earth*; we muſt not therefore be *haſty to utter any thing before God*, Eccleſ. 5. 7. Conſider him a Spirit in the higheſt Heavens, and our ſelves ſpirits dwelling in a dreggy Earth. Looſe and gariſh frames debaſe him to our own quality: Slight poſtures of Spirit, intimate him to be ſlight and mean Being: Our being in Covenant with him, muſt not lower our awful apprehenſions of him: As he is *the Lord thy God*, 'tis a *glorious and fearful* Name, *or wonderful* *: Though he lay by his Juſtice to Believers, he doth not lay by *his Majeſty*, When we have a confidence in him, becauſe he is the Lord our God; we muſt have awful thoughts of his Majeſty, becauſe his name is glorious. God is *terrible* from his Holy-places in regard of the great things he doth for his *Iſrael* *: We ſhould behave our ſelves with that inward honour and reſpect of him, as if he were preſent to our bodily eyes: The higher apprehenſions we have of his Majeſty, the greater aw will be upon our hearts in his preſence, and the greater ſpirituality in our acts. We ſhould manage our hearts ſo, as if we had a view of God in his heavenly glory.

* Iſa. 6. 2.
* *Daille* Sur. 3. Jean. P. 150.
* Heb. 12. 28.
* Deut. 28. 58.
* Pſal. 68. 35.

9. *Spiritual Worſhip is to be performed with humility in our Spirits.* This is to follow upon the reverence of God. As we are to have high thoughts of God, that we may not debaſe him; we muſt have low thoughts of our ſelves, not to vaunt before him. When we have right notions of the Divine Majeſty; we ſhall be as Worms in our own thoughts, and creep as Worms into his preſence: We can never conſider him in his glory, but we have a fit opportunity to reflect upon our ſelves, and conſider how baſely we revolted from him, and how graciouſly we are reſtored by him: As the Goſpel affords us greater diſcoveries of Gods nature, and ſo enhanceth our reverence of him; ſo it helps us to a fuller underſtanding of our own vileneſs and weakneſs, and therefore is proper to ingender Humility: The more ſpiritual and evangelical therefore any ſervice is, the more humble it is. That is a ſpiritual ſervice, that doth moſt manifeſt the glory of God; and this cannot be manifeſted by us, without manifeſting our own emptineſs and nothingneſs. The Heathens were ſenſible of the neceſſity of Humility by the Light of Nature *; after the Name of God ſignified by Ἐι inſcribed on the Temple at *Delphos*, followed γνῶθι σεαυτον whereby was inſinuated, that when we have to do with God, who is the only *Ens*, we ſhould behave our ſelves with a ſenſe of our own infirmity, and infinite diſtance from him. As a perſon, ſo a duty leavened with Pride, hath nothing of ſincerity, and therefore nothing of ſpirituality in it, *Hab.* 2. 4. *His Soul which is lifted up, is not*

* *Plutarch* Moral. p. 344.

not upright in him. The *Elders* that were crowned by God to be *Kings* and *Prieſts*, to offer ſpiritual Sacrifices; uncrown themſelves in their worſhip of him, and caſt down their Ornaments at *his feet* *: The Greek word to worſhip προσκυνεῖν ſignifies to creep like a Dog upon his belly before his Maſter; to lie low. How deep ſhould our ſenſe be of the priviledge of Gods admitting us to his worſhip, and affording us ſuch a mercy under our deſerts of wrath? How mean ſhould be our thoughts, both of our perſons and performances? How patiently ſhould we wait upon God for the ſucceſs of worſhip? How did *Abraham* the Father of the Faithful, equal himſelf to the Earth, when he ſupplicated the God of Heaven, and devote himſelf to him under the title of very *Duſt* and *Aſhes**? *Iſaiah* did but behold an Evangelical Apparition of God and the Angels worſhipping him, and preſently reflects upon his *own uncleanneſs**. Gods preſence both requires and cauſes Humility. How lowly is *David* in his own opinion, after a magnificent duty performed by himſelf and his people? 1 *Chron.* 29. 14. *Who am I? And what is my people, that we ſhould be able to offer ſo willingly?* The more ſpiritual the Soul is in its carriage to God, the more humble it is; and the more gracious God is in his communications to the Soul, the lower it lies.

* Revel. 4. 10. *compared with* 5. *and the* 10

* Gen. 18. 27.

* Iſa. 6. 5.

God commanded not the fiercer Creatures to be offered to him in Sacrifices, but Lambs and Kids, meek and lowly Creatures; none that had ſtings in their tails or venom in their tongues*. The *meek Lamb* was the daily Sacrifice: The *Doves* were to be offered by *Pairs*: God would not have *Hony* mixed with any *Sacrifice*, Levit. 2. 11. That breeds Choler, and Choler Pride; but *Oyle*, he commanded, to be uſed; that ſupples and mollifies the parts. Swelling Pride, and boiling Paſſions render our ſervices carnal; they cannot be ſpiritual, without an humble ſweetneſs and an innocent ſincerity: One grain of this tranſcends the moſt coſtly Sacrifices. A *Contrite Heart* puts a gloſs upon Worſhip*. The departure of men and Angels from God, began in Pride; Our approaches and return to him muſt begin in Humility: And therefore all thoſe Graces which are bottom'd on Humility, muſt be acted in worſhip, as Faith, and a ſenſe of our own indigence. Our bleſſed Saviour, the moſt ſpiritual Worſhipper, proſtrated himſelf in the Garden with the greateſt lowlineſs, and offered himſelf upon the Croſs a Sacrifice with the greateſt humility. Melted Souls in worſhip, have the moſt ſpiritual conformity to the perſon of Chriſt in the ſtate of humiliation, and his deſign in that ſtate: As worſhip without it is not ſutable to God, ſo neither is it advantageous for us. A time of worſhip, is a time of Gods Communication. The Veſſel muſt be melted to receive the Mould it is deſigned for: Softned wax is fitteſt to receive a ſtamp, and a ſpiritually melted Soul fitteſt to receive a ſpiritual impreſſion. We cannot perform duty in an evangelical and ſpiritual ſtrain, without the meltingneſs and meanneſs in our ſelves which the Goſpel requires.

* *Caudam aculeatam vel linguam nigram* Alexand. *ab* Alex. *l.* 3. *c.* 12.

* Pſal. 51. 16, 17.

10. *Spiritual worſhip is to be performed with Holineſs.* God is a holy Spirit; a likeneſs to God muſt attend the worſhipping of God, as he is: Holineſs is alway in ſeaſon; *It becomes his houſe for ever**. We can never ſerve the *living God*, till we *have Conſciences purged from dead works*, Heb. 9. 14. Dead works in our Conſciences are unſutable to God, an eternal living Spirit. The more mortified the heart, the more quickned the ſervice. Nothing can pleaſe an infinite Purity, but that which is pure: Since God is in his Glory, in his Ordinances; we muſt not be in our Filthineſs. The Holineſs of his Spirit doth ſparkle in his Ordinances; The holineſs of our Spirits ought alſo to ſparkle in our obſervance of them. The *Holineſs* of God is moſt celebrated in the worſhip of Angels*: Spiritual worſhip ought to be like Angelical: That cannot be with Souls totally impure. As there muſt be perfect holineſs to make a worſhip perfectly ſpiritual; ſo there muſt be ſome degree of holineſs to make it in any meaſure ſpiritual. God would have all the Utenſils of the *Sanctuary* employed about his ſervice to be holy: The *Inwards* of the Sacrifice were to be rinſed thrice*. The Crop and Feathers of Sacrificed Doves, was to be hung Eaſtward towards the entrance of the Temple, at a diſtance from the Holy of Holies where the preſence of God was moſt eminent*. When *Aaron* was to go into the Holy of Holies, he was to *ſanctifie himſelf* in an extraordinary manner*. The Prieſts were to be *bare footed* in the Temple, in the exerciſe of their Office; ſhoes alway were to be put off upon holy ground: *Look to thy foot when thou goeſt to the Houſe of God,*

* Pſal. 93. 5.

* Iſa. 6. 3. Revel. 4. 8.

* *As the Jewiſh Doctors obſerve on* Lev. 1. 9.
* Lev. 1. 16.
* Lev. 16. 4.

God, ſaith the wiſe man, *Eccleſ.* 5. 1. Strip the affections, the feet of the Soul, of all the dirt contracted; diſcard all earthly and baſe thoughts from the heart. A Beaſt was not to touch the *Mount Sinai*, without loſing his Life: Nor can we come near the Throne with brutiſh affections, without loſing the life and fruit of the worſhip. An unholy Soul degrades himſelf from a Spirit to a Brute, and the worſhip from ſpiritual to brutiſh. If any unmortified ſin be found in the Life, as it was in the comers to the Temple, it taints and pollutes the *Worſhip**. All worſhip is an acknowledgment of the excellency of God as he is *holy*: Hence it is called a *ſanctifying Gods Name*: How can any perſon ſanctifie Gods Name, that hath not a holy reſemblance to his Nature? If he be not holy as he is holy, he cannot worſhip him according to his excellency in Spirit and in Truth: No worſhip is ſpiritual wherein we have not a communion with God. But what intercourſe can there be between a holy God, and an impure Creature; between Light and darkneſs? We have no fellowſhip with him in any ſervice, unleſs *we walk in the Light*, in ſervice and out of ſervice, as he is Light*. The Heathen thought not their Sacrifices agreeable to God, without waſhing their hands, whereby they ſignified the preparation of their hearts, before they made the Oblation: Clean hands without a pure heart, ſignifie nothing: The frame of our hearts muſt anſwer the purity of the outward Symbols. *Pſal.* 26. 6. *I will waſh my hands in Innocence, ſo will I compaſs thine Altar, O Lord:* He would obſerve the appointed Ceremonies, but not without *cleanſing his heart as well as his hands.* Vain Man is apt to reſt upon outward acts and rites of worſhip: But this muſt alway be practiſed: The words are in the preſent Tenſe, *I waſh, I compaſs.* Purity in worſhip ought to be our continual Care. If we would perform a ſpiritual ſervice, wherein we would have communion with God, it muſt be in *Holineſs*: If we would walk with Chriſt, it muſt be in *white**; alluding to the white Garments the Prieſts put on, when they went to perform their ſervice: As without this we cannot ſee God in Heaven, ſo neither can we ſee the beauty of God in his own Ordinances.

* Iſa. 1. 15. * Jer. 7. 9, 10. * 1 John 1. 7. * Revel. 3. 4.

11. *Spiritual Worſhip is performed with ſpiritual ends, with raiſed aims at the glory of God.* No duty can be ſpiritual that hath a carnal aim: Where God is the ſole Object, he ought to be the principal End: In all our actions he is to be our End, as he is the principle of our Being; much more in Religious Acts, as he is the Object of our worſhip. The worſhip of God in Scripture, is expreſt by the *ſeeking of him**: *Him*, not our ſelves; all is to be referred to God. As we are *not to live to our ſelves*, that being the ſign of a carnal ſtate; ſo we are not to worſhip for our ſelves, *Rom.* 14. 7, 8. As all actions are denominated good from their end, as well as their object; ſo upon the ſame account they are denominated ſpiritual. The end ſpiritualizeth our natural actions; much more our religious: Then are our faculties devoted to him when they center in him. If the intention be evil, there is nothing but darkneſs in the whole ſervice, *Luke* 11. 34. The firſt inſtitution of the *Sabbath*, the ſolemn day for worſhip, was to contemplate the glory of God in his ſtupendous works of Creation, and render him a homage for them, *Revel.* 4. 11. *Thou art worthy O Lord, to receive Honour, Glory and Power; for thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are and where Created.* No worſhip can be returned, without a glorifying of God; and we cannot actually glorifie him, without direct aims at the promoting his honour. As we have immediately to do with God, ſo we are immediately to mind the praiſe of God. As we are not to content our ſelves with habitual grace, but be rich in the exerciſe of it in worſhip; ſo we are not to acquieſce in habitual aims at the glory of God, without the actual outflowings of our hearts in thoſe aims.

* Heb. 11. 6.

'Tis natural for Man to worſhip God for *ſelf*: Self-righteouſneſs is the rooted aim of Man in his worſhip ſince his revolt from God, and being ſenſible it is not to be found in his natural actions, he ſeeks for it in his moral and religious. By the firſt Pride we flung God off from being our Soveraign, and from being our end; ſince, a Phariſaical Spirit ſtruts it in nature, not only to do things to be ſeen of men, but to be admired by God, *Iſa.* 58. 3. *Wherefore have we faſted and thou takeſt no knowledge?* This is to have God worſhip them, inſtead of being worſhipped by them. *Cain*'s carriage after his Sacrifice, teſtified ſome baſe end in his worſhip; he came not to God as a Subject to a Soveraign, but as if he had been the Soveraign, and God

the Subject; and when his design is not answered, and his desire not gratified, he proves more a Rebel to God, and a Murderer of his Brother. Such base scents will rise up in our worship from the body of death which cleaves to us, and mix themselves with our services, as Weeds with the Fish in the Net. *David* therefore, after his People had offered willingly to the Temple, begs of God, that their
* 1 Chr. 29. 18. *hearts might be prepared to him** ; that their hearts might stand right to God, without any squinting to self-ends.

Some present themselves to God, as poor men offers a present to a great person, not to honour him, but to gain for themselves a reward richer than their gift. *What profit is it that we have kept his Ordinance*, &c. ? Mal. 3. 14. Some worship him, intending thereby to make him amends for the wrong they have done him, wipe off their scores, and satisfie their debts; as though a spiritual wrong could be recompensed with a bodily service, and an infinite Spirit be outwitted and appeased by a carnal flattery. *Self* is the Spirit of Carnality: To pretend a homage to God, and intend only the advantage of *self*, is rather to mock him, than worship him. When we believe that we ought to be satisfied, rather than God glorified; we set God below our selves, imagine that he should submit his own honour to our advantage: We make our selves more glorious than God, as though we were not made for him, but he hath a Being only for us; this is to have a very low esteem of the Majesty of God. Whatsoever any man aims at in worship above the glory of God, that he forms as an Idol to himself instead of God, and sets up a Golden Image. God counts not this as a Worship. The Offerings made in the Wilderness for forty years together, God esteemed as not offered to him, *Amos* 5. 25. *Have you offered to me Sacrifices and Offerings in the Wilderness forty years, O House of* Israel ? They did it not to God, but to themselves; for their own security, and the attainment of the possession of the promised Land. A spiritual Worshipper performs not worship for some hopes of carnal advantage; he uses ordinances as means to bring God and his Soul together; to be more fitted to honour God in the world, in his perticular place: When he hath been inflamed and humble in any address or duty, he gives God the glory; his heart suites the doxology at the end of the Lords-prayer, ascribes the Kingdom, Power and glory to God alone; and if any viper of Pride starts out upon him, he endeavours presently to shake it off. That which was the first end of our framing, ought to be the chief end of our acting towards God: But when men have the same ends in worship as Brutes, the satisfaction of a sensitive part; the service is no more than brutish. The acting for a sensitive end, is unworthy of the Majesty of God to whom we address, and unbecoming a rational Creature. The acting for a sensitive end, is not rational, much less can it be a spiritual service; though the Act may be good in it self yet not good in the Agent, because he wants a due end: We are then spiritual, when we have the same end in our redeemed services, as God had in his redeeming love, *viz.* his own glory.

12. *Spiritual service is offered to God in the name of Christ.* Those are only *spiritual*
* 1 Pet. 2. 5. *Sacrifices, that are offered up to God by Jesus Christ** ; that are the fruits of the Sanctification of the Spirit, and offered in the mediation of the Son: As the Altar sanctifies the gift, so doth Christ spiritualize our services for Gods acceptation; as the Fire upon the Altar separated the airy and finer parts of the sacrifice from the terreen and earthly: This is the *Golden Altar* upon which the Prayers of the Saints are offered
* Revel. 8. 3. up *before the Throne**. As all that we have from God streams through his blood: so all that we give to God ascends by vertue of his merits. All the blessings God gave
* Psal. 134. 3. *The Lord bless thee out of* Sion. to the *Israelites* came out of *Sion**, that is, from the Gospel hid under the Law; all the duties we present to God are to be presented in *Sion*, in an evangelical manner: All our worship must be bottomed on Christ. God hath intended that we should *honour the Son as we honour the Father*: As we honour the Father by offering our service only to him, so we are to honour the Son by offering it only in his name: In him alone God is well pleased, because in him alone he finds our services spiritual and worthy of acceptation: We must therefore take fast hold of him with our Spirits, and the faster we hold him, the more spiritual is our worship. To do any thing in the name of Christ, is not to believe the worship shall be accepted for it self, but to have our eye fixed upon Christ for the acceptance of it, and not to rest upon the work done as carnal people are apt to do. The Creatures present their acknowledgments

ledgments to God by Man; and man can only preſent his by Chriſt. It was utterly unlawful after the building of the Temple, to ſacrifice any where elſe: The Temple being a Type of Chriſt, it is utterly unlawful for us to preſent our ſervices in any other name than his.

This is the way to be ſpiritual. If we conſider God out of Chriſt, we can have no other notions but thoſe of horror and bondage. We behold him a Spirit, but environ'd with Juſtice and Wrath for ſinners: But the conſideration of him in Chriſt, vails his Juſtice; draws forth his Merey; repreſents him more a Father than a Judge. In Chriſt the aſpect of Juſtice is changed, and by that the temper of the Creature; ſo that in and by this Mediator, we *can have a ſpiritual boldneſs, and acceſs to God with confidence* *; whereby the Spirit is kept from benummedneſs, and diſtraction; and our Souls quickned and refined. The thoughts kept upon Chriſt in a duty of Worſhip, quickly elevates the Soul, and ſpiritualizeth the whole ſervice. Sin makes our ſervices black, and the blood of Chriſt makes both our perſons and ſervices white. * Eph. 3. 12.

To conclude this Head.

God is a Spirit infinitely happy, therefore we muſt approach to him with cheerfulneſs; He is a Spirit of infinite Majeſty, therefore we muſt come before him with reverence; He is a Spirit infinitely high, therefore we muſt offer up our Sacrifices with the deepeſt humility; He is a Spirit infinitely holy, therefore we muſt addreſs with purity; He is a Spirit infinitely glorious, we muſt therefore acknowledge his excellency in all that we do, and in our meaſures contribute to his glory, by having the higheſt aims in his worſhip; He is a Spirit infinitely provoked by us, therefore we muſt offer up our worſhip in the name of a pacifying Mediator and Interceſſour.

3. The third general is, *why a ſpiritual worſhip is due to God, and to be offered to him.* We muſt conſider the Object of Worſhip, and the Subject of worſhip; the Worſhipper and the Worſhipped. God is a Spiritual Being; Man is a reaſonable Creature. The nature of God informs us, what is fit to be preſented to him; our own nature informs us, what is fit to be preſented by us.

Reaſon 1. *The beſt we have is to be preſented to God in worſhip.* For

1. *Since God is the moſt excellent Being, he is to be ſerved by us with the moſt excellent thing we have, and with the choiceſt veneration.* God is ſo incomprehenſibly excellent, that we cannot render him what he deſerves; We muſt render him what we are able to offer; the beſt of our affections; the flower of our ſtrength; the Cream and Top of our Spirits. By the ſame reaſon that we are bound to give to God the beſt worſhip, we muſt offer it to him in the beſt manner. We cannot give to God any thing too good for ſo Bleſſed a Being: God being a *great King*, ſlight ſervices *become not* his Majeſty *: 'Tis unbecoming the Majeſty of God, and the reaſon of a Creature, to give him a trivial thing: 'Tis unworthy to beſtow the beſt of our ſtrength on our Luſt, and the worſt and weakeſt in the ſervice of God. An infinite Spirit, ſhould have affections as near to infinite as we can: As he is a Spirit without bounds, ſo he ſhould have a ſervice without limits: When we have given him all, we *cannot ſerve him* according to the excellency of his nature *; and ſhall we give him leſs than all? His infinite excellency and our dependance on him, as Creature, demands the choiceſt adoration: Our Spirits being the nobleſt part of our nature, are as due to him, as the ſervice of our bodies which are the vileſt: To ſerve him with the worſt only, is to diminiſh his honour. * Mal. 1. 13, 14. * Joſh. 24. 19.

2. *Under the Law, God commanded the beſt to be offered him.* He would have the *Males*, the beſt of the kind; the *fat*, the beſt of the Creature *: He commanded them to offer him the *Firſtlings* of the flock; not the Firſtlings of the Womb, but the Firſtlings of the Year: The *Jewiſh* Cattle having two breeding times, in the beginning of the *Spring*, and the beginning of *September*; the latter breed was the weaker which *Jacob* knew *, when he laid the Rods before the Cattle when they were ſtrong in the Spring, and witheld them when they were feeble in the Autumn. One reaſon (as the *Jews* ſay) why God accepted not the offerings of *Cain* was, becauſe he brought the meaneſt, not the beſt of the fruit; and therefore 'tis ſaid, only that he brought of the *fruit* of the Ground, *Gen.* 4. 3. not the firſt of the fruit, or the beſt of the fruit; as *Abel* who brought the *Firſtling* of his Flock, and the Fat thereof, *v.* 4. * Exod. 29. 13. The inward fat not the off-falls. * Gen. 30.

3. *And this the Heathen practiced by the light of Nature.* They for the moſt part offered Males, as being more worthy; and burnt the Male, not the Female Frankincenſe, as it is divided into thoſe two kinds: They offered the beſt, when they offered their Children to *Moloch*. Nothing more excellent than Man, and nothing dearer to Parents than their Children, which are parts of themſelves. When the *Iſraelites* would have a Golden-Calf for a repreſentation of God, they would dedicate their Jewels, and ſtrip their Wives and Children of their richeſt Ornaments, to ſhew their devotion. Shall men ſerve their dumb Idols with the beſt of their ſubſtance, and the ſtrength of their Souls; and ſhall the living God have a duller ſervice from us, than Idols had from them? God requires no ſuch hard, but delightful worſhip from us, our Spirits.

4. *All Creatures ſerve Man, by the providential order of God, with the beſt they have.* As we by Gods appointment receive from Creatures the beſt they can give, ought we not with a free will render to God the beſt we can offer? The Beaſts give us their beſt Fat; the Trees their beſt Fruit; the Sun its beſt Light; the Fountains their beſt ſtreams: Shall God order us the beſt from Creatures, and we put him off with the worſt from our ſelves?

5. *God hath given us the choiceſt thing he had.* A Redeemer that was the *Power* of God, and the *Wiſdom* of God: The beſt he had in Heaven, his own Son, and in himſelf, a Sacrifice for us, that we might be enabled to preſent our ſelves a Sacrifice to Him. And Chriſt offered himſelf for us, the beſt he had, and that with the ſtrength of the Deity through the *Eternal Spirit*; and ſhall we grudge God the beſt part of our ſelves? As God would have a worſhip from his Creature, ſo it muſt be with the beſt part of his Creature. If we have *given our ſelves to the Lord**, we can worſhip with no leſs than our ſelves. What is the Man without his Spirit? If we are to worſhip God with all that we have received from him, we muſt worſhip him with the beſt part we have received from him: 'Tis but a ſmall glory we can give him with the beſt, and ſhall we deprive him of his right by giving him the worſt? As what we are, is from God; ſo what we are, ought to be for God. Creation is the foundation of worſhip, *Pſal.* 100. 2, 3. *Serve the Lord with gladneſs: Know ye that the Lord he is God; 'tis he that hath made us:* He hath ennobled us with ſpiritual affections; where is it fitteſt for us to employ them, but upon him? and at what time, but when we come ſolemnly to converſe with him? Is it Juſtice to deny him the honour of his beſt gift to us? Our Souls are more his gift to us, than any thing in the World: Other things are ſo given that they are often taken from us, but our Spirits are the moſt durable gift. Rational faculties cannot be removed without a diſſolution of nature.

* 2 Cor. 8. 5.

Well then *; As he is God, he is to be honoured with all the propenſions and ardor that the infiniteneſs and excellency of ſuch a Being requires, and the incomparable obligations he hath laid upon us in this ſtate deſerve at our hands: In all our worſhip therefore, our minds ought to be filled with the higheſt admiration, love and reverence. Since our end was to glorifie God, we anſwer not our end, and honour him not, unleſs we give him the choiceſt we have.

* *Amyrald.* Mor. Tom. 2. p. 311.

Reaſon 2. *We cannot elſe act towards God according to the nature of rational Creatures.* Spiritual worſhip is due to God, becauſe of his nature; and due from us, becauſe of our nature. As we are to adore God, ſo we are to adore him as men: The nature of a rational Creature makes this impreſſion upon him: He cannot view his own nature without having this duty ſtriking upon his mind. As he knows by inſpection into himſelf, that there was a God that made him; ſo, that he is made to be in ſubjection to God; ſubjection to him in his Spirit as well as his Body, and ought morally to teſtifie this natural dependance on him: His conſtitution informs him, that he hath a capacity to converſe with God; that he cannot converſe with him, but by thoſe inward faculties: If it could be managed by his Body without his Spirit, Beaſts might as well converſe with God as Men. It can never be a *reaſonable ſervice* as it ought to be*, unleſs the reaſonable faculties be employed in the management of it: It muſt be a worſhip prodigiouſly lame, without the concurrence of the cheifeſt part of Man with it. As we are to act conformably to the nature of the object, ſo alſo to the nature of our own faculties. Our faculties in the very gift of them to us were deſtined to be exerciſed; about what? What? All other things but the Au-

* Rom. 12. 1.

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thor of them: 'Tis a conceit cannot enter into the heart of a rational Creature, that he ſhould act as ſuch a Creature in other things, and as a ſtone in things relating to the Donor of them; as a man, with his mind about him in the affairs of the world, as a Beaſt without reaſon in his acts towards God. If a man did not employ his reaſon in other things, he would be an unprofitable Creature in the world: If he do not employ his ſpiritual faculties in worſhip, he denies them the proper end and uſe for which they were given him; 'tis a practical denial that God hath given him a Soul, and that God hath any right to the exerciſe of it. If there were no worſhip appointed by God in the world, the natural inclination of man to ſome kind of Religion would be in vain; and if our inward faculties were not employed in the duties of Religion, they would be in vain: The true end of God in the endowment of us with them would be defeated by us, as much as lies in us, if we did not ſerve him with that which we have from him ſolely at his own coſt. As no man can with reaſon conclude, that the reſt commanded on the *Sabbath* and the Sanctification of it, was only a reſt of the body; that had been performed by the Beaſts as well as Men; but ſome higher end was aimed at for the rational Creature: So no man can think that the Command for worſhip, terminated only in the preſence of the Body; that God ſhould give the Command to Man as a reaſonable Creature, and expect no other ſervice from him than that of a Brute.

God did not require a worſhip from man, for any want he had, or any eſſential honour that could accrue to him; but that men might teſtifie their gratitude to him, and dependance on him. 'Tis the moſt horrid ingratitude, not to have lively and deep ſentiments of gratitude after ſuch obligations, and not to make thoſe due acknowledgments that are proper for a rational Creature. Religion is the higheſt and choiceſt act of a reaſonable Creature: No Creature under Heaven is capable of it that wants reaſon. As it is a violation of reaſon not to worſhip God, ſo it is no leſs a violation of reaſon not to worſhip him with the Heart and Spirit: It is a high diſhonour to God, and defeats him not only of the ſervice due to him from Man, but that which is due to him from all the Creatures. Every Creature, as it is an effect of Gods Power and VViſdom, doth paſſively worſhip God; that is, it doth afford matter of adoration to man that hath reaſon to collect it and return it where it is due: VVithout the exerciſe of the Soul we can no more hand it to God, than without ſuch an exerciſe we can gather it from the Creature: So that by this neglect, the Creatures are reſtrained from anſwering their chief end; they cannot pay any ſervice to God without man; nor can man without the employment of his rational faculties, render a homage to God, any more than beaſts can. This engagement of our inward power ſtands firm and unviolable, let the modes of worſhip be what they will, or the changes of them by the Soveraign Authority of God never ſo frequent; this could not expire or be changed, as long as the nature of Man indured. As man had not been capable of a Command for VVorſhip, unleſs he had been indued with ſpiritual faculties; ſo he is not active in a true practice of VVorſhip, unleſs they be imployed by him in it. The conſtitution of Man makes this manner of worſhip perpetually obligatory; and the obligation can never ceaſe, till man ceaſe to be a Creature furniſht with ſuch faculties: In our worſhip therefore, if we would act like rational Creatures, we ſhould extend all the powers of our Souls to the utmoſt pitch, and eſſay to have apprehenſions of God, equal to the excellency of his Nature, which though we may attempt, we can never attain.

Reaſon 3. *Without this engagement of our Spirits, no act is an act of worſhip.* True worſhip being an acknowledgment of God and the perfections of his Nature, reſults only from the Soul, that being only capable of knowing God and thoſe perfections, which are the object and motive of worſhip: The poſture of the body is but to teſtifie the inward temper and affection of the mind: If therefore it teſtifies what it is not, 'tis a lie and no worſhip: The cringes a Beaſt may be taught to make to an Altar, may as well be called Worſhip; ſince a man thinks as little of that God he pretends to honour, as the beaſt doth of the Altar to which he bowes. Worſhip is a reverent remembrance of God, and giving ſome honour to him with the intention of the Soul: It cannot juſtly have the name of Worſhip, that wants the eſſential part of it: 'Tis an aſcribing to God the glory of his Nature, an owning ſubjection and obedience to him as our Soveraign Lord: This is as impoſſible to be performed without

without the Spirit, as that there can be life and motion in a body without a Soul: 'Tis a drawing near to God, not in regard of his eſſential preſence; ſo all things are near to God; but in an acknowledgment of his excellency, which is an act of the Spirit; *without this, the worſt of men in a place of worſhip, are as near to God as the beſt.* The neceſſity of the conjunction of our Soul, ariſeth from the nature of worſhip; which being the moſt ſerious thing we can be employed in, the higheſt converſe with the higheſt object, requires the choiceſt temper of Spirit in the performance. That cannot be an act of worſhip, which is not an act of Piety and Vertue; but there is no act of vertue done by the members of the Body, without the concurrence of the Powers of the Soul. We may as well call the preſence of a dead Carcaſs in a place of worſhip, an act of Religion, as the preſence of a living body without an intent Spirit: The ſeparation of the Soul from one is natural, the other moral; that renders the body lifeleſs, but this renders the act loathſome to God: As the being of the Soul gives life to the Body, ſo the operation of the Soul gives life to the actions: As he cannot be a man that wants the form of a man, a rational Soul; ſo that cannot be a worſhip that wants an eſſential part, the act of the Spirit: God will not vouchſafe any acts of man ſo noble a title, without the requiſite qualifications, *Hoſ.* 5. 6. *They ſhall go with their Flocks and their Herds, to ſeek the Lord,* &c. A multitude of Lambs and Bullocks for Sacrifice, to appeaſe Gods Anger: God would not give it the title of worſhip, though inſtituted by himſelf, when it wanted the qualities of ſuch a ſervice: The Spirit of Whoredom was in the midſt of them, *v.* 4. In the judgment of our Saviour, it is a *vain worſhip, when the Traditions of Men are taught for the Doctrines of God**; and no leſs vain muſt it be, when the Bodies of Men are preſented to ſupply the place of their Spirits. As an omiſſion of duty is a contempt of Gods Soveraign Authority, ſo the omiſſion of the manner of it, is a contempt of it, and of his amiable excellency; and that which is a contempt and mockery, can lay no juſt claim to the title of Worſhip.

* Mat. 15. 9.

Reaſon 4. *There is in worſhip, an approach of God to Man.* It was inſtituted to this purpoſe, that God might give out his bleſſings to Man: And ought not our Spirits to be prepared and ready to receive his communications? We are in ſuch acts, more peculiarly in his preſence. In the *Iſralites* hearing the Law, it is ſaid God was to *come among them**: Then, men are ſaid to ſtand before the Lord*: *God before whom I ſtand,* that is, whom I worſhip: And therefore when *Cain* forſook the worſhip of God ſetled in his Fathers Family, he is ſaid *to go out from the preſence of the Lord,* Gen. 4. 16. God is eſſentially preſent in the world; graciouſly preſent in his Church. The name of the Evangelical City is, *Jehovah Shammah**, *the Lord is there.* God is more graciouſly preſent in the Evangelical inſtitutions, than in the Legal: He *Loves the Gates of Zion, more then all the dwellings of* Jacob*: His Evangelical-Law and Worſhip which was to go forth from *Zion,* as the other did from *Sinai, Mic.* 4. 2. God delights to approach to Men, and converſe with them in the worſhip inſtituted in the Goſpel, more than in all the dwellings of *Jacob.* If God be graciouſly preſent, ought not we to be ſpiritualy preſent? A liveleſs Carcaſs ſervice, becomes not ſo high and delectable a preſence as this: 'Tis to thruſt him from us, not invite him to us: 'Tis to practice in the Ordinances, what the Prophet predicts concerning mens uſage of our Saviour, *Iſa.* 53. 2. *There is no form, no comelineſs, nor beauty that we ſhould deſire him.* A ſlightneſs in worſhip, reflects upon the excellency of the object of worſhip. God and his worſhip are ſo linkt together, that whoſoever thinks the one not worth his inward care, eſteems the other not worth his inward affection. How unworthy a ſlight is it of God, who profers the opening his Treaſure; the reimpreſſing his Image; conferring his bleſſings; admits us into his preſence, when he hath no need for us, who hath millions of Angels to attend him in his Court, and celebrate his Praiſe? He that worſhips not God with his Spirit, regards not Gods preſence in his Ordinances, and ſlights the great end of God in them, and that perfection he may attain by them. We can only expect, what God hath promiſed to give, when we render to him what he hath commanded us to preſent. If we put off God with a Shell, he will put us off with a Husk. How can we expect his heart, when we do not give him ours? or hope for the bleſſing needful for us, when we render not the glory due to him? It cannot be an

* Exod. 19. 10, 11.
* Deut. 10. 8.
* Kings 1. 17.
* Ezek. 48. 35.
* Pſal. 87. 2.

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advantageous worſhip, without ſpiritual graces; for thoſe are uniting, and Union is the ground of all Communion.

Reaſon 5. *To have a ſpiritual worſhip is Gods end in the reſtoration of the Creature; both in Redemption by his Son, and Sanctification by his Spirit.* A fitneſs for ſpiritual Offerings, was the end of the *Coming of Chriſt* *; He ſhould purge them, as gold and ſilver by Fire, a Spirit burning up their droſs, melting them into a holy compliance with, and ſubmiſſion to God: To what purpoſe? That they may offer to the Lord and Offering in Righteouſneſs; a pure Offering from a purified Spirit: He came to *bring us to God* * in ſuch a Garb, as that we might be fit to converſe with him: Can we be thus, without a fixedneſs of our Spirits on him? * Mal. 3. 3. * 1 Pet. 3. 18.

The offering of ſpiritual Sacrifices is the end of making any a ſpiritual *Habitation*, and a *holy Prieſt-hood* *. We can no more be Worſhippers of God, without a Worſhippers nature, than a man be a man without humane nature. As man was at firſt created for the honour and worſhip of God; ſo the deſign of reſtoring that Image which was defaced by ſin, tends to the ſame end. We are not brought to God by Chriſt, nor are our ſervices preſented to him, if they be without our Spirits: Would any man that undertakes to bring another to a Prince, introduce him in a ſlovenly and ſordid habit, ſuch a garb that he knows hateful to him? Or bring the Cloaths or skin of a Man ſtuft with ſtraw, inſtead of the Perſon? To come with our skins before God without our Spirits, is contrary to the deſign of God, in Redemption and Regeneration. * 1 Pet. 2. 5.

If a carnal worſhip would have pleaſed God, a carnal heart would have ſerved his turn, without the expence of his Spirit in Sanctification: He beſtows upon man a ſpiritual nature, that he may return to him a ſpiritual ſervice: He enlightens the Underſtanding, that he may have a rational ſervice; and new moulds the Will, that he may have a voluntary ſervice. As it is the Milk of the Word wherewith he feeds us, ſo it is the ſervice of the Word wherewith we muſt glorifie him. So much as there is of confuſedneſs in our underſtanding, ſo much of ſtarting and levity in our Wills; ſo much of ſlipperineſs and skipping in our affections, ſo much is abated of the due qualities of the worſhip of God, and ſo much we fall ſhort of the end of Redemption and Sanctification.

Reaſon 6. *A ſpiritual Worſhip is to be offered to God, becauſe no worſhip but that can be acceptable.* We can never be ſecured of acceptance without it; He being a Spirit, nothing but the worſhip in Spirit can be ſutable to him: What is unſutable, cannot be acceptable: There muſt be ſomething in us, to make our ſervices capable of being preſented by Chriſt for an actual acceptation. No ſervice is *acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt*, but as it is a ſpiritnal Sacrifice, and offered by a ſpiritual heart, 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. The Sacrifice is firſt ſpiritual, before it be acceptable to God by Chriſt: When it is *an offering in righteouſneſs*, it is then, and only then pleaſant to the Lord, *Mal.* 3. 3, 4. No Prince would accept a gift that is unſutable to his Majeſty, and below the condition of the perſon that preſents it: Would he be pleaſed with a bottle of water for drink, from one that hath his Cellar full of wine? How unacceptable muſt that be, that is unſutable to the Divine Majeſty? And what can be more unſutable, than a withdrawing the operations of our Souls from him, in the oblation of our Bodies? We as little *glorifie God, as God*, when we give him only a corporeal worſhip; as the Heathen did, when they *repreſented him* in a corporeal ſhape *; one as well as the other denies his ſpiritual nature: This is worſe, for had it been lawful to repreſent God to the eye, it could not have been done, but by a bodily figure ſuted to the ſenſe; but ſince it is neceſſary to worſhip him, it cannot be by a corporeal attendance, without the operation of the Spirit. A ſpiritual frame is more pleaſing to God, than the higheſt exterior adornments; than the greateſt gifts, and the higheſt Prophetical illumination. *The glory of the ſecond Temple* exceeded the glory of the firſt *: As God accounts the ſpiritual glory of Ordinances moſt beneficial for us, ſo our ſpiritual attendance upon Ordinances is moſt pleaſing to him; He that offers the greateſt ſervices without it, offers but fleſh, *Hoſ.* 8. 13. *They ſacrifice Fleſh for the Sacrifices of my Offerings, but the Lord accepts them not.* Spiritual frames are the Soul of Religious ſervices; all other carriages without them, are contemptible to this Spirit: We can never lay claim to that promiſe of God, none ſhall *ſeek my face in vain*: We affect a vain ſeeking of him, when we want a due temper * Rom. 1. 21. * Hag. 2. 8, 9.

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of Spirit for him: And vain Spirits ſhall have vain returns: 'Tis more contrary to the nature of Gods Holineſs to have communion with ſuch, than it is contrary to the nature of Light to have communion with Darkneſs.

To make uſe of this,

Uſe 1. Firſt it ſerves for *information.*

1. If ſpiritual worſhip be required by God; *How ſad is it for them that are ſo far from giving God a ſpiritual worſhip, that they render him no worſhip at all?* I ſpeak not of the neglect of publick, but of private; when men preſent not a devotion to God from one years end to the other. The ſpeech of our Saviour, that we muſt worſhip God in Spirit and in Truth, implies that a worſhip is due to him from every one: That is the common impreſſion upon the Conſciences of all men in the world, if they have not by ſome conſtant courſe in groſs ſins, hardned their Souls, and ſtifled thoſe natural ſentiments. There was never a Nation in the world, without ſome kind of Religion; and no Religion was ever without ſome modes, to teſtifie a devotion: The *Heathens* had their Sacrifices and Purifications; and the *Jews* by Gods order had their Rites, whereby they were to expreſs their Allegiance to God.

Conſider,

1. *Worſhip is a duty incumbent upon all men.* 'Tis a homage Mankind owes to God, under the relation wherein he ſtands obliged to him: 'Tis a prime and immutable juſtice to own our Allegiance to him. 'Tis as unchangeable a truth that God is to be worſhipped, as that God is: He is to be worſhipped as God; as Creator; and therefore by all, ſince he is the Creator of all, the Lord of all, and *all are his Creatures, and all are his Subjects.* Worſhip is founded upon Creation, *Pſal.* 100. 2, 3. 'Tis due to God for himſelf and his own eſſential excellency, and therefore due from all: 'Tis due upon the account of mans nature: The human rational nature is the ſame in all. Whatſoever is due to God upon the account of mans nature, and the natural obligations he hath laid upon man, is due from all men, becauſe they all enjoy the benefits which are proper to their nature.

Man in no ſtate was exempted, nor can be exempted from it: In *Paradiſe* he had his Sabbaths and Sacraments; Man therefore diſſolves the obligation of a reaſonable nature, by neglecting the worſhip of God.

Religion is in the firſt place to be minded. As ſoon as *Noah* came out of the Ark, he contrived not a Habitation for himſelf, but an *Altar* for the Lord, to acknowledge him the Author of his preſervation from the Deluge *: And whereſoever *Abraham* came, his firſt buſineſs was to erect an *Altar*, and pay his arrears of gratitude to God, before he ran upon the ſcore for new mercies *; He left a teſtimony of worſhip where ever he came.

* Gen. 8. 20.

* Gen. 12. 7. Gen. 13. 4, 18.

2. *Wholly therefore to neglect it, is a high degree of Atheiſm.* He that calls not upon God, ſaith *in his heart there is no God*; and ſeems to have the ſentiments of natural Conſcience, as to God, ſtifled in him*: It muſt ariſe from a conceit that there is no God, or that we are equal to him, adoration not being due from perſons of an equal ſtate; or that God is unable, or unwilling to take notice of the adoring acts of his Creatures: What is any of theſe but an undeifying the ſupream Majeſty? When we lay aſide all thoughts of paying any homage to him, we are in a fair way opinionatively to deny him, as much as we practically diſown him. Where there is no knowledge of God, that is, no *acknowledgment of God*, a gap is opened to all licentiouſneſs *: And that by degrees brawns the Conſcience, and raſeth out the the ſenſe of God. Thoſe forſake God that *forget his Holy Mountain* *; They do not practically own him as the Creator of their Souls or bodies. 'Tis the ſin of *Cain*, who turning his back upon worſhip, is ſaid to *go out from the preſence of the Lord* *. Not to worſhip him with our Spirits, is againſt his *Law* of Creation: Not to worſhip him at all, is againſt his *act* of Creation: Not to worſhip him in truth is Hypocriſie: Not to worſhip him at all is Atheiſm, whereby we render our ſelves worſe than the worms in the Earth, or a toad in a Ditch.

* Pſal. 14. 1, 4.

* Hoſ. 4. 1, 2.

* Iſa. 65. 11.

* Gen. 4. 16.

3. *To perform a worſhip to a falſe God, or to the true God in a falſe manner, ſeems to be leſs a ſin, than to live in perpetual neglects of it.* Though it be directed to a falſe Object inſtead of God; yet it is under the notion of a God, and ſo is an acknowledgement of ſuch a Being as God in the world; whereas the total neglect of any worſhip, is a practical denying of the exiſtence of any ſupream Majeſty.

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Whoſoever conſtantly omits a publick and private worſhip, tranſgreſſes againſt an univerſally received dictate; for all Nations have agreed in the common notion of worſhipping God, though they have diſagreed in the ſeveral modes and rites whereby they would teſtifie that adoration. By a worſhip of God, tho ſuperſtitious, a veneration and reverence of ſuch a being is maintained in the world; whereas by a total neglect of worſhip, he is vertually diſowned and diſcarded, if not from his Exiſtence, yet from his Providence and Government of the world: All the mercies we breath in are denied to flow from him. A fooliſh worſhip owns Religion, though it beſpatters it. As if a ſtranger coming into a Country miſtakes a Subject for the Prince, and pays that reverence to the Subject, which is due to the Prince, though he miſtakes the object, yet he owns an Authority; or if he pays any reſpect to the true Prince of that Country after the mode of his own, though appearing ridiculous in the place where he is, he owns the Authority of the Prince; whereas the omiſſion of all reſpect would be a contempt of Majeſty: And therefore the Judgments of God have been more ſignal upon the Sacrilegious Contemners of worſhip among the Heathens, than upon thoſe that were diligent and devout in their falſe worſhip; and they generally owned the bleſſings received, to the preſervation of a ſenſe, and worſhip of a deity among them. Though ſuch a worſhip be not acceptable to God, and every man is bound to offer to God a devotion agreeable to his own mind; yet it is commendable, not as worſhip, but as it ſpeaks an acknowledgment of ſuch a Being as God in his power in Creation, and his beneficence in his Providence.

Well then, omiſſions of worſhip are to be avoided. Let no man execute that upon himſelf, which God will pronounce at laſt as the greateſt miſery, and bid God depart from him, who will at laſt be loath to hear God bid him depart from him. Though man hath natural ſentiments that God is to be worſhipped; yet having an hoſtility in his nature, he is apt to neglect, or give it him in a ſlight manner: He therefore ſets a perticular mark and notice of attention upon the fourth Command, *Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day.* Corrupt nature is apt to neglect the worſhip of God, and flag in it: This Command therefore which concerns his worſhip, he fortifies with ſeveral reaſons.

Nor let any neglect worſhip, becauſe they cannot find their hearts ſpiritual in it. The further we are from God, the more carnal ſhall we be. No man can expect heat by a diſtance from the Sun beams, or other means of warmth. Though God commanded a *circumciſed heart* in the Jewiſh ſervices; yet he did not warrant a neglect of the outward teſtimonies of Religion he had then appointed; he expected according to his Command, that they ſhould offer the Sacrifices, and practice the legal Purifications he had commanded; he would have them diligently obſerved, though he had declared that he impoſed them only for a time. And our *Saviour* ordered the practiſe of thoſe poſitive rites as long as the Law remained unrepealed, as in the Caſe of the *Leper**. 'Tis an injuſtice to refuſe the offering our ſelves to God according to the manner he hath in his Wiſdom preſcribed and required. * Mark 14. 4.

If ſpiritual worſhip be required by God; then

2. It informs us, *that diligence in outward worſhip is not to be reſted in.* * Men may attend all their days on worſhip, with a juiceleſs heart and unquickned frame, and think to compenſate the neglect of the manner, with abundance of the matter of ſervice. Outward expreſſions are but the Badges and Liveries of ſervice, not the ſervice it ſelf. As the ſtrength of ſin lies in the inward frame of the heart, ſo the ſtrength of worſhip in the inward complexion and temper of the Soul. What do a thouſand ſervices avail, without cutting the throat of our carnal affections? What are loud Prayers, but as ſounding Braſs and tinkling Cymbals, without Divine Charity? A *Phariſaical* diligence in outward forms without inward Spirit, had no better a title vouchſafed by our Saviour, than that of hypocritical. God deſires not Sacrifices, nor delights in burnt Offerings: Shadows are not to be offered inſtead of ſubſtance. God required the heart of man for it ſelf; but commanded outward Ceremonies, as ſubſervient to inward worſhip, and goads and ſpurs unto it: They were never appointed as the ſubſtance of Religion, but auxiliaries to it. What value had the Offering of the human Nature of Chriſt been of, if he had not had a divine Nature to qualifie him to be the Prieſt? And what is the oblation of * Daille *melange. des Sermons* Ser. 2.

our Bodies, without a Prieſtly act of the Spirit in the preſentation of it? Could the *Iſraelites* have called themſelves Worſhippers of God according to his Order, if they had brought a thouſand Lambs that had died in a Ditch, or been killed at home? They were to be brought living to the Altar; the blood ſhed at the foot of it: A thouſand Sacrifices killed without, had not been ſo valuable as one brought alive to the place of Offering: One ſound Sacrifice is better than a thouſand rotten ones. As God took no pleaſure in the blood of Beaſts without its relation to the *Antitype*; So he takes no pleaſure in the outward rites of worſhip, without Faith in the Redeemer. To offer a Body with a ſapleſs Spirit, is a Sacriledge of the ſame nature with that of the *Iſraelites* when they offered dead Beaſts. A man without ſpiritual worſhip is *dead* whiles he worſhips, though by his diligence in the externals of it, he may like the *Angel of the Church of* Sardis, *have a name to live* *. What ſecurity can we expect from a multitude of dead ſervices? What weak ſhields are they againſt the holy eye, and revenging wrath of God? What man, but one out of his wits, would ſolicite a dead man to be his Advocate or Champion?

* Revel. 3. 1.

Diligence in outward worſhip is not to be reſted in.

Uſe II. Shall be for *Examination*: *Let us try our ſelves concerning the manner of our worſhip.* We are now in the end of the world, and the dregs of time; wherein the *Apoſtle* predicts, there may be much of a *form, and little of the power of Godlineſs.** : And therefore it ſtands us in hand to ſearch into our ſelves, whether it be not thus with us? Whether there be as much reverence in our Spirits, as there may be devotion in our countenances and outward carriages.

* 2 Tim. 3. 1, 5.

1. *How therefore are our hearts prepared to worſhip?* Is our diligence greater, to put our hearts in an adoring poſture, than our bodies in a decent garb? Or are we content to have a muddy Heart, ſo we may have a dreſt Carcaſs? To have a Spirit a Cage of unclean Birds, while we wipe the filth from the outſide of the Platter, is no better than a *Phariſaical* devotion, and deſerves no better a name, than that of a whited Sepulcher.

Do we take opportunities to excite and quicken our Spirits to the performance, and cry aloud with *David*, *awake, awake, my glory*? Are not our hearts aſleep when Chriſt knocks; when we hear the voice of God, *ſeek my face*; Do we anſwer him with warm reſolutions, *thy face Lord we will ſeek** ? Do we comply with ſpiritual motions, and ſtrike whiles the Iron is hot? Is there not more of reluctancy, than readineſs? Is there a quick riſing of the Soul in reverence to the motion, as *Eglon* to *Ehud*; or a ſullen hanging the head at the firſt approach of it? Or if our hearts ſeem to be engaged, and on fire; What are the motives that quicken that fire? Is it only the Blaſt of a natural Conſcience; fear of Hell; deſires of Heaven as abſtracted from God? Or is it an affection to God; an obedient will to pleaſe him; longings to enjoy him, as a holy and ſanctifying God in his Ordinances, as well as a bleſſed and glorified God in Heaven?

* Pſal. 27. 8.

What do we expect in our approaches from him? That which may make divine impreſſions upon us, and more exactly conform us to the divine nature? Or do we deſign nothing but an empty formality, a rowling eye, and a filling the Air with a few words, without any openings of heart to receive the incomes, which according to the nature of the duty might be conveyed to us? Can this be a ſpiritual worſhip? The Soul then *cloſely waits* upon him, when its *expectation is only from him*, Pſal. 62. 6. Are our hearts ſeaſoned with a ſenſe of ſin; a ſight of our ſpiritual wants; raiſed notions of God; glowing affections to Him; ſtrong appetite after a ſpiritual fulneſs? Do we rouze up our ſleepy Spirits, and make a Covenant with all that is within us to attend upon him? So much as we want of this, ſo much we come ſhort of a ſpiritual worſhip: In *Pſal.* 57. 7. *My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed. David* would fix his heart, before he would engage in a praiſing act of worſhip: He appeals to God about it, and that with doubling the expreſſion, as being certain of an inward preparedneſs: Can we make the ſame appeals in a fixation of Spirit?

2. *How are our hearts fixed upon him, How do they cleave to him in the* [illegible] Do we reſign our Spirits to God, and make them an intire *Holocauſt*, a whole burnt-offering in his worſhip? O do we not willingly admit carnal thoughts to mix themſelves with ſpiritual duties, and faſten our minds to the Creature, under pretences

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of directing them to the Creator? Do we not paſs a neer complement on God, by ſome ſuperficial act of devotion; while ſome covetous, envious, ambitious, voluptuous imagination may poſſeſs our minds? Do we not invert Gods order, and worſhip a Luſt inſtead of God with our Spirit, that ſhould not have the leaſt ſervice, either from our Souls or Bodies, but with a ſpiritual diſdain be ſacrificed to the juſt indignation of God? How often do we fight againſt his Will, while we cry hail Maſter; inſtead of Crucifying our own thoughts, Crucifying the Lord of our Lives; Our outward carriage plauſible, and our inward ſtark naught? Do we not often regard iniquity more than God in our hearts, in a time of Worſhip? Roul ſome filthy imagination as a ſweet morſel under our tongues, and taſte more ſweetneſs in that, than in God? Do not our Spirits ſmell rank of Earth, while we offer to Heaven, and have we not hearts full of thick Clay, as their *hands were full of blood* *? When we ſacrifice, do we not wrap up our Souls in communion with ſome ſordid fancy, when we ſhould entwine our Spirits about an amiable God? While we have ſome fear of him, may we not have a love to ſomething elſe above him? This is to *worſhip*, or ſwear by the *Lord*, and by *Malchom* *. How often doth an Apiſh-fancy render a ſervice inwardly ridiculous, under a grave outward poſture; skipping to the Shop, Ware-houſe, Compting-houſe in the ſpace of a ſhort Prayer? And we are before God as a *Babel*, a confuſion of internal languages; and this in thoſe parts of worſhip which are in the right uſe moſt agreeable to God; profitable for our ſelves; ruinous to the Kingdom of Sin and Satan, and means to bring us into a cloſer communion with the Divine Majeſty: Can this be a ſpiritual worſhip?

* Iſa. 1. 15.

* Zeph. 1. 5.

3. *How do we act our Graces in worſhip?* Though the Inſtrument be ſtrung, if the ſtrings be not wound up, what melody can be the iſſue? All readineſs and alacrity diſcover a ſtrength of Nature, and a readineſs in Spirituals, diſcovers a ſpirituality in the heart. As unaffecting thoughts of God are not ſpiritual thoughts; ſo unaffecting addreſſes to God, are not ſpiritual addreſſes. Well then, what awakenings, and elevations of Faith and Love have we? What ſtrong outflowings of our Souls to him? What indignation againſt Sin? What admirations of redeeming Grace? How low have we brought our corruptions to the foot-ſtool of Chriſt, to be made his conquered Enemies? How ſtraitly have we claſpt our faith about the Croſs and the Throne of Chriſt, to become his intimate Spouſe? Do we in hearing hang upon the lips of Chriſt; in prayer take hold of God, and will not let him go; in confeſſions rent the Caul of our hearts, and indite our Souls before him with a deep humility? Do we act more by a ſoaring love than a drooping fear? So far as our Spirits are ſervile, ſo far they are legal and carnal; ſo much as they are free and ſpontaneous, ſo much they are Evangelical and ſpiritual. As men under the *Law* are ſubject to the conſtraint of *Bondage* * *all their life-time*, in all their worſhip: ſo under the Goſpel they are under a conſtraint of love *: How then are believing affections exerciſed, which are always accompanied with holy fear, a fear of his goodneſs that admits us into his preſence, and a fear to offend him in our act of worſhip? So much as we have of forced or feeble affection, ſo much we have of carnality.

* Heb. 2. 15.

* 2 Cor. 5. 14.

4. *How do we find our hearts after worſhip?* By an after carriage, we may judge of the ſpirituality of it.

1. *How are we as to inward ſtrength?* When a worſhip is ſpiritually performed, grace is more ſtrengthened, corruption more mortified: The Soul, like *Sampſon* after his awakening, goes out with a renewed ſtrength: As the inward man is renewed day by day, that is, every day; ſo it is renewed in every worſhip. Every ſhower makes the graſs and fruit grow in good ground where the root is good, and the weeds where the ground is naught: The more prepared the heart is to obedience in other duties after worſhip, the more evidence there is that it hath been ſpiritual in the exerciſe of it. 'Tis the end of God in every diſpenſation, as in that of *John Baptiſt*, To *make ready a People prepared for the Lord* *. When the heart is by worſhip prepared for freſh acts of obedience, and hath a more exact watchfulneſs againſt the incroachments of Sin. As carnal men after worſhip ſprout up in ſpiritual wickedneſs; ſo do ſpiritual Worſhippers in ſpiritual graces: Spiritual fruits, are a ſign of a ſpiritual frame. When men are more prone to ſin after duty, 'tis a ſign there was but little communion with God in it, and a greater ſtrength of ſin, becauſe ſuch an act is

* Lev. 1. 17.

contrary to the end of Worſhip, which is the ſubduing of Sin. 'Tis a ſign the *Phyſick* hath wrought well, when the ſtomach hath a better appetite to its appointed food; and worſhip hath been well performed, when we have a ſtronger inclination to other acts well pleaſing to God, and a more ſenſible diſtaſte of thoſe temptations we too much reliſht before. 'Tis a ſign of a good Concoction, when there is a greater ſtrength in the vitals of Religion, a more eager deſire to know God. When *Moſes* had been praying to God, and prevailed with him; he puts up a higher re-
* Exod. 33 13, 18. queſt; to *behold his Glory**. When the appetite ſtands ſtrong to fuller diſcoveries of God, it is a ſign there hath been a ſpiritual converſe with him.

2. *How is it eſpecially as to Humility?* The *Phariſees* Worſhip was without diſpute, carnal; and we find them not more humble after all their devotions, but over-grown with more Weeds of Spiritual pride; they performed them as their righteouſneſs. What men dare plead before God in *his day*, they plead before him in their hearts, in *their day*; but this men will do at the day of Judgment, *we have propheſied in thy Name*, &c. *Mat.* 7. 11. They ſhew what tincture their ſervices left upon their Spirits: That which excludes them from any acceptation at the laſt day, excludes them from any eſtimation of being ſpiritual in this day. The carnal Worſhippers charge God with injuſtice in not rewarding them, and claim an acceptation as a compenſation due to them, *Iſa.* 58. 3. *Wherefore have we afflicted our Souls, and thou takeſt no knowledge?* A ſpiritual Worſhipper looks upon his duties with ſhame, as well as he doth upon his ſins with confuſion, and implores the mercy of God for the one as well as the other. In the *Pſalm.* 143. *v.* 2. The Prophet *David* after his ſupplications, begs of God not to enter into Judgment with him, and acknowledges any anſwer that God ſhould give him, as a fruit of his faithfulneſs to his promiſe, and not the merit of his wor-
* Pſal. 143. 2. ſhip. *In thy Faithfulneſs anſwer me*, &c. Whatſoever ſprings from a gracious Principle, and is the breath of the Spirit, leaves a man more humble; whereas that which proceeds from a ſtock of nature, hath the true blood of nature running in the veins of it, *viz.* That *Pride* which is naturally derived from *Adam*. The breathing of the Divine Spirit is in every thing to conform us to our Redeemer; that being the main work of his Office, is his work in every particular Chriſtian-act influenced by him. Now Jeſus Chriſt in all his actions was an exact Pattern of Humility. After the *inſtitution* and *celebration* of the *Supper*, a ſpecial act of Worſhip in the Church; though he had a ſenſe of all the Authority his Father had given him, yet
* John 13. 2, 3, 4 he *humbles himſelf to waſh his Diſciples feet**: And after his ſublime Prayer, *John* 17. *He humbles himſelf to the death, and offers himſelf* to his Murderers, becauſe of his Fathers pleaſure, *John* 18. 1. *When he had ſpoken thoſe words, he went over the Brook Kedron into the Garden.* What is the end of God in appointing Worſhip, is the end of a ſpiritual heart in offering it; not his own exaltation but Gods glory: Glorifying the name of God, is the fruit of that Evangelical-worſhip the Gentiles were in time to give to God, Pſal. 86. 9. *All Nations which thou haſt made, ſhall come and worſhip before thee, O Lord, and ſhall gloriſie thy Name.* Let us examin then what debaſing our ſelves there is in a ſenſe of our own vileneſs, and diſtance from ſo glorious a ſpirit. Self-denial is the heart of all Goſpel-grace. Evangelical Spiritual-worſhip cannot be without the ingredient of the main Evangelical Principle.

3. *What delight is there after it?* What pleaſure is there, and what is the Object of that pleaſure? Is it Communion we have had with God, or a Fluency in our ſelves: Is it ſomething which hath touched our hearts, or tickled our fancies? As the ſtrength of ſin is known by the delightful thoughts of it after the commiſſion, ſo is the ſpirituality of duty, by the object of our delightful remembrance after the performance. It was a ſign *David* was ſpiritnal in the Worſhip of God in the Tabernacle, when he enjoyed it, becauſe he longed for the ſpiritual part of it, when he was exil'd from it: His deſires were not only for Liberty to reviſit the Tabernacle, but to ſee the *power and glory of God in the Sanctuary*, as he had ſeen it
* Pſal. 63. 2. before*: His deſires for it could not have been ſo ardent, if his reflection upon what had paſt, had not been delightful; nor could his Soul be poured out in him *for the want* of ſuch opportunities, if the remembrance of the converſe he had had with
* Pſal. 42. 4. God, had not been accompanied with a delightful reliſh *.

Let

Let us examine what delight we find in our ſpirits after worſhip.

Uſe III. Is of *Comfort.* And 'tis very comfortable to conſider, that the ſmalleſt Worſhip with *the Heart and Spirit*, flowing from a principle of grace, is more acceptable than the moſt pompous veneration; yea, if the oblation were as precious as the whole Circuit of Heaven and Earth without it. That God, that values a Cup of cold water given to any as his Diſciple, will value a ſincere ſervice above a coſtly Sacrifice. God hath his eye upon them that honour his nature; He would not *ſeek ſuch to worſhip him*, if he did not intend to accept ſuch a worſhip from them: when we therefore invoke him, and praiſe him, which are the prime parts of Religion; he will receive it as a ſweet ſavour from us, and overlook infirmities mixed with the graces.

The great matter of *diſcomfort*, and that which makes us queſtion the ſpirituality of Worſhip, is the *many ſtarts of our Spirits, and rovings to other things.*

For *anſwer* to which,

1. *'Tis to be confeſt, that theſe ſtarts are natural to us.* Who is free from them? We bear in our own boſom a neſt of turbulent thoughts, which like buſie Gnats will be buzzing about us, while we are in our moſt inward and ſpiritual converſes. Many wild beaſts lurk in a mans heart, as in a cloſe and covert wood, and ſcarce diſcover themſelves, but at our ſolemn worſhip.

No duty ſo holy, No worſhip ſo ſpiritual, that can wholly priviledge us from them, They will jog us in our moſt weighty employments, that, as God ſaid to *Cain*, ſin lyes at the door, and enters in, and makes a riot in our Souls. As it is ſaid of wicked men, *they cannot ſleep* for multitude of thoughts *; ſo it may be of many a good man; he cannot worſhip for multitude of thoughts: There will be ſtarts, and more in our religious, than natural imployments; 'tis natural to man: Some therefore think, the *Bells* tied to *Aarons* Garments between the *Pomegranates* were to warn the People, and recall their fugitve minds to the preſent ſervice, when they heard the ſound of them, upon the leaſt motion of the High Prieſt. The *Sacrifice* of *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful, was not exempt from the *Fowls* pecking at it*. *Zachariah* himſelf was drowſie in the midſt of his Viſions, which being more amazing, might cauſe a heavenly intentneſs*, *Zech.* 4. 1. *The Angel that talked with me, came again and awaked me, as a man is awaked out of ſlesp.* He had been rouzed up before, but he was ready to drop down again; his heart was gone, till the Angel jogged him. We may complain of ſuch imaginations, as *Jeremiah.* doth of the Enemies of the Jews *, *Our Perſecutors are ſwifter than Eagles*; they light upon us with as much ſpeed, as Eagles upon a Carcaſs; they purſue us upon the Mountain of Divine inſtitution, and they lay wait for us in the Widerneſs, in our retired addreſſes to, God

* Eccleſ. 5. 12.

* Gen. 15. 11.

* Lam. 4. 19.

And this will be ſo while,

1. *There is natural corruption in us.* There are in a Godly Man two contrary principles, Fleſh and Spirit, which endeavour to hinder one anothers acts, and and are alway ſtirring upon the offenſive or defenſive part *. There is a body of death continually exhaliug its noyſom vapours; 'Tis a body of Death in our worſhip, as well as in our natures; it ſnaps our reſolutions aſunder*; it hinders us in the doing good and contradicts our Wills in the ſtirring up evil: This corruption being ſeated in all the faculties, and a conſtant Domeſtick in them, has the greater opportunity to trouble us, ſince it is by thoſe faculties that we ſpiritually tranſact with God; and it ſtirs more in the time of Religious exerciſes, though it be in part mortified: As a wounded Beaſt though tired, will rage and ſtrive to its utmoſt, when the Enemy is about to fetch a blow at it. All duties of worſhip tend to the wounding of corruption; and it is no wonder to feel the ſtriving of ſin, to defend it ſelf, and offend us when we have our Arms in our hands to mortifie it, that the blow may be diverted which is directed againſt it.

* Gal. 5. 17.
* Rom. 7. 19.

The Apoſtles had aſpiring thoughts; and being perſwaded of an earthly Kingdom, expected a Grandeur in it: And though we find ſome appearance of it at other times; as when they were caſting out Devils, and gave an account of it to their Maſter, he gives them a kind of a check *, intimating that there was ſome kind of evil in their rejoycing upon that account: Yet this never ſwelled ſo high, as to break out into a quarrel who ſhould be greateſt, until they had the moſt ſolemn

* Luke 10. 20.

Or-

* Luke 22. 24. Ordinance, the Lords Supper to quell it*. Our corruption is like Lime, which diſcovers not its fire by any ſmoke or heat, till you caſt water, the Enemy of fire, upon it: Neither doth our natural corruption rage ſo much, as when we are uſing means to quench and deſtroy it.

2. *While there is a Devil, and we in his Precinct.* As he accuſeth us to God, ſo he diſturbs us in our ſelves: He is a bold Spirit, and loves to intrude himſelf when we are converſing with God: We read, that when the Angels preſented themſelves before God, *Satan* comes among them*. Motions from *Satan* will thruſt themſelves in with our moſt raiſed and Angelical frames; He loves to take off the edge of our Spirits from God; He acts but after the old rate; He from the firſt envied God an obedience from man, and envied man the felicity of communion with God; He is unwilling God ſhould have the honour of Worſhip, and that we ſhould have the fruit of it: He hath himſelf loſt it, and therefore is unwilling we ſhould enjoy it; and being ſubtil, he knows how to make impreſſions upon us ſutable to our inbred corruptions, and aſſault us in the weakeſt part: He knows all the avenues to get within us, (as he did in the temptation of *Eve*) and being a Spirit, he wants not a power to dart them immediately upon our fancy; and being a Spirit, and therefore active and nimble, he can ſhoot thoſe darts faſter than our weakneſs can beat them off: He is diligent alſo, and watcheth for his Prey, and ſeeks to devour our ſervices as well as our Souls, and Snatch our beſt morſels from us: We know he mixed himſelf with our *Saviours* retirements in the Wilderneſs, and endeavoured to Fly-blow his holy converſe with his Father in the preparation to his Mediatory work.

* Job. 1. 6.

Satan is Gods Ape, and imitates the Spirit in the Office of a Remembrancer: As the Spirit brings good thoughts and divine promiſes to mind, to quicken our worſhip; ſo the Devil brings evil things to mind, and endeavours to faſten them in our Souls to diſturb us: And though all the fooliſh ſtarts we have in worſhip are not purely his iſſue; yet being of kin to him, he claps his hands, and ſets them on like ſo many Maſtives to tear the ſervice in pieces.

And both thoſe diſtractions which ariſe from our own *corruption*, and from *Satan*, are moſt rife in *worſhip*, when we are under ſome preſſing affliction. This ſeems to be *David's* Caſe, *Pſal.* 86. When in *v.* 11. He prays God to *unite* his *heart to fear* and worſhip *his Name*; he ſeems to be under ſome affliction, or fear of his Enemies; Oh free me from thoſe diſtractions of Spirit, and thoſe paſſions which ariſe in my Soul, upon conſidering the deſigns of my Enemies againſt me, and preſs upon me in my addreſſes to thee, and attendances on thee. *Job* alſo in his affliction complains, *Job.* 17. 11. *That his purpoſes were broken off*: He conld not make an even thread of thoughts and reſolutions; they were frequently ſnapt aſunder, like rotten Yarn when one is winding it up.

Good men and ſpiritual Worſhippers have lain under this trouble: Though they are a ſign of weakneſs of grace, or ſome obſtructions in the acting of ſtrong grace; yet they are not alway evidences of a want of grace: What ariſeth from our own *corruption*, is to be matter of humiliation and reſiſtance; what ariſeth from *Satan*, ſhould edge our minds to a noble conqueſt of them. If the *Apoſtle* did comfort himſelf with his diſapproving of what roſe from the natural ſpring of ſin within him, with his conſent to the Law, and diſſent from his Luſt; and charges it not upon himſelf, but upon the ſin that dwelt in him, with which he had broken off the former League, and was reſolved never to enter into Amity with it: By the ſame reaſon we may comfort our ſelves, if ſuch thoughts are undelighted in, and alienate not our hearts from the worſhip of God by all their buſie intruſions to interrupt us.

2. *Theſe diſtractions (not allowed) may be occaſions by an Holy improvement to make our hearts more ſpiritual after worſhip, though they diſturb us in it*: By anſwering thoſe ends for which we may ſuppoſe God permits them to invade us. And that is,

1. *When they are occaſions to humble us.*

(1) *For our carriage in the perticluar worſhip.* There is nothing ſo dangerous as ſpiritual pride; It deprived Devils and Men of the preſence of God, and will hinder us of the influence of God. If we had had raiſed and uninterrupted motions in worſhip, we ſhould be apt to be lifted up; and the Devil ſtands ready to tempt us to ſelf confidence. You know how it was with *Paul** ; His *buffetings* were occaſions to render him more ſpiritual than his *raptures*, becauſe more humble. God ſuffers

* 2 Cor. 12. from v. 7.

thoſe

thoſe wandrings, ſtarts, and diſtractions to prevent our ſpiritual pride, which is as a Worm at the root of ſpiritual worſhip, and minds us of the duſty frame of our Spirits, how eaſily they are blown away: As he ſends ſickneſs to put us in mind of the ſhortneſs of our breath, and the eaſineſs to loſe it. God would make us aſhamed of our ſelves in his preſence; that we may own, that what is good in any duty, is meerly from his Grace and Spirit, and not from our ſelves. That with *Paul* we may cry out, *by Grace we are what we are*, and by Grace we do what we do: We may be hereby made ſenſible, that God can alway find ſomething in our exacteſt worſhip, as a ground of denying us the ſucceſsful fruit of it. If we cannot ſtand upon our duties for Salvation, what can we bottom upon in our ſelves? If therefore they are occaſions to make us out of love with any righteouſneſs of our own, to make us break our hearts for them, becauſe we cannot keep them out; If we mourn for them as our ſins, and count them our great afflictions; we have attained that brokenneſs which is a choice ingredient in a ſpiritual Sacrifice: Though we have been diſturbed by them, yet we are not robbed of the ſucceſs; we may behold an anſwer of our worſhip in our humiliation, in ſpite of all of them.

(2.) *For the baſeneſs of our Nature.* Theſe unſteady motions help us to diſcern that heap of vermin that breeds in our nature. Would any man think he had ſuch an averſeneſs to his Creator and Benefactor ſuch an unſutableneſs to him; ſuch an eſtrangedneſs from him, were it not for his inſpection into his diſtracted frames? God ſuffers this to hang over us as a Rod of Correction, to diſcover and fetch out the folly of our hearts. Could we imagine our natures ſo highly contrary to that God who is ſo infinitely amiable, ſo deſirable an Object; or that there ſhould be ſo much folly and madneſs in the heart, as to draw back from God in thoſe ſervices, which God hath appointed as pipes through which to communicate his grace, to convey himſelf, his love, and goodneſs to the Creature? If therefore we have a deep ſenſe of, and ſtrong reflections upon our baſe nature, and bewail that maſs of averſneſs which lies there, and that fulneſs of irreverence towards the God of our mercies, the Object of our worſhip; 'tis a bleſſed improvement of our wandrings and diverſions. Certainly if any *Iſraelite* had brought a lame and rotten Lamb to be ſacrificed to God, and afterward had bewailed it, and laid open his heart to God in a ſenſible and humble confeſſion of it; That Repentance had been a better Sacrifice, and more acceptable in the ſight of God; than if he had brought a ſound and a living Offering.

(2.) *When they are occaſions to make us prize duties of worſhip*: When we argue, as rationally we may, that they are of ſingular uſe; ſince our corrupt hearts and a malicious Devil doth chiefly endeavour to hinder us from them: And that we find we have not thoſe gadding thoughts when we are upon worldly buſineſs, or upon any ſinful deſign which may diſhonour God and wound our Souls: This is a ſign Sin and Satan diſlike worſhip; for he is too ſubtle a Spirit to oppoſe that which would further his Kingdom. As it is an argument the Scripture is the Word of God, becauſe the wickedneſs of the world doth ſo much oppoſe it; ſo it is a ground to believe the profitableneſs and excellency of worſhip, becauſe *Satan* and our *own unruly hearts* do ſo much interrupt us in it: If therefore we make this uſe of our croſs ſteps in worſhip, to have a greater value for ſuch duties, more affections to them and deſires to be frequent in them: Our hearts are growing ſpiritual, under the weights that would depreſs them to carnality.

(3.) *When we take a riſe from hence, to have Heavenly admirations of the graciouſneſs of God.* That he ſhould pity and pardon ſo many ſlight addreſſes to him, and give any gracious returns to us. Though men have fooliſh ranging every day, and in every duty; yet free grace is ſo tender as not to puniſh them, *Gen.* 8. 21. *And the Lord ſmelt a ſweet ſavour; and the Lord ſaid in his heart, I will not curſe the Ground for mans ſake, for the imagination of mans heart is evil from his youth.* 'Tis obſervable, that this was juſt after a *Sacrifice* which *Noah* offered to God, *v.* 20. But probably not without infirmities common to human nature, which may be grounded upon the reaſon God gives; that though he had deſtroyed the Earth before, becauſe of the *evil of mans imaginations*, Gen. 6. 5. He ſtill found evil imaginations; He doth not ſay in the heart of *Cham*, or others of *Noah's* Family; but in mans heart, including *Noah* alſo; who had both the Judgments of God upon the former world,

and

and the mercy of God in his own preſervation before his eyes; yet God ſaw evil imaginations rooted in the nature of Man; and though it were ſo, yet he would be merciful: If therefore we can, after finding our hearts ſo vagrant in worſhip, have real frames of thankfulneſs that God hath ſpared us; and be heightned in our admirations at Gods giving us any fruit of ſuch a diſtracted worſhip; we take advantage from them, to be raiſed into an Evangelical frame, which conſiſts in the humble acknowledgments of the grace of God. When *David* takes a review of thoſe tumultuous paſſions which had ruffled his mind, and poſſeſſed him with unbelieving notions of God in the perſons of his *Prophets* *; how high doth his Soul mount in aſtoniſhment and thankfulneſs to God for his *mercy* *? Motwithſtanding his diſtruſt, God did graciouſly perform his promiſe, and anſwer his deſire; Then it is, *what ſhall I render to the Lord?* His heart was more affected for it, becauſe it had been ſo paſſionate in former diſtruſts. 'Tis indeed a ground of wondring at the patience of the Spirit of God, that he ſhould guide our hearts when they are ſo apt to ſtart out; as it is the patience of a Maſter to guide the hand of his Scholar, while he mixes his writing with many blots. 'Tis not one or two infirmities the *Spirit helps* us in, and helps over, but *many* *. 'Tis a ſign of a ſpiritual heart, when he can take a riſe to bleſs God for the renewing and blowing up his affections, in the midſt of ſo many incurſions from *Satan* to the contrary, and the readineſs of the heart too much to comply with them.

* *Pſa.* 116.11.
* verſe 12.
* Rom. 8. 26.

(4.) *When we take occaſion from thence to prize the mediation of Chriſt.* The more diſtractions jog us, the more need we ſhould ſee of going out to a Saviour by Faith. One part of our Saviours Office is to ſtand between us and the infirmities of our worſhip: As he is an *Advocate*, he preſents our ſervices, and pleads for them and us *; for the *ſins* of our duties, as well as for our other ſins. Jeſus Chriſt is an High-prieſt, appointed by God to take away the *iniquities of our holy things*, which was typified by *Aarons Plate* upon his Mitre *. Were there no imperfections, were there no creeping up of thoſe Frogs into our minds, we would think our worſhip might merit acceptance with God upon its own account: But if we behold our own weakneſs, that not a tear, a groan, a ſigh is ſo pure, but muſt have Chriſt to make it entertainable; that there is no worſhip without thoſe blemiſhes; and upon this, throw all our ſervices into the Arms of Chriſt for acceptance, and ſolicite him to put his merits in the front, to make our ciphers appear valuable; 'tis a ſpiritual act, the deſign of God in the Goſpel being to advance the honour and mediation of his Son. That is a ſpiritual and evangelical act, which anſwers the evangelical deſign. The deſign of Satan and our own corruption is defeated, when thoſe interruptions make us run ſwifter, and take faſter hold on the *High-prieſt*, who is to preſent our worſhip to God, and our own Souls receive comfort thereby. Chriſt had temptations offered to him by the Devil in his Wilderneſs retirement; that from an experimental knowledge, he might be able more *compaſſionatly to ſuccour us* *; we have ſuch aſſaults in our retir'd worſhip eſpecially, that we may be able more highly to value him and his mediation.

* 1 John 2. 1.
* Exod. 28. 36, 38.
* Heb. 2. 18.

3. *Let us not therefore be diſcourged by thoſe interruptions and ſtarts of our hearts.*

(1.) *If we find in our ſelves a ſtrong reſiſtance of them.* The Fleſh will be luſting; that cannot be hindered; yet if we do not fulfil the luſts of it, riſe up at its command and go about its work, we may be ſaid to walk in the Spirit *: We *walk in the Spirit*, if we *fulfil not the luſts of the Fleſh*, though there be a luſting of the Fleſh againſt the Spirit: So we worſhip in the Spirit, though there be carnal thoughts ariſing, if we do not fullfil them; though the ſtirring of them diſcovers ſome contrariety in us to God, yet the reſiſtence manifeſts, that there is a principle of contrariety in us to them; that as there is ſomething of Fleſh that luſts againſt the Spirit, ſo there is ſomething of Spirit in worſhip which luſts againſt the Fleſh: We muſt take heed of omitting worſhip, becauſe of ſuch in-rodes; and lying down in the mire of a total neglect. If our Spirits are made more lively and vigorous againſt them; If thoſe cold vapours which have riſen from our hearts, make us like a ſpring in the midſt of the cold Earth, more warm: There is in this caſe more reaſon for us to bleſs God, than to be diſcouraged. God looks upon it as the diſeaſe, not the willfulneſs of our nature; as the weakneſs of the Fleſh, not the willingneſs of the Spirit. If we would ſhut the door upon them, it ſeems they are unwelcome company:

* Gal. 5. 16, 17.

pany: Men do not uſe to lock their doors upon thoſe they love; if they break in and diſturb us with their impertinences, we need not be diſcomforted, unleſs we give them a ſhare in our affections, and turn our back upon God to entertain them: If their preſence makes us ſad, their flight would make us joyful.

(2.) *If we find our ſelves excited to a ſtricter watch over our hearts againſt them.* As Travellers will be careful when they come to places where they have been robb'd before, that they be not ſo eaſily ſurprized again. We ſhould not only lament when we have had ſuch fooliſh imaginations in worſhip breaking in upon us, but alſo bleſs God that we have had no more, ſince we have hearts ſo fruitful of weeds. We ſhould give God the glory when we find our hearts preſerved from theſe intruders, and not boaſt of our ſelves, but return him our praiſe for the watch and guard he kept over us to preſerve us from ſuch Thieves.

Let us not be diſcomforted; for as the greatneſs of our ſins upon our turning to God is no hinderance to our juſtification, becauſe it doth not depend upon our converſion as the meritorious cauſe, but upon the infinite value of our Saviours ſatisfaction, which reaches the greateſt ſins as well as the leaſt; ſo the multitude of our bewail'd diſtractions in worſhip are not a hinderance to our acceptation, becauſe of the uncontroulable power of Chriſts interceſſion.

Uſe III. Is for *exhortation.* Since Spiritual worſhip is due to God, and the Father ſeeks ſuch to worſhip him, how much ſhould we endeavour to ſatisfie the deſire and order of God, and act *conformable to the Law of our Creation* and the *love of Redemption*? Our end muſt be the ſame in worſhip which was Gods end in Creation and Redemption; to glorifie his name, ſet forth his perfections, and be rendred fit as Creatures and Redeemed ones to partake of that grace which is the fruit of worſhip. An Evangelical diſpenſation requires a Spiritual homage; to neglect therefore either the matter or manner of Goſpel duties, is to put a ſlight upon Goſpel priviledges. The manner of duty is ever of more value than the matter; the *Scarlet dye* is more precious than the cloth tinctured with it. God reſpects more the *diſpoſition of the Sacrificer* than the *multitude of the Sacrifices* *. The *Solemn feaſts* appointed by God, were but *Dung*, as managed by the *Jews*, *Mal.* 2. 3. The heart is often welcome without the body, but the body never grateful without the heart; The inward acts of the Spirit require nothing from without to conſtitute them good in themſelves; but the outward acts of devotion require inward acts to render them ſavory to God. As the goodneſs of outward acts conſiſts not in the acts themſelves, ſo the acceptableneſs of them reſults not from the acts themſelves, but from the inward frame animating and quickning thoſe acts, as blood and Spirits running through the veins of a duty to make it a living ſervice in the ſight of God. Imperfections in worſhip hinder not Gods acceptation of it, if the heart Spirited by Grace be there to make it a ſweet Saviour. The ſtench of burning fleſh and fat in the legal Sacrifices might render them noyſome to the outward ſenſes; but God ſmelt a ſweet ſavour in them, *as they reſpected Chriſt.* When the heart and Spirit are offered up to God, it may be a ſavory duty, though attended with unſavory imperfections. But a thouſand Sacrifices without a ſtamp of faith, a thouſand Spiritual duties with an habitual carnality, are no better than ſtench with God.

* Μᾶλλον τὸ δαιμόνιον πρὸς τὸ ἅγιον φύεντων ἢ θ ἅγιον θυομένων πλῆθος Porphyr. de Abſtinentia.

The heart muſt be purged, as well as the *Temple* was by our Saviour, of the Thieves that would rob God of his due worſhip. Antiquity had ſome *Temples*, wherein it was a crime to bring any gold; therefore thoſe that came to worſhip laid their gold aſide, before they went into the Temple. We ſhould lay aſide our worldly and trading thoughts before we addreſs to worſhip, *Iſa.* 26. 9. *With my Spirit within me will I ſeek thee early.* Let not our minds be gadding abroad, and exil'd from God and themſelves. It will be thus when the *deſire of our Soul is to his name and the remembrance of him*, ver. 8. When he hath given ſo great and admirable a gift, as that of his Son, in whom are all things neceſſary to Salvation, Righteouſneſs, Peace, and pardon of ſin, we ſhould manage the remembrance of his name in worſhip with the cloſeſt unitedneſs of heart, and the moſt Spiritual affections. The motion of the Spirit is the firſt act in Religion, to this we are obliged in every act: The Devil requires the Spirit of his votaries; ſhould God have a leſs dedication than the Devil?

Motives to back this exhortation.

1. *Not to give God our Spirit is a great ſin.* 'Tis a mockery of God, not worſhip contempt, not adoration, whatever our outward fervency or proteſtations may be*. Every alienation of our hearts from him is a real ſcorn put upon him: The acts of the Soul are real, and more the acts of the man than the acts of the body; becauſe they are the acts of the choiceſt part of man, and of that which is the firſt ſpring of all bodily motions; 'tis the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος the Internal ſpeech whereby we muſt ſpeak with God: To give him therefore only an external form of worſhip without the life of it, is a taking his name in vain: We mock him, when we mind not what we are ſpeaking to him, or what he is ſpeaking to us; when the motions of our hearts are contrary to the motions of our tongues; when we do any thing before him ſlovenly, impudently or raſhly. As in a *Lutiniſt*, it is abſurd to ſing one Tune and play another; ſo it is a foul thing, to tell God one thing with our lips, and think another thing with our hearts; 'tis a ſin like that the *Apoſtle* chargeth the Heathens with, *Rom.* 1. 28. *They like not to retain God in their knowledge*; their ſtomachs are ſick while they are upon any duty, and never leave working, till they have thrown up all the ſpiritual part of worſhip, and rid themſelves of the thoughts of God, which are as unwelcome and troubleſome Gueſts to them: When men behave themſelves in the ſight of God, as if God were not God; they do not only defame him, but deny him, and violate the unchangeable perfections of the Divine Nature

* *Non valet proteſtatio contra factum* is a rule in the civil law.

(1.) *Tis againſt the Majeſty of God.* When we have not awful thoughts of that great Majeſty to whom we addreſs; when our Souls cleave not to him, when we petition him in Prayer, or when he gives out his orders in his Word. 'Tis a contempt of the Majeſty of a Prince, if whiles he is ſpeaking to us, we liſten not to him with reverence and attention, but turn our backs on him, to play with one of his Hounds, or talk with a begger; or while we ſpeak to him, to rake in a Dunghill. *Solomon* adviſeth us to *keep our foot when we go to the Houſe of God**. Our affections ſhould be ſteady, and not ſlip away again; why? *v.* 2. Becauſe *God is in Heaven*, &c. He is a God of Majeſty? earthly durty frames are unſutable to the God of Heaven; low ſpirits are unſutable to the moſt high. We would not bring our mean Servants, or durty Dogs in a Princes preſence Chamber; yet we bring not only our wordly, but our prophane affections into Gods preſence: We give in this caſe, thoſe *ſervices* to God, which our *Governour* would think unworthy of him*. The more excellent and glorious God is, the greater contempt of him it is to ſuffer ſuch fooliſh affections to be Competitors with him for our hearts: 'Tis a ſcorn put upon him to converſe with a Creature while we are dealing with him; but a greater to converſe in our thoughts and fancies with ſome ſordid luſt, which is moſt hateful to him: And the more aggravation it attracts, in that we are to apprehend him the moſt glorious Object ſitting upon his Throne in time of worſhip, and our ſelves ſtanding as vile Creatures before him, ſupplicating for our lives, and the conveyances of grace and mercy to our Souls: As if a grand Mutineer, inſtead of humble begging the pardon of his offended Prince, ſhould preſent his Petition not only ſcribled and blotted, but beſmeared with ſome loathſome excrement. 'Tis unbecoming the Majeſty both of God, and the Worſhip it ſelf, to preſent him with a Picture inſtead of Subſtance, and bring a world of naſty affections in our hearts, and ridiculous toys in our heads before him, and worſhip with indiſpoſed and heedleſs Souls.

* Eccleſ. 5. 1.

* Mal. 1. 8.

Malach. 1. 14. He is a *great King*, therefore addreſs to him with fear and reverence.

(2.) *'Tis againſt the Life of God.* Is a *dead* worſhip proportioned to a *living* God? The ſeparation of heavenly affections from our Souls before God, makes them as much a Carcaſs in his ſight, as the divorce of the Soul makes the Body a Carcaſs; When the affections are ſeparated, worſhip is no longer Worſhip, but a dead offering, a liveleſs bulk; for the eſſence and Spirit of Worſhip is departed: Though the Soul be preſent with the body in a way of information, yet it is not preſent in a way of affection, and this is the worſt; for it is not the ſeparation of the Soul from informing, that doth ſeparate a man from God, but the removal of our affections from him. If a man pretend an application to God, and ſleep and ſnore all the time; without queſtion ſuch a one did not Worſhip: In a careleſs worſhip, the heart

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is morally dead while the eyes are open: *The heart of the Spouſe** *awaked* whiles her eyes ſlept, and our hearts on the contrary ſleep while our eyes awake. * Cant. 5. 2.

Our bleſſed Saviour hath died to *purge our Conſciences from dead works* and frames, that we may ſerve the *living God* *; to ſerve God as a God of Life. *Davids* Soul cried and *fainted* for God under this conſideration *: But to preſent our Bodies without our Spirits, is ſuch a uſage of God, that implies he is a dead Image, not worthy of any but a dead and heartleſs ſervice: Like one of thoſe *Idols* the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks of *, that have *eyes and ſee not, ears and hear not*, no life in it: Though it be not an objective Idolatry, becauſe the Worſhip is directed to the true God; yet I may call it a ſubjective Idolatry, in regard of the frame, fit only to be preſented to ſome ſenſeleſs ſtock. We intimate God to be no better than an Idol, and to have no more knowledge of us, and in-ſight into us, than an Idol can have: If we did believe him to be the living God, we durſt not come before him with ſervices ſo unſutable to him, and reproaches of him. * Heb. 9. 14. * Pſal. 42. 2. * Pſal. 115. 5.

(3.) *'Tis againſt the infiniteneſs of God.* We ſhould worſhip God with thoſe boundleſs affections which bear upon them a Shadow or Image of his Infiniteneſs; ſuch are the deſires of the Soul which know no limits, but ſtart out beyond whatſoever enjoyment the heart of man poſſeſſes. No creeping Creature was to be offered to God in Sacrifice; but ſuch as had legs to run, or wings to fly: For us to come before God with a light creeping frame, is to worſhip him with the loweſt finite affections; as though any thing though never ſo mean or torn, might ſatisfie and infinite being; as though a poor ſhallow Creature could give enough to God without giving him the heart, when indeed we cannot give him a worſhip proportionable to his infiniteneſs, did our hearts ſwell as large as Heaven in our deſires for him in every act of our duties.

(4.) *'Tis againſt the ſpirituality of God.* God being a Spirit, calls for a worſhip in ſpirit; to withold this from him, implies him to be ſome groſs corporeal matter: As a *Spirit*, *he looks for the heart*; a Wreſtling heart in Prayer; a trembling heart in the word *: To bring nothing but the Body when we come to a ſpiritual God to beg ſpiritual benefits, to wait for ſpiritual communications, which can only be diſpenſed to us in a ſpiritual manner, is unſutable to the ſpiritual nature of God: A meer carnal ſervice implicitely denies his ſpirituality, which requires of us higher engagements than meer corporeal ones. * Iſa. 66. 2.

Worſhip ſhould be rational, not an imaginative ſervice, wherein is required the activity of our nobleſt faculties; and our fancy ought to have no ſhare in it, but in ſubſerviency to the more ſpiritual part of our Soul.

(5.) *'Tis againſt the ſupremacy of God.* As God is *one*, the only Soveraign; ſo our hearts ſhould be one, cleaving wholly to him, and undivided from him: In pretending to deal with him, we acknowledge his Deity and Soveraignty; but in with-holding our choiceſt faculties and affections from him, and the ſtarting of our minds to vain Objects, we intimate their equality with God, and their right as well as his to our hearts and affections: Tis as if a Princeſs ſhould commit Adultery with ſome baſe Scullion, while ſhe is before her Husband; which would be a plain denial of his ſole right to her. It intimates that other things are ſuperior to God; they are true Soveraigns that ingroſs our hearts. If a man were addreſſing himſelf to a Prince, and ſhould in an inſtant turn his back upon him, upon a beck or nod from ſome inconſiderable perſon; is it not an evidence, that that perſon that invited him away, hath a greater Soveraignty over him, than that Prince to whom he was applying himſelf? And do we not diſcard Gods abſolute dominion over us, when at the leaſt beck of a corrupt inclination, we can diſpoſe of our hearts to it, and alienate them from God? As they in *Ezek.* 33. 31. Left the ſervice of God for the ſervice of their *covetouſneſs*; which evidenced that they owned the authority of ſin more than the authority of God: This is not to ſerve God as our Lord and abſolute Maſter, but to make God ſerve our turn, and ſubmit his Soveraignity to the Supremacy of ſome unworthy affection. The Creature is preferred before the Creator, when the heart runs moſt upon it in time of Religious worſhip, and our own carnal intereſt ſwallows up the affections that are due to God: Tis *an Idol ſet up in the heart** in his ſolemn preſence, and attracts that devotion to it ſelf, which we only owe to our Soveraign Lord; and the moſt baſe and contemptible that is to which the Spirit is * Ezek. 14. 4.

devoted, the more contempt there is of Gods dominion. *Judas* his kiſs with a *Hail Maſter*, was no act of Worſhip, or an owning his Maſters authority; but a deſigning the ſatisfaction of his Covetouſneſs in the betraying of him.

(6.) *Tis againſt the Wiſdom of God.* God as a God of order, has put earthly things in ſubordination to heavenly; and we by this unworthy carriage invert this order, and put heavenly things in ſubordination to Earthly; in placing mean and low things in our hearts, and bringing them ſo placed into Gods preſence, which his Wiſdom at the Creation put under our feet. A ſervice without ſpiritual affections, is a *ſacrifice of Fools*, Eccleſ. 5.1. Which have loſt their Brains and Underſtandings: A fooliſh Spirit is very unſutable to an infinitely wiſe God: Well may God ſay of ſuch a one, as *Achiſh* of *David* who ſeemed mad; *Why have you brought this Fellow to play the Mad-man in my preſence? Shall this Fellow come into my Houſe?* 1 Sam. 21. 15.

(7.) *'Tis againſt the Omniſciency of God.* To carry it fair without and impertinently within, is as though God had not an all-ſeeing eye that could pierce into the heart, and underſtand every motion of the inward faculties; As though God were eaſily cheated with an outward fawning ſervice, like an Apothecaries box with a guilded title, that may be full of Cobwebs within: What is ſuch a carriage, but a deſign to deceive God; when with *Herod* we pretend to *worſhip* Chriſt, and intend to *murder* all the motions of Chriſt in our Souls? A heedleſs Spirit, an eſtrangement of our Souls, a giving the Reins to them to run out from the preſence of God to ſee every Reed ſhaken with the Wind, is to deny him to be Searcher of hearts, and the Diſcerner of ſecret thoughts; as though he could not look through us to the darkneſs and remoteneſs of our minds, but were an ignorant God, who might be put off with the worſt as well as the beſt in our Flock. If we did really believe there were a God of infinite Knowledge, who ſaw our frames, and whether we came dreſt with *Wedding-garments* ſutable to the duties we are about to perform; ſhould we be ſo gariſh, and put him off with ſuch trivial ſtuff, without any reverence of his Majeſty?

(8.) *'Tis againſt the Holineſs of God.* To alienate our Spirits, is to offend him while we pretend to worſhip him; though we may be mighty officious in the external part, yet our baſe and carnal affections make all our worſhip but as a heap of Dung; and who would not look upon it as an affront, to lay Dung before a Prince's Throne? *Pro.* 21 27. *The Sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination: How much more when he brings it with a wicked mind?* A putrified Carcaſs under the Law, had not been ſo great an affront to the Holineſs of God, as a frothy unmelted heart, and a wanton fancy in a time of worſhip. God is ſo holy, that if we could offer the worſhip of Angels, and the quinteſcence of our Souls in his ſervice, it would be beneath his infinite purity: How unworthy then are they of him, when they are preſented not only without the ſenſe of our uncleanneſs, but ſullied with the fumes and exhalations of our corrupt affections, which are as ſo many Plague-ſpots upon our duties, contrary to the unſpoted purity of the Divine Nature? Is not this an unworthy conceit of God, and injurious to his infinite Holineſs?

(9.) *'Tis againſt the Love and Kindneſs of God.* 'Tis a condeſcenſion in God to admit a piece of Earth to offer up a duty to him, when he hath *miriads of Angels* to attend him in his Court and celebrate his Praiſe: To admit Man to be an Attendant on him, and a Partner with Angels, is a high favour. Tis not a ſingle mercy, but a heap of mercies to be admitted into the preſence of God, *Pſal.* 5.7. *I will come into thy houſe in the multitude of thy mercies.* When the bleſſed God is ſo kind as to give us acceſs to his Majeſty, do we not undervalue his kindneſs when we deal uncivilly with him, and deny him the choiceſt part of our ſelves? Tis a contempt of his Soveraignty, as our Spirits are due to him by nature; a contempt of his Goodneſs, as our Spirits are due to him by gratitude? How abuſive a carriage is it to make uſe of his mercy to encourage our impudence, that ſhould excite our fear and reverence? How unworthy would it be for an indigent Debtor to bring to his indulgent Creditor, an empty Purſe inſtead of Payment? When God holds out his Golden Scepter to encourage our approaches to him; ſtands ready to give us the pardon of ſin and full felicity, the beſt things he hath; is it a fit requital of his kind-

kindneſs, to give him a formal outſide only, a ſhadow of Religion; to have the heart overſwayed with other thoughts and affections; as if all his proffers were ſo contemptible, as to deſerve only a ſlight at our hands? 'Tis a contempt of the love and kindneſs of God.

(10.) *'Tis againſt the Sufficiency and Fullneſs of God.* When we give God our Bodies and the Creature our Spirits, it intimates a conceit, that there is more content to be had in the Creature than in God bleſſed for ever; that the waters in the *Ciſtern* are ſweeter than thoſe in the *Fountain*: Is not this a practical giving God the Lye, and denying thoſe promiſes wherein he hath declared the ſatisfaction he can give to the Spirit, as he is the God of the Spirits of all Fleſh?

If we did imagin the excellency and lovelineſs of God were worthy to be the ultimate Object of our affections, the heart would attend more cloſely upon him, and be terminated in him; did we believe God to be allſufficient, full of grace and goodneſs, a tender Father, not willing to forſake his own; willing, as well as able to ſupply their wants; the heart would not ſo lamely attend upon him, and would not upon every impertinency be diverted from him. There is much of a wrong notion of God, and a predominancy of the world above him in the heart, when we can more ſavourly reliſh the thoughts of low inferior things than heavenly, and let our Spirits upon every trifling occaſion be fugitives from him: 'Tis a Teſtimony that we make not God our chiefeſt good. If apprehenſions of his excellency did poſſeſs our Souls, they would be faſtned on him, glued to him; we ſhould not liſten to that rabble of fooliſh thoughts that ſteal our hearts ſo often from him. Were our breathings after God as ſtrong as the pantings of the Hart after the water Brooks, we ſhould be like that Creature not diverted in our Courſe by every Puddle. Where God the predominant ſatisfactory Object in our eye, he would carry our whole Soul along with him.

When our Spirits readily retreat from God in Worſhip upon every giddy motion, 'tis a kind of repentance that ever we did come near him, and implies, that there is a fuller ſatisfaction, and more attractive excellency in that which doth ſo eaſily divert us, than in that God to whoſe worſhip we did pretend to addreſs our ſelves: 'Tis as if, when we were petitioning a Prince, we ſhould immediatly turn about, and make requeſt to one of his Guard; as though ſo mean a perſon were more able to give us the boon we want, than the Soveraign is.

2. Conſideration by way of *motive*. *To have our Spirits off from God in worſhip, is a bad ſign.* It was not ſo in Innocence. The heart of *Adam* could cleave to God; the Law of God was engraven upon him; he could apply himſelf to the fulfilling of it without any twinkling; there was no folly and vanity in his mind, no independency in his thoughts, no duty was his burden; for there was in him a proneſs to, and delight in all the duties of worſhip: 'Tis the Fall hath diſtempered us; and the more unwieldineſs there is in our Spirits, the more carnal our affections are in worſhip, the more evidence there is of the ſtrength of that revolted ſtate.

(1.) *It argues much corruption in the heart.* As by the eructations of the ſtomach, we may judge of the windineſs and foulneſs of it; ſo by the inordinate motions of our minds and hearts, we may judge of the weakneſs of its complexion. A ſtrength of ſin is evidenced by the eruptions and ebullitions of it in worſhip, when they are more ſudden, numerous, and vigorus than the motions of grace. When the heart is apt like tinder to catch fire from *Satan*, 'tis a ſign of much combuſtible matter ſuitable to his temptation. Were not corruption ſtrong, the Soul could not turn ſo eaſily from God when it is in his preſence, and hath advantageous opportunity to create a fear and aw of God in it: Such baſe fruit could not ſprout up ſo ſuddenly, were there not much ſap and juice in the root of ſin.

What communion with a living root can be evidenced without exerciſes of an inward life? That Spirit which is a Well of living waters in a gracious heart, will be eſpecially ſpringing up when it is before God.

(2.) It ſhews *much affection to earthly things, and little to heavenly.* There muſt needs be an inordinate affection to earthly things, when upon every ſlight ſolicitation we can part with God, and turn the back upon a ſervice glorious for him, and advantageous for our ſelves, to wed our hearts to ſome idle fancy that ſignifies nothing. How can we be ſaid to entertain God in our affections, when we give him

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not the precedency in our underſtandings, but let every trifle juſtle the ſenſe of God out of our minds? Were our hearts fully determined to ſpiritual things, ſuch vanities could not ſeat themſelves in our underſtandings, and divide our Spirits from God. Were our hearts ballanced with a love to God, the world could never ſteal our hearts ſo much from his worſhip, but his worſhip would draw our hearts to it.

It ſhews a baſe neutrality in the greateſt concernments; a *halting between God and Baal*; a contrariety between Affection an Conſcience, when natural Conſcience preſſes a man to duties of worſhip, and his other affections pull him back, draw him to carnal objects, and make him ſlight that whereby he may honour God. God argues the prophaneſs of the *Jews* hearts from the wickedneſs they brought into his houſe, and acted there, *Jer.* 23. *Tea in my houſe*, that is, my worſhip, *I found their wickedneſs*, ſaith the Lord. Carnality in worſhip is a kind of an Idolatrous frame; when the heart is renewed, *Idols* are caſt to the *Moles* and the *Batts*. Iſa. 2. 20.

(3.) It ſhews *much hypocriſie to have our Spirits off from God.* The mouth ſpeaks and the carriage pretends what the heart doth not think; there is a diſſent of the heart from the pretence of the body.

Inſtability is a ſure ſign of hypocriſie. *Double thoughts* argue *a double heart.* The Wicked are compared to *Chaff* *, for the uncertain and various motions of their minds, by the leaſt wind of fancy. The leaſt motion of a carnal Objects diverts the Spirit from God, as the ſcent of Carrion doth the Raven from the flight it was ſet upon.

* Pſal. 1 4.

The People of God are called Gods Spouſe, and God calls himſelf their Husband; whereby is noted, the moſt intimate union of the Soul with God, and that there ought to be the higheſt love an affection to him, and faithfulneſs in his worſhip; but when the heart doth ſtart from him in worſhip, it is a ſign of the unſtedfaſtneſs of it with God, and a diſreliſh of any communion with him; It is as God complains of the *Iſraelites*, a going a whoring after our own imaginations.

As grace reſpects God as the object of Worſhip, ſo it looks moſt upon God in approaching to him. Where there is a likneſs and love, there is a deſire of converſe and intimacy; if there be no ſpiritual entwining about God in our worſhip, it is a ſign there is no likeneſs to him, no true ſenſe of him, no renewed image of God in us: Every living image will move ſtrongly to joyn it ſelf with its original Copy, and be glad with *Jacob*, to ſit ſteadily in thoſe Chariots that ſhall convey him to his beloved *Joſeph*.

Motive 3. Conſider *the danger of a Carnal worſhip.*

(1.) *We loſe the comfort of worſhip.* The Soul is a great Gainer when it offers a ſpiritual worſhip, and as great a loſer when it is unfaithful with God. Treachery and perfidiouſneſs hinder commerce among men; ſo doth Hypocriſie in its own nature, communion with God. God never promiſed any thing to the Carcaſs but to the Spirit of worſhip. God hath no obligation upon him by any word of his, to reward us with himſelf, when we perform it not to himſelf: When we give an outſide worſhip, we have only the outſide of an ordinance: We can expect no kernel, when we give God only the ſhell: He that only licks the outſide of the Glaſs, can never be refreſhed with the rich Cordial encloſed within. A cold and lazy formality, will make God to withdraw the light of his countenance, and not ſhine with any delightful communications upon our Souls; but if we come before him with a livelineſs of affections, and ſteadineſs of heart; he will draw the vail, and cauſe his glory to diſplay it ſelf before us. An humble praying Chriſtian, and a warm affectionate Chriſtian in worſhip, will ſoon find a God who is delighted with ſuch frames and cannot long withold himſelf from the Soul: When our hearts are enflamed with love to him in worſhip, tis a preparation tho ſome act of love on his part whereby he intends further to gratifie us. When *John* was *in the Spirit on the Lords day*, that is iu ſpiritual employment, and meditation and other duties, he had that great *Revelation* of what ſhould happen to the Church in all Ages *; His being in the Spirit, intimates his ordinary courſe on that day, and not any extraordinary act in him though it was followed with an extraordinary diſcovery of God to him; When he was thus engaged, *he heard a voice behind him.*

* Rev. 1. 10.

God

God doth not require of us ſpirituality in worſhip to advantage himſelf, but that we might be prepared to be advantaged by him. If we have a clear and well diſpoſed eye, 'tis not a benefit to the Sun, but fits us to receive benefits from his Beams. Worſhip is an act that perfects our own Souls; they are then moſt widened by ſpiritual frames, to receive the influence of divine bleſſings, as an eye moſt opened receives the fruit of the Suns light, better than the eye that is ſhut. The communications of God are more or leſs, according as our ſpiritual frames are more or leſs in our worſhip: God will not give his bleſſings to unſutable hearts. What a naſty Veſſel is a carnal heart for a ſpiritual communication? The chief end of every duty enjoyned by God, is to have communion with him; and therefore it is called, a drawing near to God: 'Tis impoſſible therefore, that the outward part of any duty can anſwer the end of God in his inſtitution. 'Tis not a bodily appearance or geſture whereby men can have communion with God, but by the impreſſions of the heart and reflections of the heart upon God: Without this, all the rich ſtreams of grace will run beſides us, and the growth of the Soul be hindered and impaired. A *diligent hand makes rich*, ſaith the wiſe man; a diligent heart in ſpiritual Worſhip, brings in rich incomes to the humble and ſpiritual Soul.

(2.) *It renders the worſhip not only unacceptable, but abominable to God.* It makes our Gold to become Droſs; it ſoyls our duties, and beſpotts our Souls. A carnal and unſteady frame ſhews an indifferency of Spirit at beſt; and *luke warmneſs* is as ungrateful to God, as heavy and nauſeous meat is to the ſtomach, he *ſpues them out of his mouth**. As our gracious God doth overlook infirmities where intentions are good, and endeavours ſerious and ſtrong; ſo he loaths the ſervices where the frames are ſtark naught; *Pſal. 66. 18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my Prayer.* Luke warm and indifferent ſervices ſtink in the Noſtrils of God. The heart ſeems to loath God when it ſtarts from him upon every occaſion, when it is unwilling to employ it ſelf about, and ſtick cloſe to him: And can God be pleaſed with ſuch a frame? The more of the heart and Spirit is in any ſervice, the more real goodneſs there is in it, and the more ſavoury it is to God; the leſs of the Heart and Spirit, the leſs of goodneſs, and the more nauſeous to God, who loves Righteouſneſs and *Truth in the inward parts**. And therefore infinite Goodneſs and Holineſs cannot but hate Worſhip preſented to him with deceitful, carnal and flitting affections: They muſt be more nauſeous to God, than a putrified Carcaſs can be to Man: They are the prophanings of that which ſhould be the habitation of the Spirit: They make the Spirit, the ſeat of duty, a filthy dunghil; and are as loathſome to God, as Mony-changers in the Temple were to our Saviour.

* Rev. 3. 16.

* Pſal. 51. 6.

We ſee the evil of carnal frames, and the neceſſity and benefit of ſpiritual frames: For further *help* in this laſt, let us practiſe theſe following *directions.*

Direction 1. *Keep up ſpiritual frames out of worſhip.* To avoid low affections, we muſt keep our hearts as much as we can in a ſetled elevation. If we admit unworthy diſpoſitions at one time, we ſhall not eaſily be rid of them at another*: As he that would not be bitten with Gnats in the night, muſt keep his windows ſhut in the day; when they are once entred tis not eaſie to expel them: In which reſpect, one adviſeth, to be ſuch out of worſhip as we would be in worſhip. If we mix ſpiritual affections with our worldly employments, worldly affections will not mingle themſelves ſo eaſily with our heavenly engagements. If our hearts be ſpiritual in our outward calling, they will ſcarce be carnal in our religious ſervice. If *we walk in the Spirit, we ſhall not fulfil the luſts of the Fleſh**. A ſpiritual walk in the day, will hinder carnal luſtings in worſhip. The Fire was to be kept alive upon the Altar when Sacrifices were not offered, from morning till night, from night till morning, as well as in the very time of Sacrifice. A ſpiritual life and vigour out of worſhip, would render it at its ſeaſon ſweet and eaſie, and preſerve a ſpontaneity and preparedneſs to it, and make it both natural and pleaſant to us.

* *Fitzherbert pol. in relig. part. 2. cap. 15. § 12.*

* Gal. 5. 16.

Any thing that doth unhinge and diſcompoſe our Spirits, is inconſiſtent with religious ſervices, which are to be performed with the greateſt ſedateneſs and gravity. All irregular paſſions diſturb the ſerenity of the Spirit, and open the door for *Satan**. Saith the Apoſtle, *Let not the Sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the Devil.*

* Eph. 4. 25. 27.

Devil. Where wrath breaks the Lock, the Devil will quickly be over the Threſhold; and though they be allayed, yet they leave the heart ſometime after, like the Sea rowling and ſwelling after the ſtorm is ceaſed.

Mixture with ill company leaves a tincture upon us in worſhip. *Ephraims* allying himſelf with the *Gentiles*, bred an indifferency in Religion. *Hoſ.* 7. 8. Ephraim *hath mixed himſelf with the People.* Ephraim *is a Cake not turn'd*: It will make our hearts, and conſequently our ſervices half Dough, as well as half bak'd: Theſe and the like make the holy Spirit withdraw himſelf, and then the Soul lies like a wind-bound Veſſel and can make no way. When the Sun departs from us, it carries its Beams away with it; then doth *Darkneſs ſpread it ſelf over the Earth, and the Beaſts of the Forreſts creep out* *. When the Spirit withdraws a while from a good man, it carries away, (though not habitual, yet) much of the exciting and aſſiſting grace; and then carnal diſpoſitions perk up themſelves from the boſome of natural corruption. To be ſpiritual in worſhip, we muſt bar the door at other times againſt that which is contrary to it: As he that would not be infected with a contagious diſeaſe, carries ſome Preſervative about with him, and inures himſelf to good ſcents.

* Pſal. 104. 20.

To this end, be much in ſecret ejaculations to God, theſe are the pureſt flights of the Soul, that have more of fervor and leſs of carnality; they preſerve a livelineſs in the Spirit, and make it more fit to perform ſolemn ſtated worſhip with greater freedom and activity: A conſtant uſe of this would make our whole lives, lives of worſhip. As frequent ſinful acts ſtrengthen habits of ſin; ſo frequent Religious acts ſtrengthen habits of grace.

Direction 2. *Excite and exerciſe particularly a love to God, and dependence on him.*

Love is a commanding affection, a uniting grace; it draws all the faculties of the Soul to one Center. The Soul that loves God, when it hath to do with him, is bound to the beloved Object; It can mind nothing elſe during ſuch impreſſions. When the affection is ſet to the worſhip of God, every thing the Soul hath will be beſtowed upon it: As *David's* diſpoſition *was to the Temple*, 1 *Chron.* 29. 3. Carnal frames like the Fowls, will be lighting upon the Sacrifice; but not when it is enflam'd: Though the ſcent of the fleſh invite them, yet the heat of the fire drives them to their diſtance. A flaming love will ſinge the Flies that endeavour to interrupt and diſturb us. The happineſs of Heaven conſiſts in a full attraction of the Soul to God, by his glorious influence upon it; There will be ſuch a diffuſion of his goodneſs throughout the Souls of the bleſſed, as will unite the affections perfectly to him: Theſe affections which are ſcattered here, will be there gathered into one flame, moving to him and centring in him: Therefore the more of a heavenly frame poſſeſſes our affections here, the more ſettled and uniform will our hearts be in all their motions to God, and operations about him.

Excite a dependence on him, *Pro.* 16. 3. *Commit thy works to the Lord, and thy thoughts ſhall be eſtabliſhed.* Let us go out in Gods ſtrength and not in our own; vain is the help of man in any thing, and vain is the help of the heart: 'Tis through God only we can do valiantly in ſpiritual concerns as well as temporal; the want of this makes but ſlight impreſſions upon the Spirit.

Direction 3. *Nouriſh right conceptions of the Majeſty of God in your minds.* Let us conſider, that we are drawing to God; the moſt amiable Object, the beſt of Beings, worthy of infinite honour, and highly meriting the higheſt affections we can give; a God that made the world by a word; that upholds the great frame of Heaven and Earth; a Majeſty above the conceptions of Angels; who uſes not his power to ſtrike us to our deſerved puniſhment, but his love and bounty to allure us; a God that gave all the Creatures to ſerve us, and can in a trice make them as much our Enemies as he hath now made them our Servants. Let us view him in his greatneſs, and in his goodneſs, that our hearts may have a true value of the worſhip of ſo great a Majeſty, and count it the moſt worthy employment with all diligence to attend upon him. When we have a fear of God, it will make our worſhip ſerious; when we have a joy in God, it will make our worſhip durable. Our affections will be raiſed, when we repreſent God in the moſt reverential, endearing, and obliging circumſtances. We honour the Majeſty of God, when we conſider him with due reverence according to the greatneſs and perfection of his works; and in this reverence of his Majeſty doth worſhip chiefly conſiſt. Low thoughts of God will make

make low frames in us before him: If we thought God an infinite glorious Spirit, how would our hearts be lower than our knees in his presence? How humbly, how believingly pleading is the *Psalmist*, when he considers God to be without comparison in the Heavens; *to whom none of the Sons of the mighty can be likened*; when there was none like to him in strength or faithfulness round about* ? We should have also deep impressions of the Omniscience of God; and remember we have to deal with a God that searcheth the heart and tryeth the reins; to whom the most secret temper is as visible, as the loudest words are Audible; that though man judges by outward expressions, God judges by inward affections. As the Law of God regulates the inward frames of the heart; so the eye of God pitches upon the inward intentions of the Soul. If God were visibly present with us, should we not approach to him with strong affections; summon our Spirits to attend upon him; behave our selves modestly before him? Let us consider, he is as really present with us, as if he were visible to us; let us therefore preserve a strong sense of the presence of God. No man but one out of his wits, when he were in the presence of a Prince, and making a speech to him; would break off at every period, and run after the catching of Butter-flyes. Remember in all worship you are before the Lord, to whom all things are open and naked.

* Psal. 89. 6, 7, 8.

Direction 4. *Let us take heed of inordinate desires after the world.* As the world steals away a mans heart from the Word, so it doth from all other worship; *It chokes the Word** ; it stifles all the spiritual breathings after God in every duty: The edge of the Soul is blunted by it, and made too dull for such sublime exercises. The *Apostles* rule in Prayer, when he joyns *sobriety with watching unto Prayer*, is of concern in all worship, sobriety in the pursuite and use of all worldly things. A man drunk with worldly fumes cannot watch, cannot be heavenly, affectionate, spiritual in service. There is a magnetick force in the Earth, to hinder our flights to Heaven: Birds, when they take their first flights from the Earth, have more flutterings of their wings, than when they are mounted further in the Air, and got more without the Sphear of the Earths attractiveness; the motion of their wings is more steady, that you can scarce perceive them stir; they move lik a Ship with a full Gale. The world is a clog upon the Soul, and a bar to spiritual frames: 'Tis as hard to elevate the heart to God in the midst of a hurry of worldly affairs, as it is difficult to meditate when we are near a great noise of waters falling from a Precipice, or in the midst of a Volley of Muskets. Thick claiy affections bemire the heart, and make it unfit for such high flights it is to take in worship: Therefore get your hearts clear from worldly thoughts and desires, if you would be more spiritual in worship.

* Mat. 13. 27.

* 1 Pet. 4. 7.

5. *Let us be deeply sensible of our present wants, and the supplies we may meet with in worship.* Cold affections to the things we would have, will grow cooler: Weakness of desire for the Communications in worship, will freez our hearts at the time of worship, and make way for vain and foolish diversions. A Begger that is ready to perish, and knows he is next door to ruin, will not slightly and dully beg an Alms; and will not be diverted from his importunity by every slight call, or the moving of an Atom in the Air. Is it Pardon we would have? Let us apprehend the blackness of sin with the aggravations of it as it respects God; Let us be deeply sensible of the want of pardon and worth of mercy, and get our affections into such a frame, as a condemned man would do: Let us consider, that as we are now at the Throne of Gods grace, we shall shortly be at the Bar of Gods Justice; and if the Soul should be forlorn there, how fixedly and earnestly would it plead for mercy? Let us endeavour to stir up the same affections now, which we have seen some dying men have, and which we suppose despairing Souls would have done at Gods Tribunal.

* We must be sensible that the life or death of our Souls depends upon worship. Would we not be ashamed to be ridiculous in our carriage while we are eating; and shall we not be ashamed to be cold or garish before God, when the Salvation of our Souls as well as the Honour of God is concerned? If we did see the heaps of sins, the eternity of punishment due to them; If we did see an angry and offended Judge; If we did see the riches of mercy, the glorious outgoings of God in the Sanctuary, the blessed Doles he gives out to men when they spiritually attend upon him; both the one and the other would make us perform our duties humbly, sincerely, earnestly, and affectionately, and wait upon him with our whole Souls, to

* *Guliel Paris* Rhetor. Divin. cap. 26. p. 350. Col. 1.

have miſery averted and mercy beſtowed. Let our ſenſe of this be encouraged by the conſideration of our Saviour preſenting his merits; With what affection doth he preſent his merits, his blood ſhed upon the Croſs now in Heaven? And ſhall our hearts be cold and frozen, flitting and unſteady, when his affections are ſo much concerned? Chriſt doth not preſent any Mans caſe and duties without a ſenſe of his wants, and ſhall we have none of our own?

Let me add this; let us affect our hearts with a ſenſe of what ſupplies we have met with in former worſhip, The delightful remembrance of what converſe we have had with God in former worſhip, would ſpiritualize our hearts for the preſent worſhip. Had *Peter* had a view of Chriſts glory in the Mount, freſh in his thoughts, he would not ſo eaſily have turned his back upon his Maſter: Nor would the *Iſralites* have been at leaſure for their Idolatry, had they preſerved the ſenſe of the Majeſty of God diſcovered in his late Thunders from Mount *Sinai*.

6. *If any thing intrudes that may choak the Worſhip, caſt it ſpeedily out.* We cannot hinder Satan and our own Corruption from preſenting Coolers to us, but we may hinder the ſucceſs of them: We cannot hinder the Gnats from buzing about us when we are in our buſineſs, but we may prevent them from ſetling upon us. A man that is running on a conſiderable Errand, will ſhun all unneceſſary diſcourſe that may make him forget or loyter in his buſineſs. What though there may be ſomething offered that is good in it ſelf; yet if it hath a tendency to deſpoil God of his honour, and our ſelves of the ſpiritual intentneſs in worſhip, ſend it away. Thoſe that weed a Field of Corn, examine not the nature and perticular virtues of the Weeds; but conſider only how they choak the Corn, to which the native juyce of the Soil is deſign'd. Conſider what you are about; and if any thing interpoſe that may divert you, or cool your affections in your preſent worſhip, caſt it out.

7. *As to private worſhip, let us lay hold of the moſt melting opportunities and frames.* When we find our hearts in a more than ordinary ſpiritual frame, let us look upon it as a Call from God to attend him: Such impreſſions and motions are Gods Voice, inviting us into communion with him in ſome particular act of worſhip, and promiſing us ſome ſucceſs in it. When the *Pſalmiſt* had a ſecret motion to *ſeek Gods face*, and complied with it *, the iſſue is the encouragement of his heart, which breaks out into an exhortation to others to be of good courage, and wait on the Lord, *v.* 13, 14. *Wait on the Lord, be of good courage and he ſhall ſtrengthen thy heart, wait I ſay on the Lord.*

* Pſal. 27. 8.

* One blow will do more on the Iron when it is hot, than a hundred when it is cold: Melted Metals may be ſtampt with any impreſſion; but once hardned, will with difficulty be brought into the figure we intend.

* *Reynold's.*

8. *Let us examin our ſelves at the end of every act of worſhip, and chide our ſelves for any carnality we perceive in them.* Let us take a review of them, and examine the reaſon; why art thou ſo low and carnal O my Soul? As *David* did of his diſquietedneſs, *Pſalm* 42. 5. *Why art thou caſt down O my Soul, and why art thou diſquieted within me?* If any unworthy frames have ſurprized us in worſhip, let us ſeek them out after worſhip; call them to the bar; make an exact ſcrutiny into the cauſes of them, that we may prevent their incurſions another time; let our pulſes beat quick, by way of anger and indignation againſt them: This would be a repairing what hath been amiſs; otherwiſe they may grow, and clog an after worſhip more than they did a former. Dayly examination is an Antidote againſt the temptations of the following day, and conſtant examination of our ſelves after duty, is a Preſervative againſt vain encroachments in following duties; and upon the finding them out, let us apply the blood of Chriſt by Faith for our Cure, and draw ſtrength from the death of Chriſt for the conqueſt of them, and let us alſo be humbled for them. God lifts up the humble: When we are humbled for our carnal frames in one duty, we ſhall find our ſelves by the Grace of God more elevated in the next.

A DISCOURSE UPON THE ETERNITY OF GOD.

Psalm 90. 2.

Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the Earth and the World; even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

THE *Title* of this *Psalm* is a Prayer; The Author *Moses*. Some think not only this, but the Ten following *Psalms* were composed by him. The Title wherewith he is dignified, is *The Man of God*, as also in *Deut.* 33. 1. One inspir'd by him, to be his Interpreter, and deliver his Oracles; One particularly directed by him: * One who as a Servant, did diligently employ himself in his Masters business, and acted for the glory of God; * He was the Minister of the Old-Testament, and the Prophet of the New.

* *Coccei* in Loc.

* *Austin* in Loc.

There are *two parts* of this Psalm.

1. *A complaint of the frailty of Mans Life in general*, verse 3, 4, 5, 6. And then a *particular complaint of the condition of the Church*, v. 8, 9, 10. * *Parens* in loc.

2. A Prayer, v. 12.

But before he speaks of the shortness of human life, he fortifies them by the consideration of the refuge they had, and should find in God, *v.* 1. *Lord thou hast been our dwelling place in all Generations.*

We have had no settled abode in the Earth, since the time of *Abraham*'s being called out from *Ur* of the *Chaldees*: We have had *Canaan* in a promise, we have it not yet in possession; We have been exposed to the Cruelties of an oppressing Enemy, and the incommodities of a desert Wilderness; we have wanted the fruits of the Earth, but not the dews of Heaven. *Thou hast been our dwelling place in all Generations. Abraham* was under thy Conduct; *Isaac* and *Jacob* under thy Care: Their Posterity were multiplied by thee, and that under their oppressions. Thou hast been our Shield against dangers, our security in the times of trouble: When we were pursued to the Red-sea, it was not a Creature delivered us; and when we feared the pinching of our Bowels in the Desert, it was no Creature rain'd *Manna* upon us. Thou hast been our dwelling place; Thou hast kept open house for us, sholtered us against storms, and preserved us from mischief, as a house doth an Inhabitant from wind and weather; and that not in one or two, but in all Generations: Some think

an alluſion is here made to the Ark, to which they were to have recourſe in all emergencies. Our refuge and defence hath not been from created things; not from the Ark, but from the God of the Ark.

Obſerve,

1. *God is a perpetual refuge and ſecurity to his People.* His Providence is not confin'd to one Generation; 'tis not one Age only that taſtes of his bounty and compaſſion: His eye never yet ſlept, nor hath he ſuffered the little Ship of his Church to be ſwallowed up, though it hath been toſt upon the waves: He hath always been an Haven to preſerve us, a Houſe to ſecure us; He hath always had compaſſions to pity us, and power to protect us; He hath had a Face to ſhine, when the world hath had an angry Countenance to frown; * He brought *Enoch* home by an extraordinary tranſlation from a brutiſh world; and when he was reſolved to reckon with men for their brutiſh lives, he lodged *Noah*, the *Phœnix* of the world, in an Ark, and kept him alive as a ſpark in the midſt of many waters, whereby to rekindle a Church in the world: In all Generations he is a dwelling place, to ſecure his people here, or entertain them above.

* *Theodoret* in loc.

His Providence is not wearied nor his Care fainting: He never wanted Will to relieve us, *For he hath been our refuge*; Nor ever can want Power to ſupport us; *for he is a God from everlaſting to everlaſting.* The Church never wanted a Pilot to ſteer her, and a Rock to ſhelter her, and daſh in pieces the waves which threaten her.

2. *How worthy is it to remember former benefits, when we come to beg for new?* Never were the Records of Gods mercies ſo exactly reviſed, as when his people have ſtood in need of new Editions of his Power. How neceſſary are our wants to ſtir us up to pay the rent of thankfulneſs in arrear? He renders himſelf doubly unworthy of the mercies he wants, that doth not gratefully acknowledge the mercies he hath received. God ſcarce promiſed any deliverance to the *Iſralites*, and they in their diſtreſs ſcarce prayed for any deliverance, but that from *Egypt* was mentioned on both ſides; by God to encourage them, and by them to acknowledge their confidence in him. The greater our dangers, the more we ſhould call to mind Gods former kindneſs. We are not only thankfully to acknowledge the mercies beſtowed upon our perſons, or in our age, but thoſe of former times. Thou haſt been our dwelling place *in all Generations.*

Moſes was not living in the former Generations, yet he appropriates the former mercies to the preſent Age. Mercies as well as Generations proceed out of the loyns of thoſe that have gone before. All Mankind are but one *Adam*; the whole Chuch but one Body.

In the *ſecond verſe* he backs his former conſideration.

1. *By the greatneſs of his Power in forming the world.*

2. *By the boundleſneſs of his duration*; *From everlaſting to everlaſting.* As thou haſt been our dwelling place, and expended upon us the ſtrength of thy power, and riches of thy love; ſo we have no reaſon to doubt the continuance on thy part, if we be not wanting on our parts; For the vaſt Mountains, and fruitful Earth are the works of thy hands; and there is leſs power requiſite for our relief, than there was for their Creation: and though ſo much ſtrength hath been upon various occaſions manifeſted, yet thy Arm is not weakned; for *from everlaſting to everlaſting, thou art God* *.

* אל ſtrong.

* Thou haſt always been God, and no time can be aſſigned as the beginning of thy Being: The Mountains are not of ſo long a ſtanding as thy ſelf; they are the effects of thy power, and therefore cannot be equal to thy duration; ſince they are effects, they ſuppoſe a precedency of their cauſe. If we would look back, we can reach no further then the beginning of the Creation, and account the years from the firſt foundation of the world; but after that we muſt loſe our ſelves in the Abyſs of *Eternity*; we have no Clew to guide our thoughts; we can ſee no bounds in thy Eternity: But as for Man he traverſeth the world a few days, and by thy order pronounced concerning all men, returns to the Duſt, and moulders into the Grave.

* *Amyrald.* in loc.

By Mountains ſome underſtand Angels, as being Creatures of a more elevated Nature: By Earth, they underſtand humane Nature, the Earth being the habitation of Men. There is no need to divert in this place, from the Letter to ſuch a ſenſe.

The

The deſcription ſeems to be poetical, and amounts to this; He neither began with the beginning of Time, nor will expire with the End of it *: He did not begin when he made himſelf known to our Fathers; but his being did precede the Creation of the world; before any created Being was formed, and any time ſettled.

* ἀναρχος καὶ ἀτελεύτητος, *Theodoret* in loc.

Before the Mountains were brought forth, Or before they were begotten or born; The word being uſed in thoſe ſenſes in Scripture; before they ſtood up higher than the reſt of the earthly Maſs God had created. It ſeems that Mountains were not caſually caſt up by the force of the deluge, ſoftning the Ground, and driving ſeveral parcels of it together to grow up into a maſſy body, as the Sea doth the Sand in ſeveral places; but they were at firſt formed by God.

The Eternity of God is here deſcribed.

1. *In his Priority* [*Before the World.*]

2. *In the extenſion of his duration.* [*From everlaſting to everlaſting, thou art God.*] He was before the world, yet he neither began nor ends: He is not a Temporary, but an eternal God: It takes in both parts of Eternity, what was before the Creation of the World, and what is after: Though the Eternity of God be one permanent ſtate without ſucceſſion, yet the Spirit of God ſuiting himſelf to the weakneſs of our conception, divides it into two parts, one paſt before the foundation of the world, another to come after the deſtruction of the world; as he did exiſt before all ages, and as he will exiſt after all ages.

Many Truths lye coucht in the *verſe.*

1. *The World hath a beginning of being.* It was not from Eternity, it was once nothing; had it been of a very long duration, ſome Records would have remained of ſome memorable actions done of a longer date than any extant,

2. *The World owes it Being to the creating Power of God.* [*Thou hadſt formed it*] out of nothing into being, *Thou,* that is God; it could not ſpring into being of it ſelf; it was nothing; it muſt have a Former.

3. *God was in being before the world.* The cauſe muſt be before the Effect; that Word which gives Being muſt be before that which receives Being.

4. *This Being was from Eternity.* [*From Everlaſting*]

5. *This being ſhall endure to Eternity.* [*To Everlaſting*]

6. *There is but one God, one Eternal.* [*From everlaſting to everlaſting, thou art God.*] None elſe but one hath the Property of Eternity; the Gods of the Heathen cannot lay claim to it.

Doct. *God is of an eternal duration.* The Eternity of God is the foundation of the ſtability of the Covenant, the great comfort of a Chriſtian. The deſign of God in *Scripture* is to ſet forth his dealing with men in the way of a Covenant. The Priority of God before all things begins the Bible: *In the beginning God created.* His Covenant can have no foundation, but in his duration before and after the world: And *Moſes* here mentions his Eternity; not only with reſpect to the Eſſence of God, but to his fœderal Providence: As he is the dwelling place of his People in all Generations. The duration of God for ever, is more ſpoken of in Scripture than his Eternity *à parte ante,* though that is the foundation of all the comfort we can take from his Immortality: If he had a beginning, he might have an end; and ſo all our happineſs, hope and being would expire with him; but the Scripture ſometimes takes notice of his being without beginning, as well as without end. * *Thou art from everlaſting.* * *Bleſſed be God from everlaſting to everlaſting:* * *I was ſet up from everlaſting:* If his wiſdom were from everlaſting, himſelf was from everlaſting: Whether we underſtand it of Chriſt the Son of God, or of the Eſſential wiſdom of God, 'tis all one to the preſent purpoſe. The Wiſdom of God ſuppoſeth the Eſſence of God, as habits in Creatures ſuppoſe the being of ſome power or faculty as their Subject. The Wiſdom of God ſuppoſeth Mind and Underſtanding, Eſſence and Subſtance.

* Gen. 1. 1.

* *Calv.* in loc.

* Pſal. 93. 2.
* Pſal. 41. 13.
* Pro. 8. 23.

The notion of *Eternity* is difficult, as *Auſtin* ſaid * of time; If no man will ask me the queſtion what time is; I know well enough what it is: But if any ask me what it is, I know not how to explain it: So may I ſay of Eternity; 'tis eaſie in the word pronounced, but hardly underſtood, and more hardly expreſt; 'tis better expreſt by negative than poſitive words.

* *Confeſſ.* lib. 11. *Confeſ.* 15.

Though we cannot comprehend *Eternity,* yet we may comprehend that there is an

an Eternity; as though we cannot comprehend the Eſſence of God, what he is, yet we may comprehend that he is; we may underſtand the notion of his Exiſtence, though we cannot underſtand the infiniteneſs of his nature; Yet we may better underſtand Eternity than Infiniteneſs; we can better conceive a time with the addition of numberleſs days and years, than imagin a Being without bounds; whence the
* Rom. 1. 20 *Apoſtle* joyns his Eternity with his Power; *His Eternal Power, and God-head*; Becauſe next to the Power of God apprehended in the Creature, we come neceſſarily by reaſoning to acknowledge the Eternity of God. He that hath an incomprehenſible Power, muſt needs have an Eternity of Nature: His Power is moſt ſenſible in the Creatures to the eye of man, and his Eternity eaſily from thence deducible by the reaſon of Man.

Eternity is a perpetual duration, which hath neither beginning nor end: Time hath both. Thoſe things we ſay are in time, that have beginning, grow up by degrees, have ſucceſſion of parts: Eternity is contrary to time, and is therefore a permanent and immutable ſtate; a perfect poſſeſſion of life without any variation: It comprehends in it ſelf all years, all Ages, all periods of Ages; It never begins: it endures after every duration of time, and never ceaſeth; it doth as much out-run time, as it went before the beginning of it: Time ſuppoſeth ſomething before it, but there can be nothing before Eternity, it were not then Eternity. Time hath a continual ſucceſſion; the former time paſſeth away, and another ſucceeds; the laſt year is not this year, nor this year the next. We muſt conceive of Eternity contrary to the notion of time; As the nature of time conſiſts in the ſucceſſion of parts, ſo
* *Moulin.* Coo. 1. Ser. 2. p. 52. the *Nature of Eternity* in an infinite immutable duration *. Eternity and Time differ as the Sea and Rivers; the Sea never changes place, and is always one water; but the Rivers glide along, and are ſwallowed up in the Sea; ſo is time by eternity.

A thing is ſaid to be *eternal*, or *everlaſting* rather, in Scripture,

2. *When it is of a long duration, though it will have an end*; When it hath no meaſures of time determined to it; ſo Circumciſion is ſaid to be in the Fleſh for an
* Gen. 17. 14. *everlaſting Covenant** ; not purely everlaſting, but ſo long as that adminiſtration of the Covenant ſhould endure.

And ſo when a Servant would not leave his Maſter, but would have his ear bored; 'tis ſaid, he ſhould be a Servant *for ever*, * i. e. Till the *Jubilee*, which was every
* Deut. 15. 17. fiftieth year: So the Meat-offering they were to offer, is ſaid to be *Perpetual*:
* Levit. 6 20. * *Canaan* is ſaid to be given to *Abraham* for an *everlaſting* poſſeſſion *: When as the
* Gen. 17. 8. *Jews* are expelled from *Canaan*, which is given a Prey to the barbarous Nations. Indeed Circumciſion was not everlaſting; yet the ſubſtance of the Covenant whereof this was a ſign, *viz.* That God would be the God of Believers, endures for ever; and that Circumciſion of the heart which was ſignified by Circumciſion of the fleſh, ſhall remain for ever in the Kingdom of Glory: It was not ſo much the laſting of the ſign, as of the thing ſignified by it, and the Covenant ſealed by it: The ſign had its abolition, ſo that the Apoſtle is ſo peremptory in it, that he aſſerts, that if any went
* Gal. 5. 2. about to eſtabliſh it, he excluded himſelf from a participation of Chriſt *. The Sacrifices were to be perpetual, in regard of the thing ſignified by them, *viz.* The death of Chriſt, which was to endure in the efficacy of it: And the Paſſover was to be for ever *, in regard of the Redemption ſignified by it, which was to be of ever-
* Exod 12. 24. laſting remembrance. *Canaan* was to be an everlaſting poſſeſſion in regard of the glory of Heaven typified, to be for ever conferr'd upon the ſpiritual Seed of *Abraham*.

3. *When a thing hath no end, though it hath a beginning.* So Angels, and Souls are everlaſting; though their being ſhall never ceaſe, yet there was a time when their being began; they were nothing before they were ſomething, though they ſhall never be nothing again, but ſhall live in endleſs happineſs or miſery.

But *that properly is eternal, that hath neither beginning nor end*; and thus Eternity is a Property of God. In this Doctrin I ſhall ſhew

1. *How God is eternal, or in what reſpects Eternity is his Property.*
2. *That he is eternal, and muſt needs be ſo.*
3. *That Eternity is only proper to God, and not common to him with any Creature.*
4. The *Uſe*.

1. *How*

1. *How God is eternal, or in what reſpects he is ſo.* *Eternity* is a Negative Attribute, and is a denying of God any meaſures of time, as Immenſity is a denying of him any bounds of place; As Immenſity is the diffuſion of his Eſſence, ſo Eternity is the duration of his Eſſence: And when we ſay God is eternal, we exclude from him all poſſibility of beginning and ending, all flux and change: As the Eſſence of God cannot be bounded by any place, ſo it is not to be limited by any time; as it is his Immenſity to be every where, ſo it is his Eternity to be always. * As created things are ſaid to be ſomewhere in regard of place, and to be preſent, paſt, or future, in regard of time; ſo the Creator in regard of place, is every where; in regard of time, is *ſemper*: * His duration is as endleſs, as his Eſſence is boundleſs; He always was and always will be, and will no more have an End than he had a Beginning; and this is an excellency belonging to the Supream Being: * As his Eſſence comprehends all beings and exceeds them, and his Immenſity ſurmounts all places; ſo his Eternity comprehends all times, all durations, and infinitely excells them.

* *Gaſſend.*

* *Crellius* de Deo cap. 18. p. 41.
* *Lingend* Tom. 2. p. 496.

1. *God is without beginning.*

* *In the beginning* God created the World: God was then before the beginning of it; and what point can be ſet wherein God began, if he were before the beginning of created things? God was without beginning, though all other things had time and beginning from him. As Unity is before all Numbers, ſo is God before all his Creatures. *Abraham* called upon the name of the *everlaſting* God; * The eternal God: 'Tis oppoſed to the Heathen Gods, which were but of *Yeſterday*, new coyn'd, and ſo new; but the Eternal God, was before the world was made: In that ſenſe it is to be underſtood, * *The Myſtery which was kept ſecret ſince the world began, but now is made manifeſt; and by the Scriptures of the Prophets according to the Command of the everlaſting God, made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith.* The Goſpel is not preached by the Command of a new and temporary God, but of that God that was before all Ages; though the manifeſtation of it be in time, yet the purpoſe and reſolve of it was from Eternity.

* Gen. 1. 1.

* Gen. 21. 33. אלעולם

* Rom. 16. 26.

If there were *Decrees* before the foundation of the World, there was a *Decreer* before the foundation of the World: Before the foundation of the world he lov'd Chriſt as a Mediator: * A fore-ordination of him was *before the foundation* of the world; a Choice of men, and therefore a Chooſer *before the foundation* of the world; a *Grace given in Chriſt before the world began*, * and therefore a Donor of that Grace. From thoſe places, ſaith *Crellius*, it appears that God was before the foundation of the world, but they do not aſſert an abſolute Eternity; * But to be before all Creatures, is equivalent to his Being from Eternity. Time began with the foundation of the world, but God being before time, could have no beginning in time: Before the beginning of the Creation, and the beginning of Time, there could be nothing but *Eternity*; nothing but what was uncreated, that is nothing but what was *without beginning*. To be in time, is, to have a beginning; to be before all time, is never to have a beginning, but always to be: For as between the Creator and Creatures there is no Medium, ſo between Time and Eternity, there is no Medium. 'Tis as eaſily deduced, that he that was before all Creatures is Eternal, as he that made all Creatures is God: If he had a beginning, he muſt have it from another, or from himſelf; if from another, that from whom he received his Being would be better than he, ſo more a God than he. He cannot be God, that is not Supream; he cannot be Supream that owes his being to the Power of another: He would not be ſaid *only* to have Immortality as he is, * if he had it dependent upon another; nor could he have a beginning from himſelf; if he had given beginning to himſelf, then he was once nothing, there was a time when he was not; if he was not, how could he be the Cauſe of himſelf? 'Tis impoſſible for any to give a Beginning and Being to it ſelf: If it acts, it muſt exiſt; and ſo exiſt, before it exiſted: A thing would exiſt as a Cauſe, before it exiſted as an Effect. He that is not, cannot be the Cauſe that he is; If therefore God doth exiſt, and hath not his being from another, he muſt exiſt from Eternity: Therefore when we ſay God is of and from himſelf, we mean not that God gave Being to himſelf; but it is negatively to be underſtood, that he hath no cauſe of Exiſtence without himſelf.

* John 17. 24.

* Eph. 1. 4.
* 2 Tim. 1. 9.

* *Coccei* Sum. p. 48. Theol. *Gerhard* Exeges. cap. 86. 4. p. 266.

* 1 Tim. 6. 16.

Whatſoever Number of Millions of Millions of Years we can imagin before the Creati-

Creation of the World, yet God was infinitely before thoſe; he is therefore called
* Dan. 7. 9. the Ancient of Days,* as being before all days and time, and eminently containing in himſelf all times and ages: Though indeed God cannot properly be called ancient, that will teſtifie that he is decaying, and ſhortly will not be; no more than he can be called young, which would ſignifie that he was not long before. All created things are new and freſh; but no Creature can find out any beginning of God: 'Tis impoſſible there ſhould be any beginning of him.

2. *God is without end.* He always was, always is, and always will be what he is; He remains always the ſame in Being; ſo far from any *change*, that *no ſhadow* of it can
* James 1. 17. touch him: * He will continue in being, as long as he hath already enjoy'd it; and if we could add never ſo many Millions of years together, we are ſtill as far from an
* Pſal. 9. 7. end, as from a beginning; for *the Lord ſhall indure for ever*: * As it is impoſſible he ſhould not be, being from all Eternity; ſo it is impoſſible that he ſhould not be to all Eternity. The Scripture is moſt plentiful in teſtimonies of this Eternity of God,
* Rev. 4. 9,10. *à parte poſt*, or after the Creation of the world: He is ſaid to *live for ever*. * The Earth ſhall *periſh*, but God ſhall *endure for ever*, and his *years ſhall have no end*.
* Pſal. 102. 27. Plants and Animals grow up from ſmall beginnings; arrive to their full growth and decline again, and have always remarkable alterations in their nature; But there is no declination in God by all the revolutions of time: Hence ſome think the incorruptibility of the Deity was ſignified by the *Shittim*, or *Cedar* wood, whereof the
* Exod. 25.10. Ark was made, it being of an incorruptible nature *.

That which had no beginning of duration can never have an end, or any interruptions in it. Since God never depended upon any, what ſhould make him ceaſe to be what eternally he hath been, or put a ſtop to the continuance of his perfections? He cannot will his own deſtruction, that is againſt univerſal nature in all things to ceaſe from being, if they can preſerve themſelves. He cannot deſert his own Being, becauſe he cannot but love himſelf as the beſt and chiefeſt good. The reaſon that any thing decays, is either its own native weakneſs, or ſuperior Power of
* *Crellius de Deo cap.* 18. *p.* 41. ſomething contrary to it: * There is no weakneſs in the nature of God that can introduce any Corruption, becauſe he is infinitely ſimple without any mixture; Nor can he be overpowered by any thing elſe; a weaker cannot hurt him, and a ſtronger than he there cannot be; Nor can he be outwited or circumvented, becauſe of his infinite Wiſdom: As he received his Being from none, ſo he cannot be deprived of it by any; As he doth neceſſarily exiſt, ſo he doth neceſſarily always exiſt: This indeed is the Property of God; nothing ſo proper to him, as always to be. Whatſoever perfection any Being hath, if it be *not eternal*, it is *not*
* 1 Tim. 6. 16. *Daille* in loc. *divine*. God *only* is immortal; * he only is ſo by a neceſſity of nature: Angels, Souls and bodies too, after the Reſurrection ſhall be immortal; not by nature but grant; they are ſubject to return to nothing, if that word that raiſed them from nothing ſhould ſpeak them into nothing again: 'Tis as eaſie with God to ſtrip them of it, as to inveſt them with it; nay, it is impoſſible but that they ſhould periſh, if God ſhould withdraw his Power from preſerving them, which he exerted in creating them: But God is immovably fixed in his own Being; that as none gave him his Life, ſo none can deprive him of his Life, or the leaſt particle of it; not a jot of the happineſs and life, which God infinitely poſſeſſes, can be loſt: It will be as durable to everlaſting, as it hath been poſſeſſed from everlaſting.

3. *There is no ſucceſſion in God.* God is without ſucceſſion or change; 'Tis a part of Eternity; *From everlaſting to everlaſting* he is *God*, i. e. the ſame. God doth not only always remain in Being, but he always remains the ſame in that Being,
* Pſal. 102. 27. * *Thou art the ſame.* The Being of Creatures is ſucceſſive; the Being of God is permanent, and remains intire with all its perfections, unchanged in an infinite duration: Indeed the firſt notion of Eternity is to be without beginning and end, which notes to us the duration of a Being in regard of its Exiſtence; but to have no ſucceſſion, nothing firſt or laſt, notes rather the perfection of a Being in regard of its Eſſence.

The Creatures are in a perpetual Flux; ſomething is acquired, or ſomething loſt every day. A Man is the ſame in regard of Exiſtence when he is a Man, as he was when he was a Child; but there is a new ſucceſſion of quantities and qualities in him; every day he acquires ſomething till he comes to his maturity; every day he loſeth

ſome-

ſomething till he comes to his Period. A Man is not the ſame at night that he was in the morning; ſomething is expir'd, and ſomething is added; every day there is a change in his age, a change in his ſubſtance, a change in his accidents: But God hath his whole Being in one and the ſame point, or moment of Eternity; He receives nothing as an Addition to what he was before; He loſeth nothing of what he was before; He is always the ſame excellency and perfection in the ſame infiniteneſs as ever; His *years* do *not fail*, * his years do not come and go as others do; there is not this day, to morrow, or yeſterday with him: As nothing is paſt or future with him in regard of Knowledge, but all things are preſent; ſo nothing is paſt or future in regard of his Eſſence; He is not in his Eſſence this day what he was not before, or will be the next day and year what he is not now; * All his perfections are moſt perfect in him every moment, before all Ages, after all Ages; As he hath his whole Eſſence undivided in every place, as well as in immenſe ſpace; ſo he hath all his Being in one moment of time, as well as in infinite intervalls of time. * Some illuſtrate the difference between Eternity and Time, by the ſimilitude of a Tree, or a Rock ſtanding upon the ſide of a River, or Shore of the Sea; the Tree ſtands always the ſame and unmoved, while the waters of the River glide along at the foot; The Flux is in the River, but the Tree acquires nothing but a diverſe reſpect and relation of preſence to the various parts of the River as they flow; The waters of the River preſs on, and puſh forward one another, and what the River had this minute, it hath not the ſame, the next: So are all ſublunary things in a continual Flux. And though the Angels have no ſubſtantial change, yet they have an accidental; for the actions of the Angels this day, are not the ſame individual actions which they performed yeſterday: But in God there is no change, He always remains the ſame.

* Heb. 1. 12.

* *Leſſius* de perfect. divin. lib. 4. cap. 1.

* *Gamacheus* in Aquin part. 1. Qu. 10 cap. 1.

* Of a Creature it may be ſaid, he was, or he is, or he ſhall be; Of God it cannot be ſaid, but only he is; He is what he always was, and he is what he always will be; whereas a Creature is what he was not, and will be what he is not now; As it may be ſaid of the flame of a Candle, 'tis flame; but it is not the ſame individual flame as was before, nor is it the ſame that will be preſently after; there is a continual diſſolution of it into Air, and a continual ſupply for the generation of more; While it continues, it may be ſaid there is a flame; yet not intirely one, but in a ſucceſſion of parts: So of a Man it may be ſaid, he is in a ſucceſſion of parts; but he is not the ſame that he was, and will not be the ſame that he is: But God is the ſame without any ſucceſſion of part: and of time; of him it may be ſaid, He is; He is no more now than he was, and he ſhall be no more hereafter than he is. * God poſſeſſes a firm and abſolute Being, always conſtant to himſelf; He ſees all things ſliding under him in a continual variation; He beholds the revolutions in the world without any change of his moſt glorious and immoveable nature: All other things paſs from one ſtate to another; from their Original, to their Eclipſe and deſtruction: But God poſſeſſes his Being in one indiviſible point, having neither beginning, end, nor middle.

* *Gaſſend.* Tom. 1. Phyſic. § 1. l. 2. c. 7. p. 223.

* *Daille* Melange de Sermon p. 252.

1. *There is no ſucceſſion in the Knowledge of God.* The variety of ſucceſſions and changes in the world, make not ſucceſſion or new Objects in the Divine Mind; for all things are preſent to him from Eternity in regard of his knowledge, though they are not actually preſent in the world in regard of their Exiſtence: He doth not know one thing now, and another anon; He ſees all things at once; *known unto God are all things from the beginning of the world*: * But in their true order of ſucceſſion, as they lye in the eternal Council of God, to be brought forth in time. Though there be a ſucceſſion and order of things as they are wrought, yet there is no ſucceſſion in God in regard of his knowledge of them. God knows the things that ſhall be wrought, and the order of them in their being brought upon the Stage of the World; yet both the things and the order he knows by one act. Though all things be preſent with God, yet they are preſent in him in the order of their appearance in the world, and not ſo preſent with him as if they ſhould be wrought at once. The Death of Chriſt was to precede his Reſurrection in order of time; there is a ſucceſſion in this; both at once are known by God, yet the act of his knowledge is not exerciſed about Chriſt as dying, and riſing at the ſame time; ſo that there is ſucceſſion in things, when there is no ſucceſſion in Gods knowledge of them. Since

* Acts 15. 18.

God knows time, he knows all things as they are in time; He doth not know all things to be at once, though he knows at once what is, has been, and will be. All things are paſt, preſent, and to come in regard of their Exiſtence; but there is not paſt, preſent, and to come in regard of Gods Knowledge of them; * becauſe he ſees and knows not by any other, but by himſelf; He is his own Light by which he ſees, his own Glaſs wherein he ſees; beholding himſelf, he beholds all things.

* *Pariſienſis.*

2. *There is no ſucceſſion in the Decrees of God.* He doth not decree this now, which he decreed not before; for as his works were known from the beginning of the world, ſo his works were decreed from the beginning of the world; as they are known at once, ſo they are decreed at once; there is a ſucceſſion in the execution of them, firſt grace, then glory; but the purpoſe of God for the beſtowing of both, was in one and the ſame moment of Eternity. * *He choſe us in him before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy.* The choice of Chriſt, and the choice of ſome in him to be holy, and to be happy, were before the foundation of the world. 'Tis by the eternal Counſel of God, all things appear in time; they appear in their order according to the Counſel and Will of God from Eternity. The Redemption of the world is after the Creation of the world; but the Decree whereby the world was created, and whereby it was redeemed, was from Eternity.

* Eph. 1. 4.

4. *God is his own Eternity.* He is not eternal by grant, and the diſpoſal of any other, but by Nature and Eſſence. * The Eternity of God, is nothing elſe but the Duration of God; and the Duration of God, is nothing elſe but his Exiſtence enduring. If *Eternity* were any thing diſtinct from God, and not of the Eſſence of God; then there would be ſomething which was not God, neceſſary to perfect God. As Immortality is the great perfection of a rational Creature, ſo Eternity is the choice perfection of God, yea, the gloſs and luſtre of all others. Every perfection would be imperfect, if it were not always a perfection.

* *Calov.* Socinian.

Exiſtentia durans.

God is eſſentially whatſoever he is; and there is nothing in God but his Eſſence: Duration, or Continuance in being in Creatures, differs from their being; for they might exiſt but for one inſtant; in which caſe they may be ſaid to have being, but not duration, becauſe all duration includes *prius*, *& poſterius*. All Creatures may ceaſe from being, if it be the pleaſure of God; they are not therefore durable by their Eſſence, and therefore are not their own duration, no more than they are their own Exiſtence. And though ſome Creatures, as Angels, and Souls may be called everlaſting, as a perpetual life is communicated to them by God; yet they can never be called their own Eternity; becauſe ſuch a duration is not ſimply neceſſary, nor eſſential to them, but accidental, depending upon the pleaſure of another; there is nothing in their nature that can hinder them from loſing it, if God, from whom they received it, ſhould deſign to take it away: But as God is his own neceſſity of exiſting, ſo he is his own duration in exiſting: * As he doth neceſſarily exiſt by himſelf, ſo he will always neceſſarily exiſt by himſelf.

* *Gaſſend.*

5. Hence *all the perfections of God are eternal.* In regard of the Divine Eternity, all things in God are Eternal, his Power, Mercy, Wiſdom, Juſtice, Knowledge. God himſelf were not eternal, if any of his perfections which are eſſential to him were not eternal alſo; He had not elſe been a perfect God from all Eternity, and ſo his whole ſelf had not been eternal. If any thing belonging to the nature of a thing be wanting, it cannot be ſaid to be that thing which it ought to be. If any thing requiſite to the Nature of God had been wanting one moment, he could not have been ſaid to be an eternal God.

The ſecond Thing, *God is eternal.* The Spirit of God in Scripture condeſcends to our Capacities in ſignifying the Eternity of God by *days* and *years*, which are terms belonging to time, whereby we meaſure it: * But we muſt no more conceive that God is bounded, or meaſured by time, and hath ſucceſſion of days becauſe of thoſe expreſſions, than we can conclude him to have a Body, becauſe Members are aſcribed to him in Scripture, to help our conceptions of his glorious nature and operations.

* Pſal. 102. 27.

Though years are aſcribed to him; yet they are ſuch as cannot be numbered, cannot be finiſhed, ſince there is no proportion between the duration of God, and the years of Men. *The number of his years cannot be ſearched out; for he makes ſmall*

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the drops of water; they pour down Rain according to the vapour thereof. * The numbers of the drops of Rain which have fallen in all parts of the Earth since the Creation of the world, if substracted from the number of the years of God, would be found a small quantity, a meer nothing to the years of God. As all the Nations in the world compared with God, are but as the *drop of a Bucket, worse than nothing, than vanity*; So all the Ages of the world, if compared with God, amount not to so much as the One hundred thousandth part of a minute: The Minutes from the Creation may be numbred, but the years of the duration of God being infinite, are without measure. * Job 36. 26, 27. * Isa. 40. 15.

As *one day* is to the Life of Man, so are a Thousand years to the Life of God: * The Holy-Ghost expresseth himself to the capacity of Man, to give us some Notion of an infinite Duration, by a resemblance suted to the capacity of Man. If a Thousand years be but as a day to the Life of God; then as a year is to the Life of Man, so are Three hundred sixty five thousand years to the Life of God: And as Seventy years are to the Life of Man, so are twenty five Millions four Hundred and fifty thousand years to the life of God: Yet still, since there is no proportion between Time and Eternity, we must dart our thoughts beyond all those; * For years and days measure only the duration of created things, and of those only that are material and corporeal, subject to the motion of the Heavens, which makes days and years. * Psal. 90. 5. *Amyrald* Trin. p. 44. * *Daille* Vent. Sermons, *Ser.* 1. *sur.* 102. Psal. 27. p. 21.

Sometimes this Eternity is expresst by parts, as looking backward and forward; by the differences of time, *past*, *present* and *to come*, * *which was*, *and is*, *and is to come.* Though this might be spoken of any thing in being, though but for an hour; it was the last minute, it is now, and it will be the next minute; yet the Holy-Ghost would declare something proper to God, as including all parts of time; He always was, is now, and always shall be; It might always be said of him he was, and it may always be said of him he will be: There is no time when he began, no time when he shall cease. It cannot be said of a Creature he always was, he always is what he was, and he always will be what he is: But God always is what he was, and always will be what he is; so that it is a very significant expression of the Eternity of God as can be suted to our capacities. * Revel. 1. 8. Revel. 4. 8. *Crellius* weakens this argument *De Deo.* cap. 18. p. 42.

1. *His Eternity is evident by the Name God gives himself.* * *And God said unto Moses, I am that I am; thus shalt thou say to the Children of* Israel, *I am hath sent me unto you.* This is the Name whereby he is distinguisht from all Creatures; *I am*, is his proper name; This description being in the Present Tense, shews that his Essence knows no past, nor future: If it were *he was*, it would intimate he were not now what he once was; if it were *he will be*, it would intimate he were not yet what he will be. But *I am*; I am the only being, the root of all Beings, he is therefore at the greatest distance from not Being, and that is eternal. So that *is* signifies his Eternity, as well as his perfection and Immutability: As *I am* speaks the want of no blessedness, so it speaks the want of no duration; and therefore the *French* where ever they find this word *Jehovah* in the Scripture, which we translate *Lord*, and *Lord eternal*, render it the *Eternal.* I am always, and immutably the same. The Eternity of God is opposed to the Volubility of Time, which is extended into past, present, and to come. Our time is but a small drop, as Sand to all the Atoms and small particles of which the world is made; but God is an unbounded Sea of Being; *I am that I am*, i. e. and infinite Life. I have not that now, which I had not formerly; I shall not afterwards have that which I have not now; *I am* that in every moment which I was, and will be in all moments of time; Nothing can be added to me, nothing can be detracted from me: There is nothing superior to him, which can detract from him; nothing desirable that can be added to him. * Now if there were any beginning and end of God, any succession in him, he could not be *I am*; For in regard of what was past he would not be, in regard of what was to come he is not yet: And upon this account, a Heathen argues well, of all Creatures it may be said they were, or they will be; but of God it cannot be said any thing else but *Est*, God *is*, because he fills an eternal duration: A Creature cannot be said to be, if it be not yet, nor if it be not now, but hath been.* * Exod. 3. 14. * *Thes. Salmur.* p. 1. p. 145. Thes. 14. * *Plutarch* de *E*, 1. p. 462.

God only can be called *I am*; all Creatures have more of not being than being; for every Creature was nothing from Eternity, before it was made something in time; * *Perer.* in Exo. 3. Disput. 13.

and if it be corruptible in its whole nature, it will be nothing to Eternity after it hath been ſomething in time; and if it be not corruptible in its nature, as the Angels; or in every part of its nature, as man in regard of his Soul; yet it hath not properly a Being, becauſe it is dependent upon the pleaſure of God, to continue it, or deprive it of it; and while it is, it is mutable, and all mutability is a mixture of not being: If God therefore be properly *I am*, i. e. Being, it follows that he always was; for if he were not always, he muſt, as was argued before, be produced by ſome other, or by himſelf; By another he could not, then he had not been God but a Creature; nor by himſelf; for then as producing, he muſt be before himſelf, as produced; he had been before he was: And he always will be, for being *I am*, having all being in himſelf, and the fountain of all being to every thing elſe, how can he ever have his Name changed to *I am not?*

1. *God hath Life in himſelf*, John 5. 26. *The Father hath Life in himſelf*; He is the *living God*, therefore *ſtedfaſt for ever* *: He hath Life by his Eſſence, not by Participation; He is a Sun to give Light and Life to all Creatures, but receives not Light or Life from any thing; and therefore he hath an unlimited Life, not a drop of life but a fountain, not a ſpark of a limited life but a life tranſcending all bounds: He hath life in himſelf: All Creatures have their life in him and from him. He that hath life in himſelf doth neceſſarily exiſt, and could never be made to exiſt; for then he had not life in himſelf, but in that which made him to exiſt, and gave him life; What doth neceſſarily exiſt therefore, exiſts from Eternity; what hath being of it ſelf, could never be produced in time, could not want being one moment, becauſe it hath being from its Eſſence without influence of any efficient cauſe.

* Dan. 6. 26.

* When God pronounced his Name, *I am that I am*, Angels and Men were in being; the world had been created above two thouſand four hundred years; *Moſes* to whom he then ſpeaks, was in being; yet, God only *is*, becauſe he only hath the fountain of being in himſelf, but all that they were, was a rivulet from him; He hath from nothing elſe, that he doth ſubſiſt; every thing elſe hath its ſubſiſtence from him as their root, as the Beam from the Sun, as the Rivers and Fountains from the Sea. All life is ſeated in God, as in its proper Throne; in its moſt perfect Purity. God is Life; 'tis in him originally, radically, therefore eternally: He is a pure act, nothing but vigor and act; He hath by his nature that life, which others have by his grant; whence the *Apoſtle* ſaith *, not only that he is is immortal, but he *hath immortality* in a full poſſeſſion; fee-ſimple, not depending upon the Will of another, but containing all things within himſelf. He that hath life in himſelf, and is from himſelf, cannot but be: He alwayes was, becauſe he received his being from no other, and none can take away that being which was not given by another *. If there were any ſpace before he did exiſt, then there were ſomething which made him to exiſt; life would not then be in him, but in that which produced him into being; he could not then be God, but that other which gave him being, would be God, And to ſay, God ſprung into being by chance, when we ſee nothing in the world that is is brought forthe by chance, but hath ſome cauſe of its exiſtence, would be vain; for ſince God is a Being, Chance which is nothing, could not bring forth ſomething; and by the ſame reaſon that he ſprung up by chance, he might totally vaniſh by chance. What a ſtrange notion of a God would this be, ſuch a God that had no life in himſelf, but from chance;

* *Petav.* Theol. Dogm. Tom. 1. lib. 1. c. 6. § 6, 7.

* 1 Tim. 6. 16.

* *Amyrald* de Trinit. p. 48.

Since he had life in himſelf, and that there was no cauſe of his exiſtence; he can have no cauſe of his limitation, and can no more be determined to a time, than he can to a place. What hath life in it ſelf, hath life without bounds, and can never deſert it, nor be deprived of it: So that he lives neceſſarily, and it is abſolutely impoſſible that he ſhould not live; whereas all other things *live*, and *move*, and have their *being in him* *; and as they live by his Will, ſo they can return to nothing at his Word.

* Acts 17. 28.

3. *If God were not eternal, he were not immutable in his nature.* 'Tis contrary to the nature of immutability to be without eternity; for whatſoever begins, is changed in its paſſing from not being to being: It began to be what it was not, and if it ends, it ceaſeth to be what it was; It cannot therefore be ſaid to be God, If there were either beginning or ending, or ſucceſſion in it, *Mal.* 3. 6. *I am the Lord, I change not*, Job. 37. 23. (*Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out.*) God argues here ſaith *Calvin*, from his unchangeable nature as *Jehovah*, to his immutabili-

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ty in his purpose: Had he not been eternal, there had been the greatest change from nothing to something: A change of the Essence, is greater than a change of purpose. God is a Sun glittering always in the same glory; No growing up in Youth; no passing on to Age: If he were not without succession, standing in one point of Eternity, there would be a change from past to present, from present to future. The Eternity of God is a Shield against all kind of mutability. If any thing sprang up in the Essence of God that was not there before, he could not be said to be either an eternal, or an unchanged Substance.

4. *God could not be an infinitely perfect Being, if he were not eternal.* A finite duration is inconsistent with infinite perfection. Whatsoever is contracted within the limits of time, cannot swallow up all perfections in it self. God hath an unsearchable perfection. **Canst thou by searching find out God; canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?* He cannot be found out, he is infinite, because he is incomprehensible: Incomprehensibility ariseth from an infinite perfection, which cannot be fathom'd by the short lines of Man's Understanding: His Essence, in regard of its diffusion, and in regard of its duration, is incomprehensible as well as his action: If God therefore had beginning, he could not be infinite; if not infinite, he did not possess the highest perfection, because a perfection might be conceived beyond it; If his being could fail, he were not perfect: Can that deserve the name of the highest perfection, which is capable of corruption and dissolution? To be finite and limited, is the greatest imperfection, for it consists in a denial of being. He could not be the most blessed Being, if he were not always so, and should not for ever remain to be so; and whatsoever perfections he had, would be sowred by the thoughts, that in time they would cease; and so could not be pure perfections, because not permanent; but *He is blessed from everlasting to everlasting.* * Had he a beginning, he could not have all perfection without limitation; he would have been limited by that which gave him beginning; that which gave him being would be God, and not himself, and so more perfect than he: But since God is the most sovereign perfection, than which nothing can be imagined perfecter by the most capacious understanding, He is certainly *eternal*; being infinite, nothing can be added to him, nothing detracted from him.

* Job. 11. 7.

* Psal. 41. 13.

5. *God could not be Omnipotent, Almighty, if he were not Eternal.* The title of *Almighty*, agrees not with a nature that had a beginning; whatsoever hath a beginning was once nothing, and when it was nothing could act nothing. Where there is no being, there is no power; neither doth the title of *Almighty* agree with a perishing nature: He can do nothing to purpose, that cannot preserve himself against the outward force and violence of Enemies, or against the inward causes of corruption and dissolution. No account is to be made of man, because *his breath is in his Nostrils* *; Could a better account be made of God, if he were of the like condition? He could not properly be Almighty, that were not *always mighty*: If he be omnipotent, nothing can impair him; He that hath all power, can have no hurt*, If he doth whatsoever he pleaseth, nothing can make him miserable, since misery consists in those things which happen against our Will. The Almightiness and Eternity of God are linkt together: *I am* Alpha *and* Omega, *the beginning and the ending saith the Lord, which was, and which is, and which is to come, the Almighty*: * Almighty because Eternal, and *Eternal* because *Almighty*.

* Isa. 2. 22.

* *Voet.* Natural. Theol. p. 310.

* Rev. 1. 8.

6. *God would not be the first Cause of all if he were not Eternal*; But he is *the first*, and *the last*; the first cause of all things, the last end of all things*: That which is the first cannot begin to be, it were not then the first; it cannot cease to be: Whatsoever is dissolved, is dissolved into that whereof it doth consist, which was before it, and then it was not the *first*. * The world might not have been, it was once nothing; it must have some cause to call it out of nothing; Nothing hath no power to make it self something, there is a superior Cause: by whose Will and Power it comes into Being, and so gives all the Creatures their distinct forms.

* Rev. 1. 8. *Ficin.* de Immort. l. 2. cap. 5.

* *Cocceii* Sum. Theol.

This Power cannot but be eternal; it must be before the world; the *Founder* must be before the *Foundation**; and his Existence must be from Eternity, or we must say nothing did exist from Eternity: And if there were no being from Eternity, there could not now be any being in time: What we see, and what we are, must arise from

* *Crellius* de Deo cap. 18. p. 43.

from it ſelf or ſome other; it cannot from it ſelf: If any thing made it ſelf, it had a power to make it ſelf; it then had an active power before it had a being; It was ſomething in regard of Power, and was nothing in regard of Exiſtence at the ſame time: Suppoſe it had a Power to produce it ſelf, this power muſt be conferred upon it by another; and ſo the power of producing it ſelf, was not from it ſelf, but from another; But if the power of being was from it ſelf, why did it not produce it ſelf before? Why was it one moment out of being? *If there be any exiſtence of things 'tis neceſſary that that which was the *firſt Cauſe*, ſhould *exiſt from Eternity*. Whatſoever was the immediate cauſe of the world, yet the firſt and chief Cauſe wherein we muſt reſt, muſt have nothing before it; if it had any thing before it, it were not the *firſt*; He therefore that is the firſt Cauſe muſt be without beginning, nothing muſt be before him; If he had a beginning from ſome other, he could not be the firſt principle and Author of all things; If he be the firſt Cauſe of all things, he muſt give himſelf a beginning, or to be from Eternity, He could not give himſelf a beginning; whatſoever begins in time was nothing before, and when it was nothing it could do nothing; it could not give it ſelf any thing, for then it gave what it had not, and did what it could not: If he made himſelf in time, why did he not make himſelf before? What hindred him; It was either becauſe he could not, or becauſe he would not! if he could not, he always wanted power, and always would unleſs it were beſtowed upon him, and then he could not be ſaid to be from himſelf? If he would not make himſelf before, then he might have made him ſelf when he would: How had he the power of willing and nilling without a Being? Nothing cannot will or nill, Nothing hath no faculties: So that it is neceſſary to grant ſome eternal Being, or run into inextricable Labyrinths and Mazes. If we deny ſome eternal being, we muſt deny all being; our own being, the being of every thing about us; unconceivable abſurdities will ariſe.

*Petav. Theol. Dogmat. Tom. 1. l. 1. c. 10. 11.

So then if God were the Cauſe of all things, He did exiſt before all things, and that from Eternity.

The third thing is, *Eternity is only proper to God and not communicable.* *'Tis as great a madneſs to aſcribe Eternity to the Creature, as to deprive the Lord of the Creature of Eternity. 'Tis ſo proper to God, that when the *Apoſtle* would prove the Deity of Chriſt, he proves it by his immutability and eternity, as well as his creating power: **Thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall not fail.* The argument had no ſtrength, if Eternity belonged eſſentially to any but God; and therefore he is ſaid *only* to have *Immortality* *: All other things receive their being from him, and can be deprived of their being by him: All things depend on him, he of none: All other things are like Cloths, which would conſume if God preſerved them not. Immortality is appropriated to God, i. e. an *independent Immortality*. Angels and Souls have an Immortality, but by donation from God, not by their own Eſſence; dependent upon their Creator, not neceſſary in their own nature: God might have annihilated them after he had created them; ſo that their duration cannot properly be called an Eternity, it being extrinſical to them, and depending upon the will of their Creator, by whom they may be extinguiſht: It is not an abſolute and neceſſary, but a precarious Immortality. Whatſoever is not God, is temporary: Whatſoever is eternal, is God.

*Hebr. 10, 11, 12.

* 1 Tim. 6. 16.

'Tis a contradiction to ſay a creature can be eternal! as nothing eternal is created, ſo nothing created is eternal. What is diſtinct from the nature of God cannot be eternal, Eternity being the Eſſence of God. Every Creature in the notion of a Creature ſpeaks a dependence on ſome Cauſe, and therefore cannot be eternal. *As it is repugnant o the nature of God not to be eternal, ſo it is repugnant to the nature of a Creature to be eternal; for then a Creature would be equal to the Creator, and the Creator or the Cauſe would not be before the Creature or Effect.

* *Leſſius* de Perfect. l. 4. c. 2.

It would be all one to admit many Gods, as many Eternals; and all on to ſay God can be created, as to ſay a Creature can be uncreated, which is to be eternal.

1. *Creation is a producing ſomething from nothing.* What was once nothing, cannot therefore be eternal; not being was eternal; therefore its being could not be eternal, for it ſhould be then before it was, and would be ſomething when it was nothing. 'Tis the nature of a Creature to be nothing before it was created; what

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was nothing before it was, cannot be equal with God in an Eternity of Duration.

2. *There is no Creature but is mutable*, therefore not eternal. As it had a change from nothing to something, so it may be changed from being to not being. If the Creature were not mutable it would be most perfect, and so would not be a Creature but God; for God only is most perfect: 'Tis as much the Essence of a Creature to be mutable, as it is the Essence of God to be immutable: Mutability and Eternity are utterly inconsistent.

3. *No Creature is infinite*, therefore not eternal. To be infinite in Duration is all one, as to be infinite in Essence: * 'Tis as reasonable to conceive a Creature immense, filling all places at once, as eternal, extended to all ages; because neither can be without infiniteness which is the Property of the Deity. A Creature may as well be without bounds of place, as limitations of time. * *Lessius* de perfect. l. 4. c. 2.

4. *No effect of an intellectual free Agent, can be equal in duration to its Cause.* The Production of natural Agents are as antient often as themselves; the Sun produceth a Beam as old in time as its self; But who ever heard of a piece of wise Workmanship as old as the wise Artificer? God produced a Creature, not necessarily and naturally, as the Sun doth a Beam, but freely, as an intelligent Agent. The Sun was not necessary; it might be or not be, according to the pleasure of God. * A free act of the Will is necessary to precede in order of time as the Cause of such effects as are purely voluntary. Those Causes that act as soon as they exist, act naturally, necessarily, not freely, and cannot cease from acting. * *Crellius* de Deo cap. 18. p. 43.

But suppose a Creature might have existed by the Will of God from Eternity; yet, as some think, it could not be said absolutely, and in its own nature to be eternal; because Eternity was not of the Essence of it. The Creature could not be its own Duration; for though it were from Eternity, it might not have been from Eternity; because its Existence depended upon the free Will of God, who might have chose, whether he would have created it or no.

God only is eternal, the *first* and the *last*, the *beginning* and the *end*; who, as he subsisted before any Creature had a being, so he will eternally subsist if all Creatures were reduced to nothing.

IV. *Use.*

1. *Information.*

1. If God be of an eternal duration, then *Christ is God*: Eternity is the Property of God, but it is ascribed to Christ; *He is before all things*, * i. e. all created things: He is therefore no Creature; and if no Creature, eternal. *All things were Created by him*, both in Heaven and in Earth, Angels as well as Men, * whether they be Thrones or Dominions: If all things were his Creatures, then he is no Creature; if he were, all things were not created by him, or he must create himself. * Col. 1. 17. * Col. 1. 16.

He hath no difference of time; *for he is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*; * The same, with the Name of God, *I am*, which signifies his Eternity; He is no more to day than he was yesterday, nor will be any other to morrow than he is to day; And therefore *Melchisedeck* whose Descent, Birth and Death, Father and Mother, Beginning and End of days are not upon Record, was a Type of the Existence of Christ without difference of time. * *Having neither beginning of Days nor end of Life, but made like the Son of God.* The suppression of his Birth and Death, was intended by the Holy-Ghost as a Type of the excellency of Christ's person in regard of his Eternity, and the duration of his Charge in regard of his Priest-hood. As there was an appearance of an Eternity in the suppression of the Race of *Melchisedeck*, so there is a true Eternity in the Son of God. How could the Eternity of the Son of God be expresst by any resemblance so well, as by such a suppression of the *Beginning* and *End* of this great Person, different from the custom of the Spirit of God in the Old-Testament, who often records the Generations and Ends of holy Men; and why might not this, which was a kind of a shadow of Eternity, be a representation of the true Eternity of Christ, as well as the restoration of *Isaac* to his Father without death, is said to be a figure of the Resurrection of Christ after a real death? *Melchisedeck* is only mentioned once (without any record of his extraction) in his appearance to *Abraham* after his victory, as if he came from Heaven only for that action, and instantly disappeared again, as if he had been an eternal person. * Heb. 13. 8. Rev. 1. 8. *He which is, and which was, and which is to come.* * Heb. 7. 3. * *Mestrezat.* in loc.

And

And Chriſt himſelf hints his one eternity, * *I came forth from the Father and am come into the world, again I leave the world and go to the Father.* He goes to the Father as he came from the Father; He goes to the Father *for everlaſting*, ſo he came from the Father *from everlaſting*; there is the ſame duration in coming forth from the Father, as in returning to the Father. But more plainly; * He ſpeaks of a Glory that he *had with the Father before the world was*, when there was no Creature in being; this is an actual glory, and not only in Decree: For a decreed glory Believers had, and why may not every one of them ſay the ſame words, *Father glorifie me with that glory which I had with thee before the world was*, if it were only a glory in decree? Nay, it may be ſaid of every man, he was before the world was, becauſe he was ſo in decree. Chriſt ſpeaks of ſomething peculiar to him, a glory in actual poſſeſſion before the world was; glorifie me, embrace, honour me as thy Son, whereas I have now been in the eyes of the world handled diſgracefully as a ſervant: If it were only in decree, why is not the like expreſſion uſed of others in Scripture as well as of Chriſt? Why did he not uſe the ſame words for his Diſciples that were then with him, who had a glory in decree? His eternity is alſo mentioned in the Old-Teſtament: * *The Lord poſſeſſed me in the beginning of his way before his works of old.* If he were the work of God, he exiſted before himſelf, if he exiſted before all the works of God; 'tis not ſo properly meant of the eſſential wiſdom of God, ſince the diſcourſe runs in the name of a *Perſon*; and ſeveral paſſages there are which belong not ſo much to the eſſential wiſdom of God, as *v.* 13. *The evil way and the froward mouth do I hate*; which belongs rather to the holineſs of God, than to the eſſential wiſdom of God, beſides it is diſtinguiſht from *Jehovah*, as poſſeſſed by him, *and rejoycing before him.* Yet plainer, * *Out of thee*, i. e. Bethlehem, *ſhall he come forth to be Ruler in* Iſrael, *whoſe goings forth have been from of old, from everlaſting* מימי עולם from the ways of Eternity. There are two goings forth of Chriſt deſcribed, one from *Bethlehem* in the days of his incarnation, and another from *Eternity.* The Holy-Ghoſt adds after his prediction of his incarnation, his going out from everlaſting, that none ſhould doubt of his Deity: If this going out from everlaſting were only in the purpoſe of God, it might be ſaid of *David*, and of every Creature: And in *Iſa.* 9. He is particularly called the *Everlaſting*, or Eternal Father; Not the Father in the Trinity, but a father to us; yet eternal, the Father of Eternity. As he is the mighty God, ſo he is the everlaſting Father: Can ſuch a title be aſcribed to any, whoſe being depends upon the Will of another, and may be daſht out at the pleaſure of a Superior?

* John. 16. 28.

* John 17. 5.

* Pro. 8. 22.

* Mica. 5. 2.

As the *Eternity* of God is the ground of all Religion, ſo the Eternity of Chriſt is the ground of the Chriſtian Religion: Could our Sins be perfectly expiated, had he not an eternal Divinity to anſwer for the offences committed againſt an eternal God? Temporary ſufferings had been of little validity, without an infiniteneſs and eternity in his perſon to add weight to his paſſion.

2. *If God be eternal, he knows all things as preſent.* * All things are preſent to him in his Eternity; for this is the notion of Eternity, to be without ſucceſſion. If Eternity be one indiviſible point, and is not diffuſed into preceding and ſucceeding parts, then that which is known in it or by it, is perceived without any ſucceſſion; for knowledge is as the ſubſtance of the perſon knowing; if that hath various actions and diſtinct from it ſelf, then it underſtands things in differences of time as time preſents them to view: But ſince Gods Being depends not upon the revolutions of time, ſo neither doth his Knowledge; it exceeds all motions of years and days, comprehends infinite ſpaces of paſt and future. God conſiders all things in his Eternity in one ſimple knowledge; as if they were now acted before him: * *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world* ἀπ' αἰῶνος *à ſeculo*; from eternity. Gods knowledge is co-eternal with him: If he knows that in time which he did not know from eternity, he would not be eternally perfect, ſince knowledge is the perfection of an intelligent nature.

* Petav.

* Acts 15. 18.

3. *How bold and fooliſh is it for a mortal Creature, to cenſure the Counſels and Actions of an eternal God, or be too curious in his inquiſitions?* 'Tis by the conſideration of the unſearchable number of the years of God that *Elihu* checks too bold enquiries: *Who hath enjoyned him his way, or who can ſay, thou haſt wrought iniquity? Behold, God is great and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be ſearched out.* Eter-

* Job. 36. 26. *compar'd with the* 23.

nity

Eternity ſets God above our Enquiries and Cenſures. Infants of a day old are notable to underſtand the acts of wiſe and gray Heads : Shall we, that are of ſo ſhort a being and underſtanding as yeſterday, preſume to meaſure the motions of Eternity by our ſcanty Intellects ? We that cannot foreſee an unexpected accident which falls in to blaſt a well laid deſign, and run a Ship many Leagues back from the intended Harbour; We cannot underſtand the reaſon of things we ſee done in time, the motions of the Sea, the generation of Rain, the nature of Light, the Sympathies and Antipathies of the Creatures; and ſhall we dare to cenſure the actions of an eternal God ſo infinitely beyond our reach? The Counſels of a boundleſs Being are not to be ſcann'd by the Brain of a ſilly Worm, that hath breathed but a few minutes in the world : Since Eternity cannot be comprehended in time, 'tis not to be judged by a Creature of time, *Let us remember to magnifie his works which we behold*, becauſe he is eternal, which is the exhortation of *Elihu*, backt by this Doctrin of *Gods Eternity*; * and not accuſe any work of him who is the Ancient of days, or preſume to direct him, of whoſe Eternity we come infinitely ſhort: When ever therefore any unworthy notion of the Counſels and Works of God is ſuggeſted to us by *Satan*, or our own corrupt hearts; let us look backward to Gods eternal and our own ſhort duration, and ſilence our ſelves with the ſame Queſtion wherewith God put a ſtop to the reaſoning of *Job*; * *Where waſt thou, when I laid the foundations of the Earth?* and reprove our ſelves for our curioſity; ſince we are of ſo ſhort a ſtanding, and were nothing when the eternal God laid the firſt Stone of the World.

* Job. 36. 24.

* Job. 38. 4.

4. *What a folly and boldneſs is there in Sin, ſince an eternal God is offended thereby?* All Sin is aggravated by Gods Eternity : The blackneſs of the *Heathen* Idolatry was in changing the glory of the *incorruptible God*, * erecting reſemblances of him contrary to his immortal nature; as if the eternal God, whoſe life is as unlimited as Eternity, were like thoſe Creatures whoſe beings are meaſured by the ſhort Ell of Time, which are of a corruptible nature, and daily paſſing on to Corruption : They could not really deprive God of his Glory and Immortality, but they did in Eſtimation. There is in the nature of every ſin a tendency to reduce God to a not Being. He that thinks unworthily of God, or acts unworthily towards him, doth (as much as in him lies) ſully and deſtroy theſe two perfections of his, Immutability and Eternity : 'Tis a carriage, as if he were as contemptible as a Creature that were but of yeſterday, and ſhall not remain in being to morrow. He that would put an end to Gods glory by darkning it, would put an end to Gods life by deſtroying it. He that ſhould love a Beaſt with as great an affection as he loves a Man, contemns a rational nature; and he that loves a periſhing thing with the ſame affection he ſhould love an everlaſting God, contemns his Eternity; He debaſeth the duration of God below that of the World : The low valuation of God ſpeaks him in his eſteem, no better than withering Graſs, or a Gourd, which laſts for a night; and the Creature which poſſeſſes his affection, to be a Good that laſts for ever. How fooliſh then is every ſin, that tends to deſtroy a Being that cannot deſtroy or deſert himſelf; a Being, without whoſe Eternity the Sinner himſelf could not have had the capacity of a being, to affront him? How baſe is that, which would not let the works of God remain in their eſtabliſhed poſture ? How much more baſe in not enduring the fountain and glory of all Beings, that would not only put an end to the Beauty of the world, but the Eternity of God?

* Rom. 1. 23.

5. *How dreadful is it to lye under the ſtroke of an eternal God?* His Eternity is as great a terror to him that hates him, as it is a comfort to him that loves him; becauſe he is the *living God, an everlaſting King, the Nations ſhall not be able to abide his indignation.* * Though God be leaſt in their thoughts, and is made light of in the world; yet the thoughts of Gods Eternity, when he comes to judge the world, ſhall make the Slighters of him tremble : That the Judge and Puniſher lives for ever, is the greateſt grievance to a Soul in miſery, and adds an unconceivable weight to it, above what the infiniteneſs of Gods executive Power could do without that duration: His Eternity makes the puniſhment more dreadful than his Power; his Power makes it ſharp, but his Eternity renders it perpetual; ever to endure, is the ſting at the end of every laſh.

* Jer. 10. 10.

And how ſad is it, to think that God lays his Eternity to pawn for the puniſh-

ment of obſtinate Sinners, and engageth it by an Oath, that he will *whet his glittering Sword*, that his *hand ſhall take hold of Judgment*, that he will *render Vengeance to his Enemies, and a Reward to them that hate him*; a reward proportioned to the greatneſs of their offences, and the glory of an eternal God? * *I lift up my hand to Heaven, and ſay, I live for ever*, i. e. as ſurely as I live for ever, I will whet my glittering Sword. As none can convey good with a perpetuity, ſo none can convey evil with ſuch a laſtingneſs as God. 'Tis a great loſs to loſe a Ship richly fraught in the bottom of the Sea, never to be caſt upon the Shore; But how much greater is it, to loſe eternally a Soveraign God, which we were capable of eternally enjoying, and undergo an evil as durable as that God we ſlighted; and were in a poſſibility of avoiding? The miſeries of men after this Life are not eaſed, but ſharpen'd by the Life and Eternity of God.

* Deut. 32. 40, 41.

The Second Uſe is of *Comfort*. What foundation of comfort can we have in any of Gods Attributes, were it not for his Infiniteneſs and Eternity; though he be *merciful, good, wiſe, faithful*? What ſupport could there be, if they were perfections belonging to a corruptible God? What hopes of a Reſurrection to Happineſs can we have, or of the duration of it; if that God that promiſed it were not immortal to continue it, as well as powerful to effect it? His Power were not Almighty, if his duration were not Eternal.

1. *If God be eternal, his Covenant will be ſo.* 'Tis founded upon the *Eternity* of God; the Oath whereby he confirms it, is by his *Life*: Since there is none greater than himſelf, he ſwears by *himſelf*, * or by his own Life, which he engageth together with his Eternity for the full performance; ſo that if he lives for ever, the Covenant ſhall not be diſannull'd, 'tis an *immutable Counſel*: * The immutability of his Counſel follows the immutability of his Nature. Immutability and Eternity go hand in hand together. The promiſe of eternal Life is as ancient as God himſelf in regard of the purpoſe of the promiſe, or in regard of the promiſe made to Chriſt for us. * *Eternal life which God promiſed before the world began.* As it hath an *ante-eternity*, ſo it hath a *poſt-eternity*; Therefore the Goſpel, which is the new Covenant publiſht, is term'd *the everlaſting Goſpel*; * which can no more be altered and periſh, than God can change and vaniſh into nothing: He can as little morally deny his truth, as he can naturally deſert his life. The Covenant is there repreſented in a Green Colour, to note its perpetual Verdure: The *Rain-bow*, the Embleme of the Covenant, *about the Throne, was like to an Emrald*, a Stone of a green colour; * whereas the natural Rain-bow hath many colours; this but one, to ſignifie its Eternity.

* Heb. 6. 13.

* Heb. 6. 16, 17.

* Tit. 1. 2.

* Rev. 14. 6.

* Rev. 4. 3.

2. If God be eternal, *he being our God in Covenant, is an eternal Good and Poſſeſſion. This God is our God for ever and ever*; * *He is a dwelling place in all Generations.* We ſhall traverſe the world a while, and then arrive at the bleſſings *Jacob* wiſhed for *Joſeph*; * The *bleſſings of the everlaſting hills.* If an Eſtate of a thouſand Pound *per Annum* render a mans life comfortable for a ſhort term, how much more may the Soul be ſwallowed up with joy in the enjoyment of the Creator, whoſe years never fail, who lives for ever to be enjoyed, and can keep us in life for ever to enjoy him? Death indeed will ſeize upon us by Gods irreverſible order, but the immortal Creator will make him diſgorge his morſel, and land us in a glorious immortality; our Souls at their Diſſolution, and our Bodies at the Reſurrection, after which they ſhall remain for ever, and imploy the extent of that boundleſs Eternity in the fruition of the Soveraign and Eternal God: For 'tis impoſſible that the Believer, who is united to the immortal God that is from everlaſting to everlaſting, can ever periſh; for being in conjunction with him who is an ever flowing Fountain of Life, he cannot ſuffer him to remain in the jaws of Death. While God is eternal, and always the ſame; 'tis not poſſible that thoſe that partake of his *ſpiritual* life, ſhould not alſo partake of his *eternal*. 'Tis from the conſideration of the endleſneſs of the years of God that the Church comforts her ſelf, that *her Children ſhall continue*, and *their Seed be eſtabliſhed for ever.* * And from the eternity of God, *Habbakkuk*, chap. 1. 12. concludes the eternity of Believers, *Art not thou from everlaſting O Lord my God, my holy One? We ſhall not dye O Lord.* After they are retired from this world, they ſhall live for ever with God without any change by the multitude of thoſe imaginable years and ages that ſhall run for ever. 'Tis that God that hath

* Pſal. 48. 14.

* Gen. 49. 26.

* Pſal. 102. 27, 28.

hath neither beginning nor end, that is our God; who hath not only immortality in himself, but immortality to give out to others. As he hath *abundance of Spirit* to quicken them*, so he hath abundance of Immortality to continue them. 'Tis only in the consideration of this a man can with wisdom say, *Soul take thy ease, thou hast Goods laid up for many years*; to say it of any other possession, is the greatest folly in the judgment of our Saviour. * *Mortality shall be swallowed up of Immortality: Rivers of pleasure* shall be *for evermore.* Death is a word never spoken there by any, never heard by any in that possession of Eternity; 'tis for ever put out as one of Christs conquered enemies.

* Mal. 2. 15.

*Luke 12. 19, 20.

The happiness depends upon the presence of God, with whom Believers shall be for ever present. Happiness cannot perish as long as God lives: He is the first and the last; the first of all delights, nothing before him; the last of all pleasures, nothing beyond him: A Paradise of delights in every Point without a flaming Sword.

2. *The enjoyment of God will be as fresh and glorious after many ages, as it was at first.* God is eternal, and Eternity knows no change; there will then be the fullest possession without any decay in the Object enjoy'd. There can be nothing past, nothing future; time neither adds to it, nor detracts from it; That infinite fulness of perfection which flourisheth in him now, will flourish eternally, without any discolouring of it in the least by those innumerable ages that shall run to Eternity, much less any dispoyling him of them. *He is the same in his endless Duration.* * As God is, so will the Eternity of him be, without succession, without division: The fulness of joy will be always present; without past to be thought of with regret for being gone; without future to be expected with tormenting desires. When we enjoy God, we enjoy him in his Eternity without any flux; an entire possession of all together, without the passing away of pleasures that may be wished to return, or expectation of future joys which might be desired to hasten. Time is fluid, but Eternity is stable, and after many ages, the joys will be as savoury and satisfying, as if they had been but that moment first tasted by our hungry appetites. When the glory of the Lord shall rise upon you, it shall be so far from ever setting, that after millions of years are expired, as numerous as the Sands on the Sea-shore, the Sun, in the light of whose Countenance you shall live, shall be as bright as at the first appearance: He will be so far from ceasing to flow, that he will flow as strong, as full as at the first communication of himself in glory to the Creature. God therefore as sitting upon his Throne of Grace, and acting according to his Covenant, is like a *Jasper-stone*, which is of a green colour, a colour always delightful; * Because God is always vigorous, and flourishing; a pure act of life, sparkling new and fresh rays of life and light to the Creature, flourishing with a perpetual Spring, and contenting the most capacious desire; forming your interest, pleasure and satisfaction, with an infinite variety, without any change or succession: He will have variety to increase delights, and eternity to perpetuate them; This will be the fruit of the enjoyment of an infinite, an eternal God: He is not a Cistern but a Fountain, wherein water is always living and never putrifies.

* Psl. 102. 27.

* Rev. 4. 3.

4. If God be eternal, *Here is a strong ground of comfort against all the distresses of the Church. and the threats of the Churches Enemies.* Gods abiding for ever, is the Plea *Jeremy* makes for his return to his forsaken Churh. * *Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever, thy Throne from Generation to Generation.* The Church is weak; created things are easily cut off? What prop is there, but that God that lives for ever? What though *Jerusalem* lost its Bulwarks, the Temple were defaced, the Land wasted; yet the God of *Jerusalem* sits upon an eternal Throne, and from everlasting to everlasting there is no diminution of his Power. The Prophet intimates in this complaint, that it is not agreeable to Gods Eternity to forget his People, to whom he hath from Eternity bore good will. In the greatest confusions, the Churches eyes are to be fixed upon the Eternity of Gods Throne, where he sits as Governour of the world: No Creature can take any comfort in this perfection, but the Church; other Creatures depend upon God, but the Church is united to him.

* Lament. 5. 20.

The first discovery of the Name *I am*, which signifies the Divine Eternity as well as Immutability, was for the comfort of the *oppress Israelites in* Egypt *; It was then publisht from the secret place of the Almighty, as the only strong Cordial to refresh them: It hath not yet, it shall not ever lose its vertue in any of the miseries that

* Exod. 3. 14 15.

have, or ſhall ſucceſſively befall the Church, 'Tis a comfort as durable as the God, whoſe name it is: He is ſtill, *I am*, and the ſame to the Church, as he was then to his *Iſrael*. His ſpiritual *Iſrael* have a greater to right the glories of it, than the carnal *Iſrael* could have. No oppreſſion can be greater than theirs; what was a comfort ſuted to that diſtreſs, hath the ſame ſutableneſs to every other oppreſſion. It was not a temporary name, but a name for ever; his *memorial to all Generations*, * and reacheth to the Church of the *Gentiles*, with whom he treats as the God of *Abraham*, ratifying that Covenant by the *Meſſiah*, which he made with *Abraham* the Father of the Faithful.

* V. 15.

The Churches enemies are not to be fear'd; they may *ſpring as the graſs*, but ſoon after do wither by their own inward principles of decay, or are cut down by the hand of God. * They may be inſtruments of the anger of God, but *they ſhall be ſcatter'd as the workers of iniquity by the hand of the Lord, that is high for evermore*, v. 8. and is engaged by his promiſe, to preſerve a Church in the World. They may threaten, but their breath may vaniſh, as ſoon as their threatnings are pronounc'd: for they carry their breath in no ſurer a place than their own Noſtrils, upon which the eternal God can put his hand, and ſink them with all their rage. *Do the Prophets* and Inſtructors of the Church, *live for ever?* * No, Shall then the Adverſaries and Diſturbers of the Church live for ever? They ſhall vaniſh as a ſhadow, their being depends upon the eternal God of the faithful, and the everlaſting Judge of the wicked. He that inhabits Eternity, is above them that inhabit Mortality, and muſt, whether they will or no, *ſay to Corruption, thou art my Father, and to the Worm, thou art my Mother, and my Siſter.* * When they will act with a confidence, as if they were living Gods, he will not be mated, but evidence himſelf to be a living God above them. Why then ſhould mortal men be fear'd in their frowns, when an immortal God hath promiſed protection in his Word, and lives for ever to perform it?

* Pſ. 92. 7,8,9.

* Zach. 1. 5.

* Job 17. 14.

5. Hence follows another comfort; ſince God is eternal, *he hath as much power, as will to be as good as his word.* His promiſes are eſtabliſhed upon his eternity, and this perfection is a main ground of truſt; **Truſt in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord* Jehovah *is everlaſting ſtrength.* כִּי יְהוָה צוּר עֹלָמִים His name is doubled, that name *Iah*, and *Jehovah*, which was always the ſtrength of his people; and not a ſingle one, but the ſtrength or rock of Eternities; not a failing but an eternal truth and power; that as his ſtrength is eternal, ſo our truſt in him ſhould imitate his Eternity in its perpetuity; and therefore in the deſpondency of his people, as if God had forgot his promiſes, and made no account of them, or his word, and were weary of doing good, he calls them to reflect on what they had heard of his Eternity, which is attended with immutability, who hath an infiniteneſs of power to perform his will, and an infiniteneſs of underſtanding to judge of the right ſeaſons of it. * His Wiſdom, Will, Truth, have alway's been, and will to Eternity be the ſame. He wants not life, any more then love, for ever to help us; ſince his word is paſt, he will never fail us; ſince his life continues, he can never be out of a capacity to relieve us: and therefore when ever we fooliſhly charge him by our diſtruſtful thoughts, we forget his love, which made the promiſe, and his eternal life, which can accompliſh it. As his word is the bottom of our truſt, and his truth is the aſſurance of his ſincerity, ſo his Eternity is the aſſurance of his ability to perform. *His word ſtands for ever.* * A man may be my friend this day, and be in another world to morrow; and though he be never ſo ſincere in his word, yet death ſnaps his life aſunder, and forbids the execution. But as God cannot die, ſo he cannot lie; becauſe he is the Eternity of *Iſrael*. * *The ſtrength of Iſrael will not lie, nor repent*, נֵצַח perpetuity or *eternity of Iſrael.* Eternity implies immutability; we could have no ground for our hopes, if we knew him not to be longer liv'd than our ſelves. The *Pſalmiſt* beats off our hands from truſt in men, *becauſe their breath goes forth, they return to their earth, and in that day their thoughts periſh.* * And if the God of *Jacob* were like them, what happineſs could we have in making him our help? As his Soveraignty in giving precepts had not been a ſtrong ground of Obedience, without conſidering him as an eternal Law-giver, who could maintain his rights; So his kindneſs in making the promiſes, had not been a ſtrong ground of confidence, without conſidering him as an Eternal promiſer, whoſe thoughts, and whoſe life can never periſh. * And this may be

* Iſa. 26. 4.

* Iſa. 40. 27, 28

* Iſa. 40. 8,

* 1 Sam. 15. 29.

* Pſ. 146. 3,4.

* *Crellius de Deo cap.* 18. P. 44, 45.

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one reaſon, why the Holy Ghoſt mentions ſo often the *poſt-eternity* of God, and ſo little his *ante-eternity:* becauſe that is the ſtrongeſt foundation of our faith, and hope, which reſpects chiefly, that which is future, and not that which is paſt; yet indeed no aſſurance of his after-Eternity can be had, if his ante-Eternity be not certain. If he had a beginning, he may have an end; And if he had a change in his nature, he might have in his Counſels; But ſince all the reſolves of God are as himſelf is, eternal, and all the promiſes of God are the fruits of his Counſel, therefore they cannot be chang'd: If he ſhould change them for the better, he would not have been eternally Wiſe, to know what was beſt; If for the worſe, he had not been eternally good or juſt. Men may break their promiſes, becauſe they are made without foreſight; but God that inhabits Eternity, foreknows all things, that ſhall be done under the Sun, as if they had been then acting before him; and nothing can intervene, or work a change in his reſolves; becauſe the leaſt circumſtances were eternally foreſeen by him. Though there may be variations, and changes to our ſight, the winds may tack about, and every hour new and croſs accidents happen; yet the eternal God, who is eternally true to his word, Sits at the Helm, and the Winds and the Waves obey him. And though he ſhould defer his promiſe a *thouſand years*, yet he is *not ſlack*: For he defers it but a day to his eternity; * And who would not with comfort ſtay a day in expectation of a conſiderable advantage? * 2 Pet. 3. 8,9.

3. Uſe is for *Exhortation.*

1. *To ſomething which concerns us in our ſelves.*
2. *To ſomething which concerns us with reſpect to God.*

1. *To ſomething which concerns us in our ſelves.*

1. *Let us be deeply affected with our ſins long ſince committed.* Though they are paſt with us, they are in regard of Gods eternity preſent with him; there is no ſucceſſion in Eternity, as there is in time: All things are before God at once; our ſins are before him, as if committed this moment, though committed long ago. As he is what he is in regard of duration, ſo he knows what he knows in regard of knowledge. As he is not more than he was, nor ſhall not be any more than he is, ſo he always knew what he knows, and ſhall not ceaſe to know, what he now know's. As himſelf, ſo his knowledge is one indiviſible point of eternity. He knows nothing, but what he did know from eternity; he ſhall know no more for the future, than he now knows. Our ſins being preſent with him in his eternity, ſhould be preſent with us in our regard of remembrance of them, and ſorrow for them. What though many years are laps'd, much time run out, and our iniquities almoſt blotted out of our memory? yet ſince a thouſand years are in Gods ſight, and in regard of his eternity but as a day; * *A thouſand years in thy ſight are but as yeſterday, when it is paſt, and as a watch in the night*; They are before him For ſuppoſe a man were as old as the World, above five thouſand ſix hundred years; the ſins committed five thouſand years ago; are according to that rule, but as if they were committed five daies ago; ſo that ſixty two years, are but as an hour and a half, and the ſins committed forty years ſince, are as if they were committed but this preſent hour. But if we will go further, and conſider them but as a Watch of the Night, about three hours (for the Night conſiſting of twelve hours, was divided into ſet Watches) then a thouſand years are but as three hours in the ſight of God; and then ſins committed ſixty years ago, are but as if they were committed within this five minutes, * Pſal. 90. 4.

Let none of us ſet light by the iniquities committed many years ago, and imagine that length of time can wipe out their guilt; No, let us conſider them in relation to Gods eternity, and excite an inward remorſe, as if they had been but the birth of this moment.

2. *Let the conſideration of Gods Eternity abate our pride.* This is the deſign of the *Verſes* following the Text, The *Eternity* of God being ſo ſufficient to make us underſtand our own nothingneſs, which ought to be one great end of man, eſpecially as fall'n. The eternity of God ſhould make us as much diſeſteem our ſelves, as the excellency of God made *Job abhor himſelf.* * His excellency ſhould humble us under a ſenſe of our vanity, and his eternity under a ſenſe of the ſhortneſs of our duration. If man compares himſelf with other Creatures, he may be too ſenſible of his greatneſs, but if he * Job. 42. 5,6.

he compares himſelf with God, he cannot but be ſenſible of his baſeneſs.

1. *In regard of our impotence, to comprehend this Eternity of God.* How little do we know? How little can we know of Gods Eternity? We cannot fully conceive it, much leſs expreſs it; we have but a *brutiſh* underſtanding in all thoſe things, as *Agur* ſaid of himſelf. *

*Prov. 30. 7. *Charrontois. vent. Livr. 1. chap. 5. p. 17. &c.

* What is Infinite and Eternal cannot be comprehended by finite and temporary Creatures; If it could, it would not be infinite and eternal: For to know a thing, is to know the Extent, and cauſe of it; Tis repugnant to Eternity to be known, becauſe it hath no limits, no cauſes; the moſt ſoaring underſtanding cannot have a proportionable underſtanding of it. What diſproportion is there between a drop of water, and the Sea in their greatneſs and motion? Yet by a drop, we may arrive to a knowledge of the nature of the Sea, which is a Maſs of drops joyn'd together. But the longeſt duration of times cannot make us know, what Eternity is: Becauſe there is no proportion between time and Eternity. The *years* of God are as numberleſs, as his *thoughts*, * and our minds as far from reckoning the one as the other. If our underſtandings are too groſs, to comprehend the Majeſty of his infinite works, they are much more too ſhort to comprehend the infiniteneſs of his Eternity.

* Pſal. 40. 5.

2. *In regard of the vaſt diſproportion of our duration to this duration of God.*

1. *We have more of not being than being.* We were nothing from an unbegun Eternity, and we might have been nothing to an endleſs Eternity, had not God call'd us into being; and if he pleaſe, we may be nothing by as ſhort an annihilating word, as we were ſomething by a Creating word. As it is the prerogative of God to be, *I am that I am*; ſo it is the property of a Creature, to be, *I am not what I am*; *I am not* by my ſelf *what I am*, but by the Indulgence of another. I was nothing formerly, I may be nothing again, unleſs he that is, *I am*, make me to ſubſiſt what I now am. Nothing is as much the title of the Creature, as Being is the title of God. Nothing is ſo holy as God, becauſe nothing hath being as God. * *There is none holy as the Lord, for there is none beſides thee.* Mans life is an Image, a dream, which are next to nothing; and if compar'd with God, worſe than nothing; a nullity as well as a vanity: Becauſe *with God only is the fountain of life.* * The Creature is but a drop of life from him, dependent on him. A drop of water is a nothing, if compar'd with the vaſt conflux of waters, and numberleſs drops in the Ocean.

* 1 Sam. 2. 2.

* Pſal. 36. 9.

How unworthy is it for duſt and aſhes kneaded together in time, to ſtrut againſt the *Father of Eternity?* Much more unworthy for that which is nothing, worſe than nothing, to quarrel with that which is only being, and equal himſelf with him that inhabits Eternity.

2. *What being we have, had a beginning.* After an unaccountable Eternity was run out, in the very dregs of time, a few years ago we were created, and made of the baſeſt and vileſt droſs of the world, the ſlime and duſt of the Earth; made of that, wherewith Birds build their neſts; made of that, which Creeping things make their habitation, and beaſts trample upon; How monſtrous is pride in ſuch a Creature, to aſpire, as if he were the Father of Eternity, and as Eternal as God, and ſo his own Eternity?

3. *What being we have, is but of a ſhort duration in regard of our life in this World.* Our life is in a conſtant change, and flux, we remain not the ſame an intire day; Youth quickly ſucceeds Child-hood, and age as ſpeedily treads upon the heels of Youth; there is a continual defluxion of minutes, as there is of ſands in a glaſs. He is as a Watch wound up at the beginning of his life, and from that time is running down, till he comes to the bottom; ſome part of our lives is cut off every day, every minute. Life is but a moment, what is paſt cannot be recalled; what is future cannot be inſured: If we enjoy this moment, we have loſt that which is paſt, and ſhall preſently loſe this by the next that is to come.

The ſhort duration of men is ſet out in *Scripture* by ſuch Creatures, as ſoon diſappear. A *worm*, * that can ſcarce out live a winter. Graſs, that withers by the Summer Sun. Life is a *flower* ſoon withering, * a *vapour* ſoon vaniſhing, * a *ſmoke* ſoon diſappearing. * The ſtrongeſt man is but compacted duſt, the fabrick muſt moulder, the higheſt Mountain falls and comes to nought. Time gives place to E-

* Job. 25. 6.
* Job. 14. 2.
* James 4. 14.
* Pſal. 102. 3.

eternity

ternity, we live now, and die to morrow. Not a Man ſince the world began, ever lived a day in Gods ſight: For no man ever lived a *thouſand years.* The longeſt day of any mans life never amounted to twenty four hours in the account of divine Eternity: A life of ſo many hundred years, with the addition *he dyed*, makes up the greateſt part of the Hiſtory of the *Patriarchs.* * And ſince the life of man hath been curtaild, if any be in the world eighty years, he ſcarce properly lives ſixty of them, ſince the fourth part of time is at leaſt conſumed in ſleep. * Gen. 5.

A greater difference there is between the duration of God, and that of a Creature, than between the life of one for a minute, and the life of one that ſhould live as many years as the whole globe of Heaven and Earth, if changed into papers, could contain figures: And this life, tho but of a ſhort duration according to the period God hath determined, is eaſily cut off; the treaſure of life is depoſited in a brittle veſſel: A ſmall ſtone hitting againſt *Nebuchadnezzars* Statue, will tumble it down into a poor and naſty grave: A Grape ſtone, the bone of a fiſh, a ſmall fly in the throat, a moiſt damp are enough to deſtroy an Earthly Eternity, and reduce it to nothing.

What a Nothing then is our ſhortneſs, if compared with Gods Eternity? Our frailty, with Gods duration? How humble then ſhould periſhing Creatures be before an Eternal God, with whom *our days are as a hands breadth, and our age as nothing?* * The Angels that have been of as long a duration as Heaven and Earth, tremble before him, the Heavens melt at his preſence; and ſhall we that are but of yeſterday, approach a Divine Eternity with unhumbled Souls, and offer the Calves of our lips with the pride of Devils, and ſtand upon our terms with him, without falling upon our faces, with a ſenſe that we are but duſt and aſhes, and Creatures of time? How eaſily is it to reaſon out mans humility, but how hard is it to reaſon man into it? * Pſal. 39. 5.

3. *Let the conſideration of Gods Eternity take off our love and confidence from the world, and the things thereof.* The Eternity of God reproaches a purſuit of the world, as preferring a momentary pleaſure before an everlaſting God; as tho a temporal world could be a better ſupply, than a God whoſe years never fail. Alas! what is this Earth, men are ſo greedy of, and will get, tho by blood and ſweat? What is this whole Earth, if we had the entire poſſeſſion of it, if compared with the vaſt Heavens, the ſeat of Angels and bleſſed Spirits? Tis but as an Atome to the greateſt Mountain, or as a drop of dew to the immenſe Ocean. How fooliſh is it, to prefer a drop before the Sea, or an Atome before the world? The Earth is but a point to the Sun; the Sun with its whole Orb, but a little part of the Heavens, if compared with the whole Fabrick. If a man had the poſſeſſion of all thoſe, there could be no compariſon between thoſe that have had a beginning, and ſhall have an end, and God who is without either of them. Yet, how many are there, that make nothing of the divine Eternity, and imagine an Eternity of nothing?

1. *The world hath been but of a ſhort ſtanding.* 'Tis not yet *ſix thouſand years* ſince the foundations of it were laid; and therefore it cannot have a boundleſs excellency, as that God, who hath been from everlaſting, doth poſſeſs. If *Adam* had liv'd to this day, and been as abſolute Lord of his Poſterity, as he was of the other Creatures, had it been a competent object to take up his heart; had he not been a mad man, to have prefer'd this little created pleaſure before an everlaſting uncreated God? A thing that had a dependent Beginning, before that which had an independent Eternity?

2. *The beauties of the world are tranſitory and periſhing.* The whole world is nothing elſe but a fluid thing, the Faſhion of it is a Pageantry, *paſſing away*; * tho the glories of it might be conceived greater than they are, yet they are not conſiſtent, but tranſient; There cannot be an entire enjoyment of them; becauſe they grow up, and expire every moment, and ſlip away between our fingers, while we are uſing them. Have we not heard of Gods diſperſing the greateſt Empires like *Chaff before a whirlwind*, or as ſmoke out of a Chimny; * which tho it appears as a compacted cloud, as if it would choak the Sun, is quickly ſcattered into ſeveral parts of the Air, and becomes inviſible? Nettles have often been heirs to ſtately Palaces, as God threatens *Iſrael.* * We cannot promiſe our ſelves over night any thing the next day. A *Kingdom* with the *glory* of a throne may be cut off in a *morning.* * The new wine may be taken from the mouth, when the *Vintage* is ripe; the devour- * 1 Cor. 7. 31. * Hoſ. 13. 3. * Hoſ. 9. 6. * Hoſ. 10. 15.

devouring *locuſt* may ſnatch away both the hopes of that, and the harveſt *: They are therefore things which are not; and nothing cannot be a fit object for confidence or affection. * *Wilt thou ſet thy eyes upon that which is not? For rickes certainly make themſelves wings.* They are not properly beings; becauſe they are not ſtable, but flitting; They are not; becauſe they may not be the next moment to us, what they are this; they are but Ciſterns, not ſprings, and broken Ciſterns, not ſound and ſtable; no ſolidity in their ſubſtance, nor ſtability in their duration. What a fooliſh thing is it then, to prefer a tranſient felicity, a meer nullity before an eternal God? What a ſenſeleſs thing would it be in a man, to prefer the Map of a Kingdom, which the hand of a Child can tear in pieces, before the Kingdom ſhadowed by it; How much more inexcuſable is it to value things, that are ſo far from being Eternal, that they are not ſo much as dusky reſemblances of an Eternity? Were the things of the world more glorious than they are, yet they are but as a counterfeit Sun in a Cloud, which comes ſhort of the true Sun in the Heavens both in glory and duration; and to eſteem them before God, is unconceiveably baſer, than if a man ſhould Value a particolour'd bubble in the Air, before a durable rock of Diamonds. The comforts of this world are as Candles that will end in a Snuff; whereas the felicity that flows from an eternal God, is like the Sun, that ſhines more and more to a perfect day.

* Joel 1. 15.

* Prov. 23. 5.

3. *They cannot therefore be fit for a ſoul, which was made to have an intereſt in Gods Eternity.* The ſoul being of a perpetual nature was made for the fruition of an Eternal good; without ſuch a good it can never be perfect. *Perfection*, that noble thing, riſeth not from any thing in this world, nor is it a Title due to a Soul while in this world; 'tis then they are ſaid to be *made perfect*, when they arrive at that entire conjunction with the eternal God in another life. * The Soul cannot be enobled by an acquaintance with theſe things, or eſtabliſh'd by a dependence on them, they cannot confer, what a rational nature ſhould deſire, or ſupply it with what it wants.

* Heb. 12. 23.

The ſoul hath a reſemblance to God in a *poſt-Eternity*: Why ſhould it be drawn aſide by the blandiſhments of earthly things, to neglect its true eſtabliſhment, and laquey after the Body, which is but the ſhadow of the Soul, and was made to follow it and ſerve it? But while it buſieth it ſelf altogether in the concerns of a periſhing body, and ſeeks ſatisfaction in things that glide away, it becomes rather a body than ſoul, deſcends below its nature, reproacheth that God, who hath imprinted upon it an image of his own Eternity, and loſeth the comfort of the everlaſtingneſs of its Creator. How ſhall the whole world, if our lives were as durable as that, be an happy Eternity to us, who have Souls, that ſhall ſurvive all the delights of it, which muſt fry in thoſe flames, that ſhall fire the whole frame of nature at the general conflagration of the world? *

* 2 Pet. 3. 10.

4. *Therefore let us provide for an happy intereſt in the Eternity of God.* Man is made for an eternal ſtate. The Soul hath ſuch a perfection in its nature, that it is fit for Eternity; and cannot diſplay all its operations but in Eternity: To an Eternity it muſt go, and live as long as God himſelf lives. Things of a ſhort duration are not proportion'd to a Soul made for an eternal continuance; to ſee that it be a comfortable eternity, is worth all our care. Man is a forecaſting Creature, conſiders not only the preſent, but the the future too, in his proviſions for his family; and ſhall he diſgrace his nature, in caſting off all conſideration of a future eternity? Get poſſeſſion therefore of the eternal God: *A portion in this life* is the lot of thoſe, who ſhall be for ever miſerable. * But God, an *everlaſting portion*, is the lot of them that are deſign'd for happineſs. * *God is my portion for ever.*

* Pſal. 17. 14.

* Pſal. 73. 26.

Time is ſhort. * The whole time for which God deſign'd this building of the world is of a little compaſs; tis a Stage erected for rational Creatures to act their parts upon for a few thouſand years; the greateſt part of which time is run out; and then ſhall time like a rivulet fall into the Sea of Eternity, from whence it ſprung. As time is but a ſlip of Eternity, ſo it will end in eternity; our advantages conſiſt in the preſent inſtant; what is paſt, never promiſed a return, and cannot be fetcht back by all our vows: What is future, we cannot promiſe our ſelves to enjoy; we may be ſnatcht away before it comes. Every minute that paſſeth, ſpeaks the fewer remaining till the time of death. And as we are every hour further from our *beginning*, we are nearer our *end*. The Child born this day grows up, to grow nothing at laſt.

* 1 Cor. 7. 29.

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In all Ages, there is *but a ſtep between us and Death*, as *David* ſaid of himſelf. * The little time that remains for the Devil till the day of Judgment, envenoms his wrath; he rageth, becauſe *his time is ſhort*. * The little time that remains between this moment and our death, ſhould quicken our diligence to inherit the endleſs and unchangeable Eternity of God. * 1 Sam. 20. 3. * Rev. 12. 12.

5. *Often meditate on the Eternity of God.* The Holineſs, Power and Eternity of God, are the fundamental Articles of all Religion, upon which the whole body of it leans; His Holineſs for conformity to him, his Power and Eternity for the ſupport of Faith and Hope. The ſtrong and inceſſant Cries of the four Beaſts, repreſenting that Chriſtian Church, are, *holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.* * Though his Power is intimated, yet the chiefeſt are his Holineſs, *three times* expreſt; and his Eternity which is repeated, *v. 9. who lives for ever and ever.* This ought to be the conſtant practice in the Church of the Gentiles, which this Book chiefly reſpects: The meditation of his converting Grace manifeſted to *Paul*, raviſht the *Apoſtles* heart, but not without the triumphant conſideration of his Immortality and Eternity, which are the principal parts of the Doxology. * *Now unto the King Eternal, immortal, inviſible, only wiſe God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.* It could be no great tranſport to the Spirit, to conſider him glorious without conſidering him immortal: The unconfinedneſs of his perfections in regard of time, preſents the Soul with matter of the greateſt complacency. The happineſs of our Souls depends upon his other Attributes, but the perpetuity of it upon his Eternity. Is it a comfort to view his immenſe Wiſdom; his overflowing Goodneſs; his tender Mercy; his unerring Truth? What comfort were there in any of thoſe, if it were a Wiſdom that could be baffled; a Goodneſs that could be dampt; a Mercy that can expire, and a Truth that can periſh with the Subject of it? Without Eternity, what were all his other Perfections, but as glorious, yet withering Flowers; a great, but a decaying Beauty? By a frequent meditation of Gods Eternity, we ſhould become more ſenſible of our own vanity and the worlds triflingneſs: How nothing ſhould our ſelves; How nothing would all other things appear in our eyes? How coldly ſhould we deſire them? How feebly ſhould we place any truſt in them? Should we not think our ſelves worthy of contempt to dote upon a periſhing glory, to expect ſupport from an Arm of Fleſh, when there is an eternal Beauty to raviſh us, an eternal Arm to protect us? *Aſaph*, when he conſidered God *a Portion for ever*, thought nothing of the Glories of the Earth, or the Beauties of the created Heavens worth his appetite or complacency, but *God.* * Beſides, an elevated frame of heart at the conſideration of Gods Eternity, would batter down the ſtrong holds and engines of any temptation: A ſlight temptation will not know where to find and catch hold of a Soul high and hid in a meditation of it; and if it doth, there will not be wanting from hence preſervatives to reſiſt and conquer it. What tranſitory pleaſures will not the thoughts of Gods Eternity ſtifle? When this work buſieth a Soul, 'tis too great to ſuffer it to deſcend, to liſten to a ſleeveleſs errand from Hell or the World. The wanton allurements of the Fleſh will be put off with indignation. The profers of the world will be ridiculous when they are caſt into the Ballance with the Eternity of God, which ſticking in our thoughts, we ſhall not be ſo eaſie a Prey for the Fowlers Gin. * 1 Tim. 1. 15, 16, 17. *Pſ. 73. 25, 26.

Let us therefore often meditate upon this, but not in a bare ſpeculation without engaging our affections, and making every notion of the *Divine Eternity* end in a ſutable impreſſion upon our hearts: This would be much like the Diſciples *gazing upon the Heavens* at the *aſcenſion* of their Maſter, while they forgat the practice of his Orders: * We may elſe find ſomething of the nature of God: and loſe our ſelves, not only in Eternity but to Eternity. * Acts 1. 11.

2. And hence the ſecond part of the Exhortation is *to ſomething which concerns us with a reſpect to God.*

1. If God be eternal, *How worthy is he of our choiceſt affections, and ſtrongeſt deſires of communion with him?* Is not every thing to be valued according to the greatneſs of its Being? How then ſhould we love him, who is not only lovely in his nature, but eternally lovely; having from everlaſting all thoſe perfections centred in himſelf, which appear in time? If every thing be lovely, by how much the more it partakes of

the nature of God who is the chief Good, how much more infinitely lovely is God, who is ſuperior to all other goods, and eternally ſo.? Not a God of a few minutes, months, years, or millions of years; not of the dregs of time or the top of time, but of Eternity; above time, unconceivably immenſe beyond time: The loving him infinitely, perpetually, is an act of homage due to him for his eternal excellency: We may give him the one, ſince our Souls are immortal, though we cannot the other, becauſe they are finite: Since he encloſeth in himſelf all the excellences of Heaven and Earth for ever, he ſhould have an affection, not only of time in this world, but of etenity in the future; and if we did not owe him a love for what we are by him, we owe him a love for what he is in himſelf; and more for what he is, than for what he is to us: He is more worthy of our affections becauſe he is the *eternal God*, than becauſe he is our Creator; becauſe he is more excellent in his nature than in his tranſient actions: The beams of his goodneſs to us, are to direct our thoughts and affections to him; but his own eternal excellency, ought to be the ground and foundation of our affections to him. And truly, ſince nothing but God is eternal, nothing but God is worth the loving; and we do but a juſt right to our love, to pitch it upon that which can always poſſeſs us, and be poſſeſſed by us; upon an Object that cannot deceive our affection, and put it out of countenance by a diſſolution.

And if our happineſs conſiſts in being like to God, we ſhould imitate him in loving him as he loves himſelf, and as long as he loves himſelf: God cannot do more to himſelf than love himſelf; he can make no addition to his Eſſence, nor diminution from it. What ſhould we do leſs to an eternal Being, than to beſtow affections upon him, like his own to himſelf: ſince we can find nothing ſo durable as himſelf, for which we ſhould love it?

2. *He only is worthy of our beſt Service.* The *Ancient of days* is to be ſerved before all that are younger than himſelf; Our beſt obedience is due to him as a God of unconfined excellency: Every thing that is excellent deſerves a veneration ſutable to its excellency. As God is infinite, he hath right to a boundleſs ſervice; as he is eternal, he hath right to a perpetual ſervice: As Service is a debt of Juſtice upon the account of the excellency of his nature, ſo a perperual ſervice is as much a debt of juſtice upon the account of his Eternity. If God be infinite and eternal, he merits an honour and comportment from his Creatures ſuted to the unlimited perfection of his Nature, and the duration of his Being. How worthy is the *Pſalmiſts* reſolution? *I will ſing unto the Lord as long as I live, I will ſing praiſes to my God while I have any being:* * 'Tis the uſe he makes of the *endleſs duration* of the Glory of God, and will extend to all other ſervice as well as praiſe. To ſerve other things, or to ſerve our ſelves, is too vaſt a ſervice upon that which is nothing. In devoting our ſelves to God, we ſerve him that is; that was, ſo as that he never began; Is to come, ſo as that he never ſhall end; By whom all things are what they are; who hath both eternal knowledge to remember our ſervice, and eternal goodneſs to reward It.

* Pſal. 104.33.

A DISCOURSE UPON THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD.

Pſalm 102. 26, 27.

They ſhall periſh, but thou ſhalt endure; yea, all of them ſhall wax old as a Garment; as a Veſture ſhalt thou change them, and they ſhall be changed: But thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall have no end.

THIS *Pſalm* contains a Complaint of a People preſſed with a great Calamity; ſome think of the *Jewiſh* Church in *Babylon*, others think the Pſalmiſt doth here perſonate Mankind lying under a ſtate of corruption, becauſe he wiſhes for the coming of the *Meſſiah*, to accompliſh that Redemption promiſed by God, and needed by them. Indeed the *title* of the *Pſalm* is *a Prayer of the Afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and pours out his complaint before the Lord*: Whether afflicted with the ſenſe of corruption, or with the ſenſe of oppreſſion. And the Redemption by the *Meſſiah*, which the ancient Church looked upon as the fountain of their Deliverance from a ſinful or a ſervile Bondage, is in this *Pſalm*, ſpoken of: A ſet time appointed for the diſcovery of his mercy to *Sion*, *v.*13. An appearance in glory to build up *Sion*, *v.*16. The looſening of the Priſoner by Redemption, and them that are appointed to Death, *v.*20. The calling of the *Gentiles*, v. 22. And the later part of the *Pſalm*, wherein are the *verſes* I have read, are applied to Chriſt, *Heb.* 1. Whatſoever the deſign of the *Pſalm* might be, many things are intermingled that concern the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, and Redemption by Chriſt.

Some make three parts of the *Pſalm*,

1. *A Petition* plainly delivered, *v.* 1. 2. *Hear my Prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto thee*, &c.

2. *The Petition ſtrongly and argumentatively enforced and pleaded*, v. 3. from the miſery of the Petitioner in himſelf, and his reproach from his Enemies.

3. *An acting of Faith in the expectation of an Anſwer in the general Redemption promiſed*, v. 12, 13. *But thou O Lord ſhalt endure for ever; thou ſhalt ariſe and have mercy upon* Sion; *The Heathen ſhall fear thy Name.*

The *firſt part* is the Petition pleaded; the *ſecond part* is the Petition anſwered in an aſſurance, that there ſhould in time be a full deliverance. * The deſign of the *Pen-man* is to confirm the Chuch in the truth of the Divine Promiſes; that though the foundations of the World ſhould be ript up, and the Heavens clatter together, and the whole Fabrick of them be unpinn'd and fall to pieces, the firmeſt parts of it diſſolved; yet the Church ſhould continue in its ſtability, becauſe it ſtands not upon the changeableneſs of Creatures, but is built upon the immutable Rock of the Truth of God, which is as little ſubject to change as his Eſſence:

* *Pareus.*

They ſhall periſh, thou ſhalt change them. As he had before aſcribed to God the *foundation of Heaven and Earth**, ſo he aſcribes to God here the *deſtruction* of them: Both the beginning and end of the World are here aſcertained. There is nothing indeed from the preſent appearance of things that can demonſtrate the ceſſation of the world; The Heaven and Earth ſtand firm; the motions of the heavenly Bodies are the ſame, their beauty is not decayed: Individuals corrupt; but the Species and Kinds remain: The Succeſſions of the Year obſerve their due order; but the Sin of Man renders the change of the preſent appearance of the world neceſſary, to accompliſh the deſign of God for the glory of his Elect. The Heavens do not naturally periſh, as ſome fanced an old age of the world, wherein it muſt neceſſarily decay as the Bodies of Animals do; or that the parts of the Heavens are broken off by their rubbing one againſt another in their motion, and falling to the Earth, are the Seeds of thoſe things that grow up among us. *

* Verſe 25.

* Plin Hiſt. lib. 2. cap. 3.

The Earth and *Heavens.* He names here the moſt ſtable parts of the world, and the moſt beautiful parts of the Creation; thoſe that are freeſt from corruptibility and change, to illuſtrate thereby the Immutability of God; that though the Heavens and Earth have a Prerogative of fixedneſs above other parts of the world, and the Creatures that reſide below; the Heavens remain the ſame as they were created, and the Center of the Earth retains its fixedneſs, and are as beautiful and freſh in their age as they were in their youth many years ago, notwithſtanding the change of the Elements; Fire and Water being often turned into Air, ſo that there may remain but little of that Air which was firſt created by reaſon of the continual tranſmutation; yet this firmneſs of the *Earth* and *Heavens*, is not to be regarded in compariſon of the unmoveableneſs and fixedneſs of the Being of God: As their beauty comes ſhort of the glory of his Being, ſo doth their firmneſs come ſhort of his *ſtability.*

Some by Heavens and Earth, underſtand the Creatures which reſide in the Earth, and thoſe which are in the Air, which is called Heaven often in Scripture; but the ruin and fall of theſe being ſeen every day, had been no fit illuſtration of the unchangeableneſs of God.

They ſhall periſh, they ſhall be changed.

1. They *may* periſh, ſay ſome; they have it not from themſelves that they do not periſh, but from thee, who didſt indue them with an incorruptible nature; They ſhall periſh if thou ſpeakeſt the word; Thou canſt with as much eaſe deſtroy them as thou didſt create them: But the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks not of their poſſibility, but the certainty of their periſhing.

2. They *ſhall* periſh in their qualities and motion, not in their ſubſtance, ſay others: They ſhall ceaſe from that motion which is deſigned properly for the generation and corruption of things in the Earth; but in regard of their ſubſtance and beauty they ſhall remain: As when the ſtrings or Wheels of a Clock or Watch are taken off, the material parts remain; though the motion of it, and the uſe for diſcovering the time of the day ceaſeth. * To periſh, doth not ſignifie always a falling into nothing, an annihilation, by which both the matter and the form are deſtroyed; but a ceaſing of the preſent appearance of them; a ceaſing to be what they now are, as a man is ſaid to periſh when he dies, whereas the better part of man doth not ceaſe to be: The figure of the Body moulders away, and the matter of it returns to Duſt; but the Soul being immortal ceaſeth not to act, when the Body by reaſon of the abſence of the Soul is uncapable of acting. So the Heavens ſhall periſh; the appearance they now have ſhall vaniſh, and a more glorious and incorruptible frame be erected by the power and goodneſs of God. The diſſolution of Heaven and Earth is meant by the word [*periſh*]; the raiſing a new frame is ſignified by the word [*changed*]

* *Coccei.* in loc.

[*changed*]; as if the Spirit of God would prevent any wrong meaning of the word [*periſh*] by alleviating the ſenſe of that, by another which ſignifies only a mutation and change; as when we change a Habit and Garment, we quit the old to receive the new.

[*As a Garment, as a Veſture.*] Thou ſhalt change them*, ἑλίξεις Thou ſhalt *fold them up.* The Heavens are compared to a Curtain*, and ſhall in due time be folded up as cloaths and Curtains are. As a *Garment* encompaſſeth the whole body, ſo do the Heavens encircle the Earth. *Some ſay as a Garment is folded up to be laid aſide, that when there is need it may be taken again for uſe; ſo ſhalt thou fold up the Heavens like a Garment, that when they are repaired, thou mayſt again ſtretch them out about the Earth; thou ſhalt fold them up, ſo that what did appear ſhall not now appear. It may be illuſtrated by the *metaphor* of a Scrole or Book, which the Spirit of God uſeth, *Iſa.*34.4 *Rev.*6.14. *The Heavens departed as a Scrole when it is rouled together.* When a Book is rouled up or ſhut, nothing can be read in it till it be opened again; ſo the Face of the Heavens, wherein the Stars are as Letters declaring the Glory of God, ſhall be ſhut or rouled together, ſo that nothing ſhall appear till by its renovation it be opened again: As a Garment it ſhall be changed, not to be uſed in the ſame faſhion and for the ſame uſe again. It ſeems indeed to be for the worſe; an old garment is not changed but into rags, to be put to other uſes, and afterwards thrown upon the Dung-hill: But Similitudes are not to be preſſed too far; and this will not agree with the new Heavens and new Earth, *phyſically* ſo, as well as *metaphorically* ſo. 'Tis not likely the Heavens will be put to a worſe uſe than God deſigned them for in Creation: However a change as a Garment, ſpeaks not a total corruption, but an alteration of qualities; as a Garment not to be uſed in the the ſame faſhion, as before. We may obſerve,

* *Septuag.*

* Pſal. 104. 2.

* *Eſtius* in Heb. 1.

1. That *'tis probable, the world ſhall not be annihilated but refin'd.* It ſhall loſe its preſent form and faſhion, but not its foundation: Indeed as God raiſed it from nothing, ſo he can reduce it into nothing; yet it doth not appear that God will annihilate it, and utterly deſtroy both the matter and form of it; part ſhall be conſumed, and part purified, 2 *Pet.*3. 12, 13. *The Heavens ſhall be on fire and diſſolved, nevertheleſs we according to his promiſe look for a new Heaven and a new Earth.* They ſhall be melted down as Gold by the Artificer, to be refined from its Droſs, and wrought into a more beautiful faſhion, that they may ſerve the deſign of God for thoſe that ſhall reſide therein; a new world wherein Righteouſneſs ſhall dwell: The *Apoſtle* oppoſing it thereby, to the old world wherein wickedneſs did reſide. The Heavens are to be purged, as the Veſſels that held the Sin-offering were to be purified by the fire of the Sanctuary.

God indeed will take down this Scaffold which he hath built to publiſh his Glory. As every Individual hath a certain term of its duration; ſo an end is appointed for the univerſal nature of Heaven and Earth, *Iſa.* 51.6. *The Heavens ſhall vaniſh like Smoke*, which diſappears. As ſmoke is reſolved and attenuated into Air, not annihilated; ſo ſhall the world aſſume a new face, aud have a greater clearneſs and ſplendor: As the bodies of men diſſolved into Duſt, ſhall have more glorious qualities at their Reſurrection: As a Veſſel of Gold is melted down to remove the batterings in it, and receive a more comely form by the Skill of the Workman.

(1.) *The World was not deſtroyed by the Deluge:* It was rather waſhed by water than conſumed; So it ſhall be rather refined by the laſt fire, than lie under an irrecoverable ruin.

(2.) *'Tis not likely God would liken the everlaſtingneſs of his Covenant, and the perpetuity of his ſpiritual* Iſrael, *to the duration of the ordinances of the Heavens,* (*as he doth in* Jer.21.35, 36.) *if they were wholly to depart from before him.* Though that place may only tend to an aſſurance of a Church in the world while the world endures; yet it would be but ſmall comfort, if the happineſs of Believers ſhould endure no longer than the Heavens and Earth, if they were to have a total period.

(3.) Beſides, *the Bodies of the Saints muſt have place for their ſupport to move in, and glorious objects ſuted to thoſe glorious ſenſes which ſhall be reſtored to them*; Not in any carnal way which our Saviour rejects, when he ſaith there is *no eating*, or *drinking*, *or marrying*, &c. *in the other world*; but whereby they may glorifie God; though how or in what manner their ſenſes ſhall be uſed, would be raſhneſs to determine; only

only ſomething is neceſſary for the corporeal ſtate of men, that there may be an employment for their ſenſes as well as their Souls.

Rom. 8. 21. (4.) Again, *How could the Creature, the world or any part of it be ſaid to be delivered from the bondage of Corruption, into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God; if the whole Frame of Heaven and Earth were to be annihilated, Rom.* 8. 21? The Apoſtle alſo ſaith that the Creature *waits* with an *earneſt expectation for this manifeſtation of the Sons of God*, v. 19. Which would have no foundation, if the whole frame ſhould be reduced to nothing. What joyful expectation can there be in any of a total ruin? How ſhould the Creature be capable of partaking in this glorious liberty of the Sons of God?

* *Hyper. in* Heb. 1. * As the World for the ſin of man loſt its firſt dignity, and was curſed after the fall, and the Beauty beſtowed upon it by Creation defaced; So it ſhall recover that ancient glory, when he ſhall be fully reſtored by the Reſurrection to that dignity he loſt by his firſt ſin. As man ſhall be freed from his corruptibility to receive that glory which is prepared for him; ſo ſhall the Creatures be freed from that imperfection or corruptibility, thoſe ſtains and ſpots upon the face of them, to receive a new glory ſuted to their nature and anſwerable to the deſign of God; when the *glorious liberty* of

* *Meſtraʒat* ſur. Heb. 1. the Saints ſhall be accompliſht. * As when a Prince's Nuptials are ſolemnized, the whole Country eccho's with joy; ſo the inanimate Creatures, when the time of the Marriage of the Lamb is come, ſhall have a delight and pleaſure from that renovation. The *Apoſtle* ſets forth the whole world as a perſon *groaning*, and the Scripture is frequenrt in ſuch Metaphors; as when the Creatures are ſaid to *wait upon God, and to be troubled* *; the *Hills are ſaid to leap, and the Mountains to rejoyce:* The Crea-

* Pſal. 104. 27, 29. ture is ſaid to groan, as the Heavens are ſaid to declare the glory of God, paſſively, naturally, not rationally. 'Tis not likely Angels are here meant, though they cannot but deſire it; ſince they are affected with the diſhonour and reproach God hath in the world, they cannot but long for the reſtoration of his honour in the reſtoration of the Creature to its true end: And indeed the Angels are employed to ſerve man in this ſinful ſtate, and cannot but in holineſs wiſh the Creature freed from his corruption: Nor is it meant of the new Creatures which have the firſt fruits of the Spi-

* Verſe 23. rit, thoſe he brings in afterwards, *groaning* and *waiting for the Adoption* *; where he diſtinguiſheth the rational Creature from the Creature he had ſpoken of before: If he had meant the believing Creature by that Creature that deſired the liberty of the Sons of God; what need had there been of that additional diſtinction, *and not only they, but we alſo who have the firſt fruits of the Spirit, groan within our ſelves?* Whereby it ſeems he means ſome Creatures below rational Creatures, ſince neither Angels nor bleſſed Souls can be ſaid to travail in pain, with that diſtreſs as a Woman in travail hath, as the word ſignifies, who perform the work joyfully which God ſets

* *Meſtraʒat* ſur. Heb. 1. them upon *. If the Creatures be ſubject to vanity by the ſin of man, they ſhall alſo partake of a happineſs by the reſtoration of man. The Earth hath born Thorns and Thiſtles, and venemous Beaſts; The Air hath had its Tempeſts and infectious Qualities; The Water hath cauſed its Floods and Deluges. The Creature hath been abuſed to luxury and intemperance, and been tyranniz'd over by Man, contrary to the end of its creation: 'Tis convenient that ſome time ſhould be allotted for the Creature's attaining its true end, and that it may partake of the peace of Man, as it hath done of the fruits of his ſin; otherwiſe it would ſeem that ſin had prevailed more than grace, and would have had more power to deface than grace to reſtore things into their due order.

* Pſal. 96. 11, 12, 13. 5. Again, *upon what account ſhould the Pſalmiſt exhort the Heavens to rejoyce, and the Earth to be glad, when God comes to judge the world with righteouſneſs* *; *if they ſhould be annihilated and ſunk for ever into nothing?* It would ſeem, ſaith *Daille*, to be an impertinent figure, if the Judge of the world brought them to a total deſtruction; an entire ruin could not be matter of triumph to Creatures, who naturally have that inſtinct or inclination put into them by their Creator to preſerve themſelves, and to affect their own preſervation.

6. Again, *The Lord is to rejoyce in his works*, Pſal. 104. 31. *The Glory of the Lord ſhall endure for ever; the Lord ſhall rejoyce in his works*; not *hath*, but *ſhall* rejoyce in his works: In the works of Creation; which the *Pſalmiſt* had enumerated, and which is the whole ſcope of the *Pſalm*: And he intimates that it is part of the glory of the Lord which endures for ever, that is, his manifeſtative glory, to rejoyce in his

works:

works: The Glory of the Lord must be understood with reference to the Creation he had spoken of before. How short was that joy God had in his works after he had sent them beautified out of his hand? How soon did *he repent*, not only *that he had made Man*, but was *grieved at the heart* also, that he made the other Creatures which Man's sin had disordered? What joy can God have in them, since the Curse upon the entrance of sin into the world, remains upon them? If they are to be annihilated upon the full restoration of his Holiness, what time will God have to rejoyce in the other works of Creation? 'Tis the joy of God to see all his works in their due order; every one pointing to their true end; marching together in their excellency, according to his first intendment in their Creation. Did God create the World to perform its end only for one day; scarce so much, if *Adam* fell the very first day of his Creation? What would have been their end, if *Adam* had been confirm'd in a state of happiness as the Angels were; 'tis likely will be answered and performed upon the compleat restoration of Man to that happy state from whence he fell. What Artificer compiles a work by his skill but to rejoyce in it? And shall God have no joy from the works of his hands? Since God can only rejoyce in goodness, the Creatures must have that goodness restored to them which God pronounced them to have at the first Creation, and which he ordained them for, before he can again rejoyce in his works: The goodness of the Creatures is the glory and joy of God.

* Gen. 6. 7.

Inference 1. We may infer from hence, *what a base and vile thing Sin is, which lays the foundation of the worlds change.* Sin brings it to decrepit age: Sin overturned the whole work of God *; so that to render it useful to its proper end, there is a necessity of a kind of a new creating it: This causes God to fire the Earth for a purification of it from that infection and contagion brought upon it by the apostacy and corruption of Man: It hath served sinful man, and therefore must undergo a purging Flame to be fit to serve the holy and righteous Creator. As Sin is so riveted in the body of man, that there is need of a change by death to raise it out; so hath the Curse for sin got so deep into the bowels of the world, that there is need of a change by fire to refine it for its Masters use. Let us look upon Sin with no other notion than as the Object of Gods hatred, the cause of his grief in the Creatures, and the Spring of the pain and ruin of the World.

* Gen. 3. 17.

2. *How foolish a thing is it to set our hearts upon that which shall perish, and be no more what it is now?* The Heavens and Earth, the solidest and firmest parts of the Creation shall not continue in the posture they are; they must perish and undergo a refining change: How feeble and weak are the other parts of the Creation, the little Creatures walking upon and fluttering about the world, that are perishing and dying every day; and we scarce see them clothed with life and beauty this day, but they wither and are dispoyl'd of all the next; and are such frail things fit Objects for our everlasting Spirits and Affections? Though the daily employment of the Heavens is the declaration of the glory of God *, yet neither this, nor their harmony, order, beauty, amazing greatness and glory of them, shall preserve them from a dissolution and melting at the presence of the Lord: Though they have remained in the same posture from the Creation till this day, and are of so great antiquity; yet they must bow down to a change before the Will and Word of their Creator; and shall we rest upon that which shall vanish like Smoke? Shall we take any Creature for our support like Ice, that will crack under our feet, and must by the order of their Lord Creator deceive our hopes? Perishing things can be no support to the Soul; If we would have rest, we must run to God and rest in God. How contemptible should that be to us: whose fashion shall pass away, which shall not endure long in its present form and appearance; contemptible as a rest, not contemptible as the work of God; contemptible as an end, not contemptible as a means to attain our end? If these must be changed, how unworthy are other things to be the Center of our Souls, that change in our very using of them, and slide away in our very enjoyment of them?

* Psal. 19. 1.

Thou art the same. The Essence of God with all the perfections of his nature are pronounced the same, without any variation from Eternity to Eternity: So that the Text doth not only assert the eternal duration of God, but his Immutabily in that duration: his Eternity is signified in that expression *thou shalt endure*; his Immutabi-

lity

lity in this, *thou art the ſame.* * To endure, argues indeed his Immutability as well as Eternity; For what endures, is not changed, and what is changed, doth not endure: But *thou art the ſame* * doth more fully ſignifie it: He could not be the ſame if he could be changed into any other thing than what he is; The *Pſalmiſt* therefore puts, not thou *haſt been* or *ſhalt be*, but *thou art* the ſame without any alteration; thou art the ſame, that is, the ſame God, the ſame in Eſſence and Nature, the ſame in Will and Purpoſe, Thou doſt change all other things as thou pleaſeſt; but thou art immutable in every reſpect, and receiveſt no ſhadow of change, though never ſo light and ſmall. * The *Pſalmiſt* here alludes to the name *Jehovah*, *I am*; and doth not only aſcribe Immutability to God, but exclude every thing elſe from partaking in that perfection: All things elſe are tottering; God ſees all other things in continual motion under his feet, like Water paſſing away and no more ſeen, while he remains fixed and immoveable: His Wiſdom and Power, his knowledge and Will are alway the ſame. His Eſſence can receive no alteration, neither by it ſelf not by any external Cauſe; whereas other things either naturally decline to deſtruction, paſs from one term to another till they come to their period; or ſhall at the laſt day be wrapped up, after God hath compleated his Will in them and by them; as a man doth a Garment he intends to repair and transform to another uſe.

* *Eſtius* in Heb. 1.

Chryſoſtom אחה הוא

* Αλλοιώσεως κρείττων, *above all change* Theodor.

So that in the Text God as immutable, is oppoſed to all Creatures as periſhing and changeable.

Doct. *God is unchangeable in his Eſſence, Nature, and Perfections.* Immutability and Eternity are linkt together; and indeed true Eternity is true Immutability, whence Eternity is defin'd the Poſſeſſion of an immutable Life. Yet Immutability differs from Eternity in our conception: Immutability reſpects the Eſſence or Exiſtence of a thing, Eternity reſpects the duration of a being in that State; or rather, * *Immutability is the State it ſelf*, Eternity is the meaſure of that State. A thing is ſaid to be changed, when it is otherwiſe now in regard of Nature, State, Will, or any Quality than it was before; when either ſomething is added to it or taken from it; when it either loſes or acquires: But now it is the eſſential property of God, not to have any acceſſion to, or diminution of his Eſſence or Attributes, but to remain entirely the ſame: He wants nothing; He loſes nothing, but doth uniformly exiſt by himſelf, without any new nature, new thoughs, new will, new purpoſe, or new place.

* *Gamacheus.*

* This unchangeableneſs of God was anciently repreſented by the figure of a *Cube*, a piece of Metal or Wood framed four-ſquare; when every ſide is exactly of the ſame equality, caſt it which way you will, it will always be in the ſame poſture, becauſe it is equal to it ſelf in all its dimenſions: He was therefore ſaid to be the *Center* of all thiugs, and other things the Circumference; the Center is never moved while the Circumference is; it remains immoveable in the midſt of the Circle: *There is no variableneſs nor ſhadow of turning with him.* * The *Moon* hath her Spots, ſo hath the *Sun*; there is a mixture of Light and Darkneſs; it hath its changes; ſometimes it is in the increaſe, ſometimes in the wane; it is always either gaining or loſing; and by the turnings and motions, either of the Heavenly-bodies or of the Earth, 'tis in its Eclipſe: by the interpoſition of the Earth between that and the Sun. The Sun alſo hath its diurnal and annual motion; it riſeth and ſets, and puts on a different Face: It doth not alway ſhine with a noon-day light; 'tis ſometimes vail'd with Clouds and Vapours; it is always going from one Tropick to another, whereby it makes various ſhadows on the Earth, and produceth the various ſeaſons of the year; 'tis not always in our Hemiſphere, nor doth it always ſhine with an equal force and brightneſs in it: Such ſhadows and variations have no place in the eternal Father of Lights; He hath not the leaſt ſpot or diminution of Brightneſs; nothing can cloud him or eclipſe him. For the better underſtanding this Perfection of God,

* *Amyraut* ſur Heb. 9. p. 153.

* James 1. 17.

I ſhall Premiſe three things.

1. *The Immutability of God is a Perfection.* Immutability conſidered in it ſelf without relation to other things, is not a Perfection. 'Tis the greateſt miſery and imperfection of the evil Angels, that they are immutable in malice againſt God: But as God is infinite in Eſſence, infinitely good, wiſe, holy; ſo it is a Perfection neceſſary to his Nature, that he ſhould be immutably all this; all excellency, goodneſs, wiſdom, immutably all that he is; without this be would be an imperfect Being.

Are

Are not the Angels in Heaven, who are confirmed in a holy and happy ſtate, more perfect than when they were in a poſſibility of committing evil and becoming miſerable; Are not the Saints in Heaven, whoſe Wills by Grace do unalterably cleave to God and goodneſs, more perfect than if they were as *Adam* in Paradiſe, capable of loſing their Felicity as well as preſerving it? We count a Rock in regard of its ſtability, more excellent than the Duſt of the Ground, or a Feather that is toſſed about with every Wind; Is it not alſo the perfection of the body to have a conſtant tenor of health, and the glory of a man not to warp aſide from what is juſt and right, by the perſwaſions of any temptations?

2. *Immutability is a Glory belonging to all the Attributes of God.* 'Tis not a ſingle perfection of the Divine Nature, nor is it limited to particular Objects thus and thus diſpoſed. Mercy and Juſtice have their diſtinct objects, and diſtinct acts; Mercy is converſant about a Penitent, Juſtice converſant about an obſtinate Sinner. In our notion and conception of the Divine Perfections, his Perfections are different; The Wiſdom of God is not his Power, nor his Power his Holineſs; but Immutability is the Center wherein they all unite: There is not one Perfection but may be ſaid to be, and truly is immutable; none of them will appear ſo glorious without this Beam, this Sun of Immutability, which renders them highly excellent without the leaſt ſhadow of imperfection: How cloudy would his Bleſſedneſs be, if it were changeable? How dim his Wiſdom, if it might be obſcur'd? How feeble his Power if it were capable to be ſickly and languiſh? How would Mercy loſe much of its luſtre, if it could change into wrath; and Juſtice much of its dread, if it could be turned into Mercy, while the object of Juſtice remains unfit for Mercy, and one that hath need of Mercy continues only fit for the Divine Fury? But unchangeableneſs is a Thread that runs through the whole Web; 'Tis the enamel of all the reſt; none of them without it could look with a triumphant aſpect; His Power is unchangeable; * *In the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength*; his *Mercy and his Holineſs endure for ever*; *He never could, nor ever can look upon iniquity* *: He is a Rock in the righteouſneſs of his ways, the truth of his word, the holineſs of his proceedings, and the rectitude of his nature: All are expreſt, *Deut.* 32. 4. *He is a Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are Judgment; A God of Truth and without Iniquity, juſt and right is he.* All that we conſider in God is unchangeable; for his Eſſence and his Properties are the ſame, and therefore what is neceſſarily belonging to the Eſſence of God, belongs alſo to every perfection of the nature of God; none of them can receive any addition or diminution: From the unchangeableneſs of his nature, the *Apoſtle James* 1. 17. infers the unchangeableneſs of his Holineſs; and himſelf in *Mal.* 3. 6. the unchangeableneſs of his Counſel.

* Iſa. 26. 4.

* Hab. 1. 13.

3. *Unchangeableneſs doth neceſſarily pertain to the Nature of God.* 'Tis of the ſame neceſſity with the rectitude of his Nature; He can no more be changeable in his Eſſence, than he can be unrighteous in his Actions. God is a neceſſary Being; He is neceſſarily what he is, and therefore is unchangeably what he is. Mutability belongs to contingency. If any perfection of his nature could be ſeparated from him, he would ceaſe to be God: What did not poſſeſs the whole Nature of God, could not have the Eſſence of God; 'Tis reciprocated with the Nature of God. Whatſoever is immutable by Nature, is God; whatſoever is God, is immutable by Nature. Some Creatures are immutable by his Grace and Power: * God is holy, happy, wiſe, good by his Eſſence; Angels and Men are made holy, wiſe, happy, ſtrong and good by Qualities and Graces: The Holineſs, Happineſs and Wiſdom of Saints and Angels, as they had a beginning, ſo they are capable of increaſe and diminution, and of an end alſo; for their ſtanding is not from themſelves, or from the nature of created ſtrength, holineſs or wiſdom, which in themſelves are apt to fail, and finally to decay; but from the ſtability and confirmation they have by the Gift and Grace of God: The Heaven and Earth ſhall be changed, and after that renewal and reparation, they ſhall not be changed. Our Bodies after the Reſurrection ſhall not be changed; but for ever be *made conformable to the glorious Body of Chriſt* *; but this is by the powerful Grace of God: So that indeed thoſe things may be ſaid afterwards rather to be unchanged than unchangeable, becauſe they are not ſo by nature, but by ſoveraign diſpenſation. As Creatures have not neceſſary Beings, ſo they have not neceſſary Immutability. Neceſſity of being, and therefore Immutability of be-

* *Archbiſh.* Serm.

* Phil. 3. 21.

ing belongs by nature only to God; otherwiſe if there were any change in God he would be ſometimes what he was not, and would ceaſe to be what he was; which is againſt the nature, and indeed againſt the natural notion of a Deity. Let us ſee then,

1. *In what regards God is immutable.*
2. *Prove that Gods is immutable.*
3. *That this is proper to God, and incommunicable to any Creature.*
4. *Some propoſitions to clear the unchangeableneſs of God from any thing that ſeems contrary to it.*
5. The Uſe.

Firſt in what *reſpects God is unchangeable.*

1. *God is unchangeable in his Eſſence.* He is unalterably fixed in his Being, that not a Particle of it can be loſt from it, not a Mite added to it. If a Man continue in being as long as *Methuſelah*, Nine hundred and Sixty nine years; yet there is not a day, nay an hour, wherein there is not ſome alteration in his ſubſtance; though no ſubſtantial part is wanting, yet there is an addition to him by his Food, a diminution of ſomething by his Labour; He is always making ſome acquiſition, or ſuffering ſome loſs: But in God there can be no alteration, by the acceſſion of any thing to make his ſubſtance greater or better, or by diminution to make it leſs or worſe. He who hath no being from another, cannot but be always what he is: God is the firſt Being, an independent Being; He was not produced of himſelf, or of any other, but by nature always hath been; and therefore cannot by himſelf, or by any other be changed from what he is in his own nature. That which is not, may as will aſſume to it ſelf a Being, as he, who hath and is all Being, have the leaſt change from what he is. Again, becauſe he is a Spirit, he is not ſubject to thoſe mutations which are found in corporeal and bodily Natures; Becauſe he is an abſolutely ſimple Spirit, not having the leaſt particle of compoſition; he is not capable of thoſe changes which may be in created Spirits.

1. If his Eſſence were mutable. *God would not truly be*; It could not
* Exod. 3, 14. be truly ſaid by himſelf, *I am that I am*, * if he were ſuch a Thing or Being at this time, and a different Being at another time. Whatſoever is changed, properly is not, becauſe it doth not remain to be what it was: That which is changed was ſomething, is ſomething, and will be ſomething; a Being remains to that thing which is changed; yet though it may be ſaid ſuch a thing is, yet it may be alſo ſaid ſuch a thing is not, becauſe it is not what it was in its firſt being; 'tis not now what it was, 'tis now what it was not; 'tis another thing than it was, it was another thing than it is; it will be another thing than what it is or was: 'Tis indeed a Being, but a different Being from what it was before. But if God were changed, it could not be ſaid of him that *he is*, but it might alſo be ſaid of him that *he is not*; or if he were changeable or could be changed, it might be ſaid of him he is, but he will not be what he is; or he may not be what he is, but there will be or may be ſome difference in his Being, and ſo God would not be *I am that I am*; for though he would not ceaſe utterly to be, yet he would ceaſe to be what he was before.

2. Again, If his Eſſence were mutable, *he could not be perfectly bleſſed, and fully rejoyce in himſelf.* If he changed for the better, he could not have an infinite pleaſure in what he was before the change, becauſe he was not infinitely bleſſed; and the pleaſure of that ſtate could not be of a higher kind than the ſtate it ſelf, or at leaſt the apprehenſion of a happineſs in it: If he changed for the worſe, he could, not have a pleaſure in it after the change; for according to the diminution of his ſtate, would be the decreaſe of his pleaſure: His pleaſure could not be infinite before the change, if he changed for the better; it could not be infinite after the change, if he changed for the worſe: If he changed for the better, he would not have had an infinite Goodneſs of being before; and not having an infinite Goodneſs of Being, he would have a finite Goodneſs of Being; for there is no *medium* between finite and infinite: Then though the change were for the better, yet being finite before, ſomething would be ſtill wanting to make him infinitely bleſſed; becauſe being finite, he could not change to that which is infinite; for finite and infinite are extreams ſo diſtant; that they can never paſs into one another; that is, that that which is finite ſhould become infinite, or that which is infinite ſhould become finite: So that ſuppoſing him mutable, his Eſſence in no ſtate of change, could furniſh him with an infinite peace and bleſſedneſs.

3. Again,

3. Again, if Gods Eſſence be changed, *he either encreaſeth or diminiſheth**: Whatſoever is changed, doth either gain by receiving ſome thing larger and greater than it had in it ſelf before, or gains nothing by being changed. If the former, then it receives more than it ſelf, more than it had in it ſelf before. The Divine Nature cannot be encreaſed; for whatſoever receives any thing than what it had in it ſelf before, muſt neceſſarily receive it from another, becauſe nothing can give to it ſelf that which it hath not: But God cannot receive from another what he hath not already, becauſe whatſoever other things poſſeſs, is derived from him, and therefore contained in him, as the Fountain contains the Vertue in it ſelf which it conveys to the ſtreams; ſo that God cannot gain any thing: If a thing that is changed gain nothing by that change, it loſeth ſomething of what it had before in it ſelf; and this loſs muſt be by it ſelf or ſome other. God cannot receive any loſs from any thing in himſelf; he cannot will his own diminution; that is repugnant to every Nature: He may as well will his own deſtruction as his own decreaſe; Every decreaſe is a partial deſtruction: But it is impoſſible for God to dye any kind of Death, to have any reſemblance of death, for he is immortal, and *only hath Immortality**, therefore impoſſible to be diminiſht in any particle of his Eſſence; nor can he be diminiſht by any thing in his own Nature, becauſe his infinite ſimplicity admits of nothing diſtinct from himſelf, or contrary to himſelf. All decreaſes come from ſomething contrary to the nature of that thing which doth decreaſe: Whatſoever is made leſs than it ſelf, was not truly *Unum*, one and ſimple, becauſe that which divides it ſelf in ſeparation was not the ſame in conjunction. Nor can he be diminiſht by any other without himſelf; becauſe nothing is ſuperior to God, nothing ſtronger than God which can oppreſs him: But whatſoever is changed, is weaker than that which changeth it, and ſinks under a Power it cannot ſucceſſfully reſiſt; Weakneſs belongs not to the Deity. Nor *laſtly*, can God change from a State wherein he is, to another State equal to the former, as men in ſome caſes may do; for in paſſing from one ſtate to another equal to it, ſomething muſt be parted with which he had before, that ſome other thing may accrue to him as a recompenſe for that loſs, to make him equal to what he was: This recompenſe then he had not before, though he had ſomething equal to it: And in this caſe it could not be ſaid by God *I am that Iam*, but I am equal to what I was; for in this caſe there would be a diminution and increaſe which (as was ſhewed) cannot be in God.

* *Hugo Victorin.* in petavio.

* 1 Tim. 6 16.

* *Victorinus.* in petavio.

4. Again, *God is of himſelf, from no other**: Natures, which are made by God, may increaſe, becauſe they began to be; they may decreaſe, becauſe they were made of nothing, and ſo tend to nothing; the condition of their original leads them to defect, and the Power of their Creator brings them to increaſe. But God hath no original, he hath no defect, becauſe he was not made of nothing; He hath no increaſe, becauſe he had no beginning: He was before all things, and therefore depends upon no other thing which by its own change can bring any change upon him. *That which is from it ſelf cannot be changed, becauſe it hath nothing before it, nothing more excellent than it ſelf; But that which is from another, as its firſt cauſe and chief good, may be changed by that which was its efficient cauſe and laſt end.

* *Auſtin. Fulgen.* in Petavio.

* *Petav.* Tom. 1. p. 173.

2. God is immutable *in regard of Knowledge*. God hath known from all Eternity all that which he can know, ſo that nothing is hid from him; He knows not at preſent any more than he hath known from Eternity, and that which he knows now, he always knows; *All things are open and naked before him*, Heb. 4. 13. A man is ſaid to be changed in regard of knowledge, when he knows that now which he did not know before, or knows that to be falſe now which he thought true before, or hath ſomething for the Object of his Underſtanding now, which he had not before: But

1. *This would be repugnant to the Wiſdom and Omniſcience which belongs to the Notion of a Deity.* That cannot be God, that is not infinitely wiſe; that cannot be infinitely wiſe, that is either ignorant of, or miſtaken in his apprehenſion of any one thing. If God be changed in knowledge, it muſt be for want of Wiſdom; all change of this nature in Creatures, implies this defect preceding or accompanying it: Such a though of God, would have been unworthy of him that is *only wiſe*; that hath no Mate for Wiſdom*! none wiſe beſides himſelf: If he knew that thing this day which he knew not before, he would not be an *only wiſe* Being; for a being that did know every thing at once, might be conceived, and ſo a wiſer Being be apprehended by the

* 1 Tim. 1 17.

mind of man. If God underſtood a thing at one time, which he did not at another he would be changed from Ignorance to Knowledge; As if he could not do that this day which he could do to morrow, he would be changed from Impotence to Power: He could not be always Omniſcient, becauſe there might be yet ſomething ſtill to come which he yet knows not, though he may know all things that are paſt. What way ſoever you ſuppoſe a change, you muſt ſuppoſe a preſent or a paſt Ignorance; If he be changed in his knowledge for the perfection of his underſtanding, he was ignorant before; If his underſtanding be impaired by the change, he is ignorant after it.

2. *If God were changeable in his Knowledge, it would make him unfit to be an Object of Truſt to any rational Creature.* His *Revelations* would want the due ground for entertainment, if his Underſtanding were changeable; for that might be revealed as truth now which might prove falſe hereafter, and that as falſe now which hereafter might prove true; and ſo God would be an unfit Object of Obedience in regard of his Precepts, and an unfit Object of confidence in regard of his Promiſes: For if he be changeable in Knowledge, he is defective in Knowledge, and might promiſe that now which he would know afterwards was unfit to be promiſed, and therefore unfit to be performed: It would make him an incompetent Object of dread, in regard of his threatnings; for he might threaten that now, which he might know hereafter were not fit or juſt to be inflicted. A changeable mind and underſtanding cannot make a due and right judgment of things to be done, and things to be avoided. No wiſe man would judge it reaſonable to truſt a weak and flitting perſon.

God muſt needs be unchangeable in his Knowledge: But, as the *Schoolmen* ſay, that as the Sun always ſhines, ſo God always knows; as the Sun never ceaſeth to ſhine, ſo God never ceaſeth to know: Nothing can be hid from the vaſt compaſs of his Underſtanding; no more than any thing can ſhelter it ſelf without the Verge of his Power. This farther appears in that,

1. *God knows by his own Eſſence.* He doth not know as we do, by habits, qualities, ſpecies, whereby we may be miſtaken at one time, and rectified at another: He hath not an Underſtanding diſtinct from his Eſſence as we have; but being the moſt ſimple Being, his Underſtanding is his Eſſence; and as from the infiniteneſs of his Eſſence we conclude the infiniteneſs of his Underſtanding, ſo from the unchangeableneſs of his Eſſence, we may juſtly conclude the unchangeableneſs of his Knowledge. Since therefore God is without all compoſition, and his Underſtanding is not diſtinct from his Eſſence; what he knows, he knows by his Eſſence; and there can then be no more mutability in his knowledge, than there can be in his Eſſence; and if there were any in that, he could not be God, becauſe he would have the property of a Creature, If his Underſtanding then be his Eſſence, his Knowledge is as neceſſary, as unchangeable as his Eſſence: As his Eſſence eminently contains all perfections in it ſelf, ſo his Underſtandings comprehends all things paſt, preſent, and future, in it ſelf: If his Underſtanding and his Eſſence were not one and the ſame, he were not ſimple but compounded; if compounded, he would conſiſt of parts; if he conſiſted of parts, he would not be an independent Being, and ſo would not be God.

2. *God knows all things by one intuitive act.* As there is no ſucceſſion in his Being, ſo that he is one thing now and another thing hereafter; ſo there is no ſucceſſion in his knowledge: He knows things that are ſucceſſive, before their exiſtence and ſucceſſion, by one ſingle act of intuition; by one caſt of his eye all things future are preſent to him in regard of his Eternity and Omnipreſence: So that though there is a change and variation in the things known, yet his Knowledge of them and their ſeveral changes in nature, is invariable and unalterable. As imagin a Creature that could ſee with his eye at one glance the whole compaſs of the Heavens, by ſending out beams from his eye without receiving any ſpecies from them, he would ſee the whole Heavens uniformly; this part now in the Eaſt, then in the Weſt, without any change in his eye; for he ſees every part and every motion together; and though that great Body varies and whirls about, and is in continual agitation; his eye remains ſtedfaſt, ſuffers no change, beholds all their motions at once and by one glance. * God knows all things from Eternity, and therefore perpetually knows them; the reaſon is becauſe the Divine Knowledge is infinite *, and therefore

* *Suarez.* vol. 1. pa. 137.

* Pſal. 145. 5. *His underſtanding is infinite.*

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comprehends all knowable Truths at once. An eternal Knowledge comprehends in it ſelf all Time, and beholds paſt and preſent in the ſame manner, and therefore his Knowledge is immutable: By one ſimple Knowledge he conſiders the infinite ſpaces of paſt and future.

3. *Gods knowledge and Will is the cauſe of all things and their ſucceſſions.* * There can be no pretence of any changeableneſs of knowledge in God, but in this caſe, before things come to paſs, he knows that they will come to paſs; after they are come to paſs, he knows that they are paſt and ſlide away. This would be ſomething if the ſucceſſion of things were the cauſe of the Divine Knowledge, as it is of our knowledge; but on the contrary, the Divine Knowledge and Will is the cauſe of the ſucceſſion of them: God doth not know Creatures becauſe they are, but they are becauſe he knows them. *All his works were known to him from the beginning of the world.* * All his works were not known to him, if the events of all thoſe works were not alſo known to him; If they were not known to him how ſhould he make them? He could not do any thing ignorantly: He made them then after he knew them, and did not know them after he made them: His Knowledge of them made a change in them, their exiſtence made no change in his Knowledge: He knew them when they were to be Created, in the ſame manner that he knew them after they were Created; before they were brought into act, as well as after they were brought into act; before they were made, they were, and were not; they were in the Knowledge of God, when they were not in their own nature: God did not receive his knowledge from their exiſtence, but his knowledge and Will acted upon them to bring them into being.

* *Auſtin. Bradwardine.*

* Acts 15. 18.

4. *Therefore the diſtinction of paſt and future makes no change in the Knowledge of God.* When a thing is paſt, God hath no more diſtinct knowledge of it after it is paſt, than he had when it was to come; all things were all in their Circumſtances of paſt, preſent, and to come, ſeen by his Underſtanding, as they were determined by his Will. * Beſides to know a day to be paſt or future, is only to know the ſtate of that day in it ſelf, and to know its relation, to that which follows and that which went before: This day wherein we are, if we conſider it in the ſtate wherein it was yeſterday, it was to come, it was future; but if we conſider it in that ſtate wherein it will be to morrow, we underſtand it as paſt. This in man cannot be ſaid to be a different knowledge of the thing it ſelf, but only of the circumſtance attending a thing, and the different relation of it. As I ſee the Sun this day, I know it was up yeſterday, I know it will be up to morrow; my knowledge of the Sun is the ſame; if there be any change it is in the Sun not in my knowledge, only I apply my knowledge to ſuch particular circumſtances. How much more muſt the knowledge of thoſe things in God be unchangeable, who knows all thoſe ſtates, conditions and circumſtances moſt perfectly from Eternity, wherein there is no ſucceſſion, no paſt or future, and therefore will know them for ever? He always beholds the ſame thing; he ſees indeed ſucceſſion in things, and he ſees a thing to be paſt which before was future: As from Eternity he ſaw *Adam* as exiſting in ſuch a time; In the firſt time he ſaw that he would be, in the following time he ſaw that he had been: But this he knew from Eternity, this he knew in the ſame manner; tho there was a variation in *Adam*, yet there was no variation in Gods knowledge of him in all his ſtates; though *Adam* was not preſent to himſelf, yet in all his ſtates he was preſent to Gods Eternity.

* *Gamch* 1. pa. *Aquin.* Qu. 9. cap. 1. pa. 73.

5. *Conſider, that the knowledge of God, in regard of the manner of it as well as the objects, is incomprehenſible to a finite Creature.* So that tho we cannot arrive to a full underſtanding of the manner of Gods Knowledge, yet we muſt conceive ſo of it, as to remove all imperfection from him in it: And ſince it is an imperfection to be changeable, we muſt remove that from God; the Knowledge of God about things paſt, preſent, and future, muſt be unconceivably above ours: *His underſtanding is infinite*, Pſal. 147. 5. There is no number of it; it can no more be calculated or drawn into an account by us, than infinite ſpaces which have no bounds and limits can be meaſured by us. We can no more arrive, even in Heaven, to a comprehenſive underſtanding of the manner of his Knowledge, than of the infinite glory of his Eſſence; we may as well comprehend one as the other. This we muſt conclude, that God being not a Body, doth not ſee one thing with eyes and another thing with mind, as we

we do; but being a Spirit, he ſees and knows only with Mind, and his Mind is himſelf, and is as unchangeable as himſelf; and therefore as he is not now another thing than what he was, ſo he knows not any thing now in another manner than as he knew it from Eternity: He ſees all things in the Glaſs of his own Eſſence; as therefore the Glaſs doth not vary, ſo neither doth his Viſion.

3. *God is unchangeable in regard of his Will and Purpoſe.* A change in purpoſe is, when a man determins to do that now which before he determined not to do, or to do the contrary; when a man hates that thing which he loved, or begins to love that which he before hated: When the Will is changed, a man begins to will that which he willed not before, and ceaſeth to will that which he willed before: But whatſoever God hath decreed, is immutable; whatſoever God hath promiſed, ſhall be accompliſht; *The Word that goes forth of his Mouth ſhall not return to him void, but it ſhall accompliſh that which he pleaſeth* *; whatſoever *he purpoſeth, he will do* *; His Decrees are therefore called *Mountains of Braſs* *; Braſs, as having ſubſtance and ſolidity; Mountains, as being immoveable, not only by any Creature but by himſelf, becauſe they ſtand upon the Baſis of infallible Wiſdom, and are ſupported by uncontroulable Power. From this Immutability of his Will publiſht to Man, there could be no releaſe from the ſeverity of the Law, without ſatisfaction made by the death of a Mediator, ſince it was the unalterable Will of God that death ſhould be the wages of Sin; and from this immutable Will it was, that the length of Time from the firſt promiſe of the Redeemer to his miſſion, and the daily provocations of men altered not his purpoſe for the accompliſhment of it in the fullneſs of that time he had reſolved upon; Nor did the wickedneſs of former Ages hinder the addition of ſeveral promiſes as Buttreſſes to the firſt.

* Iſa. 55. 11. Iſa. 46. 11. *Numb. 23. 19. * Zach. 6. 1.

To make this out, conſider,

1. *The Will of God is the ſame with his Eſſence.* If God had a Will diſtinct from his Eſſence, he would not be the moſt ſimple Being. God hath not a faculty of Will diſtinct from himſelf: As his Underſtanding is nothing elſe but *Deus intelligens*, God underſtanding; ſo his Will is nothing elſe but *Deus volens*, God willing; being therefore the Eſſence of God, though it is conſidered according to our weakneſs as a faculty, 'tis as his Underſtanding and Wiſdom, eternal and immutable, and can no more be changed than his Eſſence; The Immutability of the Divine Counſel depends upon that of his Eſſence: He is the Lord *Jehovah*, therefore he is true to his Word, *Mal.* 3. 6. *Iſa.* 43. 13. *Yea, before the Day was, I am, He, and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.* He is the ſame, immutable in his Eſſence, therefore irreſiſtable in his Power.

2. *There is a concurrence of Gods Will and Underſtanding in every thing.* As his Knowledge is eternal, ſo is his Purpoſe. Things created had not been known to be, had not God reſolved them to be the act of his Will; the exiſtence of any thing ſuppoſeth an Act of his Will. Again as God knows all things by one ſimple viſion of his Underſtanding, ſo he wills all things by one act of volition; therefore the Purpoſe of God in the Scripture is not expreſt by Counſels in the Plural Number, but Counſel, ſhewing that all the purpoſes of God are not various, but as one Will, branching it ſelf out into many acts towards the Creature; but all knit in one Root, all links of one Chain. Whatſoever is eternal, is immutable: As his Knowledge is eternal, and therefore immutable, ſo is his Will; He wills or nills nothing to be in Time, but what he willed and nilled from Eternity; if he willed in Time that to be, that he willed not from Eternity, then he would know that in Time which he knew not from Eternity: For God knows nothing future, but as his Will orders it to be future and in time to be brought into being.

3. *There can be no Reaſon for any change in the Will of God.* When men change in their minds, it muſt be for want of foreſight, becauſe they could not foreſee all the Rubs and Bars which might ſuddenly offer themſelves; which if they had foreſeen, they would not have taken ſuch meaſures; hence men often will that which they afterwards wiſh they had not willed, when they come to underſtand it clearer, and ſee that to be injurious to them which they thought to be good for them; or elſe the change proceeds from a natural inſtability without any juſt cauſe, and an eaſineſs to be drawn into that which is unrighteous; or elſe it proceeds from a want of power, when men take new Counſels, becauſe they are invincibly hindred from executing the old. But none of thoſe can be in God.

1. It

1. It cannot be *for want of foreſight.* What can be wanting to an infinite Underſtanding? How can any unknown event defeat his Purpoſe; ſince nothing happens in the world but what he wills to effect, or wills to permit; and therefore all future events are preſent with him? Beſides, it doth not conſiſt with Gods Wiſdom to reſolve any thing, but upon the higheſt reaſon; and what is the higheſt and infinite reaſon, cannot but be unalterable in it ſelf; for there can be no Reaſon and Wiſdom higher than the higheſt. All Gods purpoſes are not bare acts of Will, but acts of Counſel, *Eph.* 1. 11. *He works all things according to the Counſel of his own Will*; and he doth not ſay ſo much that his Will, as that *his Counſel ſhall ſtand* Iſa. 46. 10. It ſtands becauſe it is Counſel: And the Immutability of a Promiſe is called the *Immutability of his Counſel*, Heb. 6. 17. as being introduced and ſettled by the moſt perfect Wiſdom, and therefore to be carried on to a full and compleat execution: His Purpoſe then cannot be changed for want of foreſight; for this would be a charge of weakneſs.

2. Nor can it proceed *from a natural Inſtability of his Will*, or an eaſineſs to be drawn to that which is unrighteous: If his Will ſhould not adhere to his Counſel, 'tis becauſe it is not fit to be followed, or becauſe it will not follow it; If not fit to be followed, 'tis a reflection upon his Wiſdom; if it be eſtabliſht and he will not follow it, there is a contrariety in God, as there is in a fallen Creature, Will againſt wiſdom: That cannot be in God, which he hates in a Creature, *viz.* the diſorder of faculties, and being out of their due place. The *Righteouſneſs* of God is like a *great Mountain*, Pſal. 36. 6. The rectitude of his Nature is as immovable in it ſelf, as all the great Mountains in the World are by the ſtrength of Man. *He is not as a Man, that he ſhould repent or lye*, Numb. 23. 19. who often changes, out of a perverſity of Will, as well as want of wiſdom to foreſee, or want of ability to perform. His eternal Purpoſe muſt either be righteous or unrighteous; if righteous and holy, he would become unholy by the change; if not righteous nor holy, then he was unrighteous before the change; which way ſoever it falls, it would reflect upon the Righteouſneſs of God, which is a blaſphemous imagination. * If God did change his Purpoſe, it muſt be either for the better, then the Counſel of God was bad before; or for the worſe, then he was not wiſe and good before.

* *Maxim. Tyrius* diſſert. 3. 30.

3. Nor can it be *for want of ſtrength.* Who hath power to controul him? Not all the combin'd devices and endeavours of men can make the Counſel of God to totter *Prov.* 19. 21. *There are many devices in a mans heart, nevertheleſs the Counſel of the Lord, that ſhall ſtand*; that, and that only ſhall ſtand: Man hath a power to deviſe and imagin, but no power to effect and execute of himſelf. God wants no more Power to effect what he will, than he wants Underſtanding to know what is fit.

Well then, ſince God wanted not Wiſdom to frame his Decrees, nor Holineſs to regulate them, nor Power to effect them; what ſhould make him change them? Since there can be no reaſon ſuperior to His; no event unforeſeen by him; no Holineſs comparable to His; no Unrighteouſneſs found in Him; no Power equal to His to put a rub in his way.

4. *Though the Will of God be immutable, yet it is not to be underſtood ſo, as that the things themſelves ſo willed, are immutable*; Nor will the immutability of the things willed by him, follow upon the unchangeableneſs of his Will in willing them; though God be firm in willing them, yet he doth not will that they ſhould alway be. God did not perpetually will the doing thoſe things which he once decreed to be done: He decreed that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, but he did not decree that Chriſt ſhould alway ſuffer; ſo he willed the Moſaical Rites for a time, but he did not will that they ſhould alway continue; He willed that they ſhould endure only for a time, and when the time came for their ceaſing, God had been mutable if he had not put an end to them, becauſe his Will had fixed ſuch a Period: So that the changing of thoſe things which he had once appointed to be practiſed, is ſo far from charging God with changeablneſs, that God would be mutable if he did not take them away, ſince he decreed as well their abolition at ſuch a time, as their continuance till ſuch a time; ſo that the removal of them was purſuant to his unchangeable Will and Decree. If God had decreed that ſuch Laws ſhould alway continue, and afterwards

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changed that Decree, and reſolved the abrogation of them; then indeed God had been mutable; He had reſcinded one Decree by another; He had then ſeen an error in his firſt reſolve, and there muſt be ſome weakneſs in the reaſon and wiſdom whereon it was grounded: * But it was not ſo here; for the change of thoſe Laws is ſo far from ſlurring God with any mutability, that the very change of them is no other than the Iſſue of his eternal Decree; for from Eternity he purpoſed in himſelf to change this or that diſpenſation, though he did decree to bring ſuch a diſpenſation into the world: The Decree it ſelf was eternal and immutable, but the thing decreed was temporary and mutable. As a Decree from Eternity doth not make the thing decreed to be eternal; ſo neither doth the immutability of the Decree, render the thing ſo decreed to be immutable: As for Example, God decreed from all Eternity to create the World; the Eternity of this Decree did not make the world to be in being and actually created from Eternity; ſo God decreed immutably that the world ſo created ſhould continue for ſuch a time; The Decree is immutable if the world periſh at that time, and would not be immutable if the world did endure beyond that time that God hath fixed for the duration of it: As when a Prince orders a mans remaining in Priſon for ſo many days; if he be prevailed with to give him a Delivery before thoſe days, or to continue him in cuſtody for the ſame Crime after thoſe days, his Order is changed; But if he orders the delivery of him juſt at that time, till which he had before decreed that he ſhould continue in Priſon, the Purpoſe and Order of the Prince remains firm, and the change in the ſtate of the Priſoner, is the fruit of that firm and fixed reſolution: So that we muſt diſtinguiſh between the Perſon decreeing, the Decree if ſelf, and the Thing decreed. The Perſon decreeing, *viz.* *God* is in himſelf immutable, and the Decree is immutable; but the Thing decreed may be mutable; and if it were not changed according to the firſt purpoſe, it would argue the Decree it ſelf to be changed; For whiles a Man wills that this may be done now, and another thing done afterwards; the ſame Will remains, and though there be a change in the Effect, there is no change in the Will.

* *Turretin*, de ſatisfac. p. 266.

5. *The Immutability of Gods Will doth not infringe the Liberty of it.* The Liberty of Gods Will conſiſts with the neceſſity of continuing his Purpoſe. God is neceſſarily good, immutably good; yet he is freely ſo, and would not be otherwiſe than what he is. God was free in his firſt Purpoſe; and purpoſing this or that by an infallible and unerring Wiſdom, it would be a weakneſs to change the Purpoſe: But indeed the Liberty of Gods Will doth not ſeem ſo much to conſiſt in an indifferency to this or that, as in an independency on any thing without himſelf: His Will was free, becauſe it did not depend upon the Objects about which his Will was converſant. To be immutably good, is no point of Imperfection, but the height of Perfection.

4. As God is unchangeable in regard of Eſſence, Knowledge, Purpoſe; ſo *he is unchangeable in regard of Place*, He cannot be changed in *Time*, becauſe he is *Eternity*; ſo he cannot be changed in *Place*, becauſe he hath *Ubiquity*: He is eternal, therefore cannot be changed in time; He is omnipreſent, therefore cannot be changed in Place: He doth not begin to be in one Place wherein he was not before, or ceaſe to be in a Place wherein he was before. He that fills every place in Heaven and Earth, cannot change Place; He cannot leave one to poſſeſs another, that is equally in regard of his Eſſence in all; *He fills Heaven and Earth*, Jer. 23. 24. The Heavens that are not ſubject to thoſe changes to which ſublunary Bodies are ſubject, that are not diminiſht in quantity or quality; yet they are alway changing place in regard of their motion; no part of them doth alway continue in the ſame point: But God hath no change of his Nature, becauſe he is moſt inward in every thing; He is ſubſtantially in all Spaces, real and imaginary; There is no part of the world which he doth not fill; no place can be imagined wherein he doth not exiſt. Suppoſe a Million of worlds above and about this, encircling one another; his Eſſence would be in every part and point of thoſe Worlds; Becauſe it is indiviſible, it cannot be divided; nor can it be contained within thoſe created limits of Millions of worlds, when the moſt ſoaring and beſt coyning fancy hath run through all Creatures, to the higheſt Sphear of the Heavens, and imagined one world after another, till it can fancy no more: None of theſe, nor all of theſe can contain God; for the *Heaven of Heavens*

vens cannot contain him, 1 Kings 8. 27. He is *higher than Heaven, deeper than Hell*,* and poſſeſſes infinite imaginary ſpaces beyond created limits. He who hath no cauſe of being, can have no limits of being: * And though by Creation he began to be in the world; yet he did not begin to be where the world is, but was in the ſame imaginary ſpace from all Eternity; for he was alway in himſelf by his own eternal *Ubi*.

* Job. 11. 8.

* *Gamacheus. ut ſupra.*

Therefore *obſerve*, that when God is ſaid to *draw near* to us, when we *draw near* to him*, 'tis not by local motion or change of place, but by ſpecial and ſpiritual influences, by exciting and ſupporting grace. As we ordinarily ſay, the Sun is come into the Houſe when yet it remains in its place and order in the Heavens, becauſe the Beams pierce through the Windows and enlighten the Room: So when God is ſaid to *come down* or deſcend*; 'tis not by a change of place, but a change of outward acts, when he puts forth himſelf in ways of freſh Mercy or new Judgments, in the effluxes of his Love or the flames of his Wrath. When good men feel the warm Beams of his Grace refreſhing them, or wicked men feel the hot Coals of his Anger ſcorching them. Gods drawing near to us, is not ſo much his coming to us, but his drawing us to him: * As when Water-men pull a Rope that is in one end faſtened to the Shore, and the other end to the Veſſel; the Shore is immoveable, yet it ſeems to the eye to come to them, but they really move to the Shore. God is an immoveable Rock; we are floating and uncertain Creatures; while he ſeems to approach to us, he doth really make us to approach to him: He comes not to us by any change of place himſelf, but draws us to him by a change of Mind, Will, and Affections in us.

* James 4. 8.

* Gen. 11. 5. Exod. 34. 5.

* The Ancients as *Dionyſius*, expreſt it by this ſimilitude.

2. *The ſecond* thing propounded, is *the reaſons to prove God immutable.* The *Heathens* acknowledged God to be ſo; *Plato*, and the *Pythagorians* called God, or the Stable good Principle ἀυτὸν, *Idem*: The evil Principle, ἕτερον, another thing, changeable; one thing one time, and another thing another time.

* *Plato* calls God ἑστὼς καὶ ἀχώρητον lib. 1. de Re. * *Stabiliſq; manens dat cuncta moveri*, Boet. *Conſolat.* lib. 3.

Daniel 6. 26. *He is the living God and ſtedfaſt for ever.*

1. *The Name* Jehovah *ſignifies this Attribute*, Exod 3. 14. *I am that I am, I am hath ſent me to you.* It ſignifies his Immutability as well as Eternity. *I am* ſignifies his Eternity; *that* or *the ſame that I am*, his Immutability: As it reſpects the Eſſence of God, it ſignifies his unchangeable Being from Eternity to Eternity; * As it reſpects the Creature, it ſignifies his conſtancy in his Counſels and Promiſes, which ſpring from no other cauſe but the unchangeableneſs of his Nature. The reaſon why Men ſtand not to their Covenant, is becauſe they are not always the ſame: *I am*, that is, I am the ſame, before the Creation of the World, and ſince the creation of the World; before the entrance of Sin, and ſince the entrance of Sin; before their going into *Egypt*, and whiles they remain in *Egypt*. * The very Name *Jehovah*, bears according to the Grammatical Order, a mark of Gods Unchangeableneſs; It never hath any thing added to it, nor any thing taken from it; It hath no Plural Number, no Affixes, a Cuſtom peculiar to the Eaſtern Languages; It never changes its letters as other words do. * That only is a true being, which hath not only an eternal Exiſtence, but ſtability in it: That is not truly a Being that never remains in the ſame ſtate. All things that are changed, ceaſe to be what they were, and begin to be what they were not, and therefore cannot have the title truly applied to them *they are*; they are indeed, but like a River in a continual Flux, that no man ever ſees the ſame; let his eye be fixed upon one place of it, the water he ſees, ſlides away and that which he ſaw not, ſucceeds in its place; let him take his eye off but for the leaſt moment, and fix it there again, and he ſees not the ſame that he ſaw before. All ſenſible things are in a perpetual ſtream; that which is ſometimes this and ſometimes that, is not, becauſe it is not always the ſame; whatſoever is changed, is ſomething now which it was not alway: But of God it is ſaid *I am*, which could not be if he were changeable; for it may be ſaid of him he is not, as well he is, becauſe he is not what he was; If we ſay not of him, he was, nor he will be, but only he is; whence ſhould any change arrive? He muſt invincibly remain the ſame, of whoſe Nature, Perfections, Knowledge and Will, it cannot be ſaid it was, as if it were not now in him; or it ſhall be, as if it were not yet in him; But he is, becauſe he doth not only exiſt: but doth alway exiſt the ſame. *I am*, that is, I receive from no other what I am in my ſelf; He depends upon no other in his Eſſence, Knowledge, Purpoſes, and therefore hath no changing Power over him.

* *Trap.* on *Exod.* * *Amyrald.* de Trinitat. p. 433.

* *Spanhe* Syntag. part. 1. p. 39.

* *Petav.* Theol. Dogmat. Tom. 1. cap. 7. § 6, 7, 8.

2. *If God were changeable, He could not be the moſt perfect Being.* God is the moſt perfect Being, and poſſeſſes in himſelf infinite and eſſential Goodneſs, *Mat.* 5. 48. *Your heavenly Father is perfect*: If he could change from that Perfection, he were not the higheſt Exemplar and Copy for us to write after. If God doth change, it muſt be either to a greater Perfection than he had before, or to a leſs, *mutatio perfectiva vel amiſſiva*; If he changes to acquire a Perfection he had not, then he was not before the moſt excellent Being neceſſarily; He was not what he might be; there was a defect in him, and a privation of that which is better than what he had and was; and then he was not alway the beſt, and ſo was not alway God; and being not alway God, could never be God; for to begin to be God is againſt the Notion of God: Not to a leſs perfection than he had; that were to change to imperfection, and to loſe a perfection which he poſſeſſed before, and ceaſe to be the beſt Being; for he would loſe ſome good which he had, and acquire ſome evil which he was free from before: So that the ſoveraign Perfection of God, is an invincible Bar to any change in him; For which way ſoever you caſt it for a change, his ſupream Excellency is impaired and nulled by it: For in all change, there is ſomething from which a thing is changed, and ſomething to which it is changed; ſo that on the one part there is a loſs of what it had, and on the other part there is an acquiſition of what it had not: If to the better, he was not perfect, and ſo was not God; if to the worſe, he will not be perfect, and ſo be no longer God after that change.

If God be changed, his change muſt be voluntary or neceſſary; if voluntary, he then intends the change for the better, and choſe it to acquire a Perfection by it: The Will muſt be carried out to any thing under the notion of ſome Goodneſs in that which it deſires. Since Good is the Object of the deſire and will of the Creature, Evil cannot be the Object of the deſire and will of the Creator. And if he ſhould be changed for the worſe when he did really intend the better, it would ſpeak a defect of Wiſdom, and a miſtake of that for good which was evil and imperfect in it ſelf; and if it be for the better, it muſt be a motion or change for ſomething without himſelf; that which he deſireth is not poſſeſſed by himſelf but by ſome other: There is then ſome good without him and above him, which is the end in this change; for nothing acts but for ſome end, and that end is within it ſelf or without it ſelf; If the end for which God changes be without himſelf, then there is ſomething better than himſelf: Beſides, if he were voluntarily changed for the better, why did he not change before? If it were for want of Power, he had the imperfection of weakneſs; If for want of knowledge of what was the beſt Good, he had the imperfection of Wiſdom, he was ignorant of his own Happineſs; If he had both Wiſdom to know it and Power to effect it, it muſt be for want of Will; He then wanted that love to himſelf and his own Glory, which is neceſſary in the ſupream Being: Voluntarily he could not be changed for the worſe, he could not be ſuch an Enemy to his own Glory, there is nothing but would hinder its own Imperfection and becoming worſe: Neceſſarily he could not be changed, for that neceſſity muſt ariſe from himſelf, and then the difficulties ſpoken of before will recur; or it muſt ariſe from another; He cannot be bettered by another, becauſe nothing hath any good but what it hath received from the hands of his bounty, and that without loſs to himſelf; nor made worſe; if any thing made him worſe, it would be Sin, but that cannot touch his Eſſence or obſcure his Glory, but in the deſign and nature of the Sin it ſelf, *Job.* 35. 6, 7. *If thou ſinneſt, what doſt thou againſt him? Or if thy Tranſgreſſions be multiplyed, what doſt thou unto him? If thou be righteous what giveſt thou him; or what receives he at thy hand?* He hath no addition by the Service of Man, no more than the Sun hath of Light by a multitude of Torches kindled on the Earth; nor any more impair by the Sins of Men, than the Light of the Sun hath by mens ſhooting Arrows againſt it.

3. * *God were not the moſt ſimple Being, if he were not immutable.* There is in every thing that is mutable, a Compoſition, either eſſential or accidental; and in all changes, ſomething of the thing changed remains, and ſomething of it ceaſeth and is done away, as for *example*, in an accidental change, If a white Wall be made black, it loſes its white Colour; but the Wall it ſelf which was the Subject of that Colour, remains and loſes nothing of its ſubſtance: Likewiſe in a ſubſtantial change, as when Wood

* *Gamach.* in prim. part. Aquin. queſt. 9. cap. 1. part. 72.

Wood is burnt, the ſubſtantial part of Wood is loſt, the earthly part is changed into Aſhes, the airy part aſcends in Smoke, the watery parts is changed into Air by the Fire: There is not an annihilation of it, but a reſolution of it into thoſe parts whereof it was compounded; and this change doth evidence, that it was compounded of ſeveral parts diſtinct from one another. If there were any change in God, 'tis by ſeparating ſomething from him or adding ſomething to him; if by ſeparating ſomething from him, then he was compounded of ſomething diſtinct from himſelf; for if it were not diſtinct from himſelf, it could not be ſeparated from him without loſs of his Being; if by adding any thing to him, then it is a compounding of him, either ſubſtantially or accidentially.

Mutability is abſolutely inconſiſtent with Simplicity, whether the change come from an internal or external Principle. If a change be wrought by ſomething without, it ſuppoſeth either contrary or various parts in the thing ſo changed, whereof it doth conſiſt; if it be wrought by any thing within, it ſuppoſeth that the thing ſo changed doth conſiſt of one part that doth change it, and another part that is changed, and ſo it would not be a ſimple Being. If God could be changed by any thing within himſelf, all in God would not be God; his Eſſence would depend upon ſome parts, whereof ſome would be ſuperior to others: If one part were able to change or deſtroy another, that which doth change would be God, that which is changed would not be God; ſo God would be made up of a Deity and a non-Deity, and part of God would depend upon God; part would be dependent, and part would be independent; part would be mutable, part immutable: So that Mutability is againſt the notion of Gods Independency as well as his Simplicity. *God is the moſt ſimple Being; for that which is firſt in Nature, having nothing beyond it, cannot by any means be thought to be compounded; for whatſoever is ſo, depends upon the parts whereof it is compounded, and ſo is not the firſt Being: Now God being infinitely ſimple, hath nothing in himſelf which is not himſelf, and therefore cannot will any change in himſelf, he being his own Eſſence and Exiſtence.

* *Ficinus Zachar.* mitylen in Peta. Tom. 1 p. 169.

4. *God were not eternal if he were mutable.* In all change there is ſomething that periſhes, either ſubſtantially or accidentally. All change is a kind of death, or imitation of death; that which was, dies, and begins to be what it was not. The Soul of man, though it ceaſeth not to be and exiſt; yet when it ceaſeth to be in quality what it was, is ſaid to die. *Adam* died when he changed from Integrity to Corruption, though both his Soul and Body were in being*; and the Soul of a regenerate Man is ſaid to *die to Sin*, when it is changed from Sin to Grace*. In all change there is a reſemblance of death: So the Notion of Mutability is againſt the Eternity of God. If any thing be acquired by a change, then that which is acquired was not from Eternity, and ſo he was not wholly eternal; if any thing be loſt which was from Eternity, he is not wholly everlaſting: If he did decreaſe by the change, ſomething in him which had no beginning would have an end; if he did increaſe by that change, ſomething in him would have a beginning that might have no end*. What is changed doth not remain, and what doth not not remain is not eternal. Though God alway remains in regard of Exiſtence, he would be immortal and live alway; yet if he ſhould ſuffer any change, he could not properly be eternal; becauſe he would not alway be the ſame, and would not in every part be eternal; for all change is finiſhed in Time, one moment preceding, another moment following; but that which is before time cannot be changed by Time. God cannot be eternally what he was, that is, he cannot have a true eternity, if he had a new knowledge, new Purpoſe, a new Eſſence; if he were ſometimes this and ſometimes that, ſometimes know this and ſometimes know that, ſometimes purpoſe this, and afterwards hath a new purpoſe? he would be partly temporary and partly eternal, not truly and univerſally eternal: He that hath any thing of newneſs, hath not properly and truly an intire Eternity. Again, by the ſame reaſon that God could in the leaſt ceaſe to be what he was, he might alſo ceaſe wholly to be; and no reaſon can be rendred, why God might not ceaſe wholly to be, as well as ceaſe to be intirely and uniformly what he was: All changeableneſs implies a corruptibility.

* Gen. 2. 17. * Rom. 6. 11.

* *Auſtin* in Pet. Tom. 1 p. 201.

5. If God were changeable, *He were not infinite and Almighty.* All change ends

in addition or diminution; if any thing be added, he was not infinite before; if any thing be diminiſht, he is not infinite after. All change implies bounds and limits to that which is changed; but God is infinite, *His greatneſs is unſearchable* *: We can add Number to Number without any end, and can conceive an infinite Number; Yet the Greatneſs of God is beyond all our Conceptions: But if there could be any change in his Greatneſs for the better, it would not be unſearchable before that change; if for the worſe, it would not be unſearchable after that change: Whatſoever hath limits and is changeable, is conceivable and ſearchable; But God is not only not known, but impoſſible in his own Nature to be known and ſearched out, and therefore impoſſible to have any diminution in his Nature. All that which is changed arrives to ſomething which it was not before, or ceaſeth in part to be what it was before.

* *Pſal.* 145. 3. אין חקר *no end, no term.*

He would not alſo be *Almighty*. What is Omnipotent cannot be made worſe; for to be made worſe, is in part to be corrupted: If he be made better, he was not Almighty before, ſomething of Power was wanting to him: if there ſhould be any change, it muſt proceed from himſelf or from another; if from himſelf, it would be an inability to preſerve himſelf in the perfection of his Nature; if from another, he would be inferior in Strength, Knowledge and Power to that which changes him, either in his Nature, Knowledge or Will; in both an inability; an inability in him to continue the ſame, or an inability in him to reſiſt the Power of another.

6. *The World could not be ordered and governed, but by ſome Principle or Being which were immutable.* Principles are alway more fixed and ſtable, than things which proceed from thoſe Principles; and this is true both in Morals and Naturals. Principles in Conſcience, whereby men are governed, remain firmly engraven in their Minds. The Root lies firmly in the Earth, while Branches are ſhaken with the Wind. The Heavens, the cauſe of Generation, are more firm and ſtable than thoſe things which are wrought by their influence. All things in the world are moved by ſome Power and Vertue which is ſtable; and unleſs it were ſo, no Order would be obſerved in motion, no Motion could be regularly continued. He could not be a full ſatisfaction to the infinite deſire of the Souls of his People. Nothing can truly ſatisfie the Soul of Man but Reſt; and nothing can give it reſt, but that which is perfect and immutably perfect; for elſe it would be ſubject to thoſe agitations and variation, which the Being depends upon is ſubject to.

The *Principle* of all things muſt be immutable*; which is deſcribed by ſome by a Unite, the Principle of Number, wherein there is a reſemblance of Gods Unchangeableneſs. A Unite is not variable, it continues in its own Nature immutably an Unite; It never varies from it ſelf, it cannot be changed from it ſelf, but is as it were ſo omnipotent towards others, that it changes all Numbers: If you add any Number, it is the beginning of that Number, but the Unite is not encreaſed by it; a new Number ariſeth from that Addition, but the Unite ſtill remains the ſame, and adds a value to other Figures, but receives none from them.

* *Fotherby* Atheomaſtix. p. 308. *Gerhard.* loc. com.

2. *The third thing* to ſpeak to is,

That Immutability is proper to God, and incommunicable to any Creature. Mutability is natural to every Creature as a Creature, and Immutability is the ſole perfection of God: He only is infinite Wiſdom, able to fore-know future events; He only is infinitely powerful, able to call forth all means to effect; So that wanting neither Wiſdom to contrive, nor Strength to execute, he cannot alter his Counſel: None being above him, nothing in him contrary to him, and being defective in no Bleſſedneſs and Perfection, he cannot vary in his Eſſence and Nature. Had not Immutability as well as Eternity been a Property ſolely pertaining to the Divine Nature, as well as creative Power and eternal Duration; the *Apoſtles* Argument to prove Chriſt to be God from this perpetual ſameneſs, had come ſhort of any convincing ſtrength. Theſe words of the *Text* he applies to Chriſt, Heb. 1. 10, 11, 12. *They ſhall be changed, but thou art the ſame.* There had been no ſtrength in the reaſon, if Immutability by Nature did belong to any Creature.

The *changeableneſs of all Creatures* is evident;

1. *Of corporeal Creatures*, it is evident to ſenſe. All Plants and Animals, as they have their duration bounded in certain limits; ſo while they do exiſt, they proceed

ceed from their riſe to their fall; they paſs through many ſenſible alterations, from one degree of Growth to another, from buds to bloſſoms, from bloſſoms to flowers and fruits; they come to their pitch that Nature hath ſet them, and return back to the ſtate from whence they ſprung; there is not a day, but they make ſome acquiſition, or ſuffer ſome loſs; they dye and ſpring up every day; nothing in them more certain than their inconſtancy: *The Creature is ſubject to vanity.** The Heavenly Bodies are changing their place; the *Sun* every day is running his Race, and ſtays not in the ſame Point; and though they are not changed in their Eſſence, yet they are in their Place: Some indeed ſay there is a continual generation of Light in the Sun, as there is a loſs of Light by the caſting out its Beams, as in a Fountain there is a flowing out of the Streams, and a continual generation of ſupply: And though theſe heavenly Bodies have kept their ſtanding and motion from the time of their Creation; yet both the Suns ſtanding ſtill in *Joſhuah*'s time, and its going back in *Hezekiah*'s time, ſhew that they are changeable at the pleaſure of God. * Rom. 8. 20.

But in Man, the change is perpetually viſible; every day there is a change from Ignorance to knowledge, from one Will to another, from Paſſion to Paſſion, ſometimes ſad and ſometimes cheerful, ſometimes craving this and preſently nauſeating it; his Body changes from health to ſickneſs, or from weakneſs to ſtrength; ſome alteration there is either in Body or Mind. Man, who is the nobleſt Creature, the ſubordinate end of the Creation of other things, cannot aſſure himſelf of a conſiſtency and fixedneſs in any thing the ſhort ſpace of *a day*, no not of a minute; all his Months are *Months of vanity** ; whence the *Pſalmiſt* calls Man at the *beſt eſtate*, *altogether vanity*, a meer heap of vanity: As he contains in his Nature the Nature of all Creatures, ſo he inherits in his Nature the Vanity of all Creatures: A little World, the Center of the World, and of the Vanity of the World; yea, *lighter than Vanity** ; more moveable than a Feather; toſt between Paſſion and Paſſion, daily changing his end, and changing the means; An Image of nothing. * Job 7. 3. * Pſal. 35. * Pſal 62. 9.

2. *Spiritual Natures*, as *Angels*, They change not in their Being, but that is from the indulgence of God: They change not in their Goodneſs, but that is not from their Nature, but Divine Grace in their confirmation; but they change in their Knowledge, they know more by *Chriſt* than they did by *Creation** ; They have an addition of knowledge every day, by the providential diſpenſations of God to his *Church** ; and the increaſe of their aſtoniſhment and Love, is according to the increaſe of their Knowledge and Inſight: They cannot have a new diſcovery, without new admirations of what is diſcovered to them; There is a change in their *joy*, *when there is a change in a Sinner** : They were changed in their Eſſence, when they were made ſuch glorious Spirits of nothing; Some of them were changed in their Will, when of holy they became impure: The good Angels were changed in their Underſtandings, when the Glories of God in Chriſt were preſented to their view; and all can be changed in their Eſſence again; and as they were made of nothing, ſo by the Power of God may be reduced to nothing again. So glorified Souls ſhall have an unchanged operation about God, for they ſhall behold his face without any grief or fear of loſs, without vagrant thoughts; but they can never be unchangeable in their Nature, becauſe they can never paſs from finite to infinite. * 1 Tim. 3. 16. * Eph. 3. 10. * Luke 15. 10.

No Creature can be *unchangeable in its Nature.*

1. *Becauſe every Creature roſe from nothing.* As they roſe from nothing, ſo they tend to nothing unleſs they are preſerved by God: The Notion of a Creature ſpeaks changeableneſs; becauſe to be a Creature, is to be made ſomething of nothing, and therefore Creation is a change of nothing into ſomething: The Being of a Creature begins from change, and therefore the Eſſence of a Creature is ſubject to change: God only is uncreated, and therefore unchangeable; If he were made he could not be immutable; for the very making is a change of not being into being. All Creatures were made good as they were the fruits of Gods Goodneſs and Power; but muſt needs be mutable, becauſe they were the extracts of nothing.

2. Becauſe *every Creature depends purely upon the Will of God.* They depend not upon themſelves, but upon another for their Being: As they received their Being from the Word of his mouth and the Arm of his Power, ſo by the ſame Word they

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can be cancell'd into nothing, and return into as little ſignificancy as when they were nothing: He that created them by a Word, can by a Word deſtroy them, *Pſalm* 104. 29. If God ſhould *take away their breath, they dye and return into their Duſt.* As it was in the power of the Creator that things might be, before they actually were; ſo it is in the power of the Creator that things after they are, may ceaſe to be what they are; and they are in their own Nature as reducible to nothing, as they were producible by the power of God from nothing; for there needs no more than an Act of Gods Will to null them, as there needed only an Act of Gods Will to make them. Creatures are all ſubject to a higher Cauſe: They are all *reputed as nothing: He doth according to his Will in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, and none can ſtay his Hand, or ſay unto him what doſt thou**? But God is unchangeable, becauſe he is the higheſt Good; none above him, all below him; all dependent on him; Himſelf upon none.

* Dan. 4. 35.

3. *No Creature is abſolutely perfect.* No Creature can be ſo perfect or can ever be, but ſomething by the infinite Power of God may be added to it; for whatſoever is finite may receive greater additions, and therefore a change. No Creature you can imagin, but in your thoughts you may fancy him capable of greater perfections than you know he hath, or than really he hath: The perfections of all Creatures are ſearchable; the perfection of God is only *unſearchable**, and therefore he only immutable.

* Job 11. 6.

God only is always the ſame: Time makes no addition to him, nor diminiſheth any thing of him; His nature and Eſſence, his Wiſdom and Will have always been the ſame from Eternity, and ſhall be the ſame to Eternity without any variation.

4. The *fourth thing* propounded, is ſome *Propoſitions to clear this Unchangeableneſs of God, from any thing that ſeems contrary to it.*

Firſt, *There was no change in God when he began to create the World in Time.* The Creation was a real change, but the change was not ſubjectively in God, but in the Creature; the Creature began to be what it was not before. Creation is conſidered as active or paſſive*; active Creation is the Will and Power of God to create; this is from Eternity, becauſe God willed from Eternity to create in Time; This never had beginning, for God never began in time to underſtand any thing, to will any thing, or to be able to do any thing; but he alway underſtood, and alway willed thoſe things which he determined from Eternity to produce in Time. The *Decree* of God may be taken for the *Act* decreeing, that is eternal and the ſame; or for the *Object* decreed, that is in Time: So that there may be a change in the *Object*, but not in the *Will* whereby the Object doth exiſt.

* *Gamach.* in part. 1. Aquin. Qu. 9. cap. 1. p. 72.

1. There was no change in God by the *Act* of Creation, *becauſe there was no new Will in him.* There was no new Act of his Will which was not before. The Creation begun in Time, but the Will of Creating was from Eternity. The Work was new, but the Decree whence that new work ſprung, was as ancient as the Ancient of days: VVhen the time of creating came, God was not made *ex nolente volens*, as we are; for whatſoever God willed to be now done, he willed from Eternity to be done; but he willed alſo that it ſhould not be done till ſuch an inſtant of time, and that it ſhould not exiſt before ſuch a time. If God had willed the Creation of the VVorld only at that time when the VVorld was produced and not before, then indeed God had been changeable: But though God ſpake that word, which he had not ſpoke before, whereby the World was brought into act; yet he did not will that Will he willed not before. God did not create by a new Counſel or new Will but by that which was from Eternity, *Eph.* 1. 9. All things are wrought according to that *purpoſe in himſelf*, and according to *the Counſel of his Will*, v. 11. And as the holineſs of the Elect is the fruit of his eternal Will *before the foundation of the World*, v. 4. So likewiſe is the Exiſtence of things, and of thoſe perſons whom he did elect: As when an Artificer frames a houſe or a Temple according to that Model he had in his mind ſome years before, there is no change in the Model in his mind, the Artificer is the ſame, though the work is produced by him ſometime after he had framed that Copy of it in his own mind; but there is a change of the thing produced by him according to that Model. Or when a rich man intends *four or five years* hence if he lives, to build an Hoſpital, Is there any change in his VVill, when after the expira-

piration of that time he builds and endows it? Though it be after his Will, yet it is the fruit of his precedent Will: So God from all Eternity did will and command that the Creatures ſhould exiſt in ſuch a part of time; and by this eternal Will, all things, whether paſt, preſent or to come, did, do and ſhall exiſt at that point of time, which that Will did appoint for them; Not as though God had a new Will when things ſtood up in Being, but only that which was prepared in his immutable Counſel and Will from Eternity, doth then appear. There can be no Inſtant fixed from Eternity, wherein it can be ſaid, God did not will the Creation of the World; For had the Will of God for the ſhorteſt Moment been undetermined to the Creation of the World, and afterwards reſolved upon it, there had been a moral change in God from not willing to willing; But this there was not, for God executes nothing in Time which he had not ordained from Eternity, and appointed all the means and circumſtances whereby it ſhould be brought about. As the Determination of our Saviour to ſuffer was not a new Will, but an eternal Counſel, and wrought no change in God. * Acts 2. 23.

2. There is no change in God by the act of Creation, becauſe *there was no new Power in God.* Had God had a Will at the time of the Creation which he had not before, there had been a moral change in him; ſo had there been in him a Power only to create then and not before, there had been a phyſical change in him from weakneſs to ability. There can be no more new Power in God, than there can be a new Will in God; for his Will is his Power, and what he willeth to effect, that he doth effect: As he was unchangeably Holy: ſo he was unchangeably Almighty, *which was, and is, and is to come* *; which was Almighty, and is Almighty, and ever will be Almighty. The Work therefore makes no change in God, but there is a change in the thing wrought by that Power of God. Suppoſe you had a Seal engraven upon ſome Metal a Hundred years old, or as old as the Creation; and you ſhould this day, ſo many Ages after the engraving of it, make an impreſſion of that Seal upon Wax; would you ſay the Engravement upon the Seal were changed, becauſe it produced that ſtamp upon the Wax now, which it did not before? No, the change is purely in the Wax, which receives a new figure or form by the impreſſion; not in the Seal, that was capable of imprinting the ſame long before. God was the ſame from Eternity as he was when he made a Signature of himſelf upon the Creatures by Creation, and is no more changed by ſtamping them into ſeveral forms, than the Seal is changed by making impreſſion upon the Wax: As when a houſe is enlightned by the Sun, or that which was cold is heated by it; there is a change in the houſe from darkneſs to light, from coldneſs to heat; but is there any change in the light and heat of the Sun? There is a change in the thing enlightned or warmed by that light and heat which remains fixed and conſtant in the Sun, which was as capable in it ſelf to produce the ſame effects before, as at that inſtant when it works them: So when God is the Author of a new Work, he is not changed; becauſe he works it by an eternal Will and an eternal Power. * Rev. 4. 8.

3. *Nor is there any new relation acquired by God by the Creation of the World.* There was a new relation acquired by the Creature; as when a Man ſins, he hath another relation to God than he had before; he hath relation to God, as a Criminal to a Judge; But there is no change in God, but in the Malefactor. The Being of Men makes no more change in God than the Sins of Men. As a Tree in now on our right hand, and by our turning about it is on our left hand, ſometimes before us, ſometimes behind us, according to our motion neer it or about it: and the turning of the Body; There is no change in the Tree, which remains firm and fixed in the Earth; but the change is wholly in the poſture of the Body: whereby the Tree may be ſaid to be before us or behind us, or on the right hand or on the left hand. * God gained no new relation of Lord or Creator by the Creation; for though he had created nothing to rule over, yet he had the Power to create and rule though he did not create and rule: As a Man may be called a skillful Writer, though he does not write, becauſe he is able to do it when he pleaſes; or a Man skillful in *Phyſick* is called a *Phyſitian*, though he doth not practice that Skill, or diſcover his Art in the diſtribution of Medicines; becauſe he may do it when he pleaſes, it depends upon his own will to ſhew his Art when he has a mind to it: So the Name Creator and Lord, belongs to God from Eternity, becauſe he could create and rule, though he did not create

* *Petav.* Theol. Dogmat. Tom. 1. lib.

create and rule: But howſoever, if there were any ſuch change of relation, that God may be called Creator and Lord, after the Creation and not before; 'tis not a change in Eſſence, nor in Knowledge, nor in Will; God gains no perfection nor diminution by it, his Knowledge is not increaſed by it; He is no more by it than he was, and will be, if all thoſe things ceaſed; and therefore *Auſtin* illuſtrates it by this ſimilitude; as a piece of Mony when it is given as the price of a thing, or depoſited only as a pledge for the ſecurity of a thing borrowed; the Coyn is the ſame and is not changed, though the relation it had as a pledge and as a price be different from one another: ſo that ſuppoſe any new relation be added, yet there is nothing happens to the Nature of God which may infer any change.

2. The ſecond Propoſition, *There was no change in the Divine Nature of the Son, when he aſſumed Human Nature.* There was an Union of the two Natures, but no change of the Deity into the Humanity, or of the Humanity into the Deity; both preſerved their peculiar Properties: The Humanity was changed by a Communication of excellent Gifts from the Divine Nature; not by being brought into an Equality with it, for that was impoſſible that a Creature ſhould become equal to the Creator; He took the *Form of a Servant*, but he loſt not the Form of God, he deſpoiled not himſelf of the Perfections of the Deity; He was indeed emptied, *and became of no reputation* *, but he did not ceaſe to be God, though he was reputed to be only a Man, and a very mean one too: The Glory of his Divinity was not extinguiſht nor diminiſht, though it was obſcur'd and darkned under the vail of our infirmities; but there was no more change in the hiding of it, than there is in the Body of the Sun when it is ſhadowed by the interpoſition of a Cloud; His blood while it was pouring out from his Veins was the *blood of God* *; and therefore when he was bowing the Head of his Humanity upon the Croſs, he had the Nature and Perfections of God; for had he ceaſed to be God*, he had been a meer Creature, and his ſufferings would have been of as little value and ſatisfaction as the ſufferings of a Creature.

* Phil. 2. 7.

* Acts 20. 28.

He could not have been a ſufficient Mediator, had he ceaſed to be God; and he had ceaſed to be God, had he loſt any one Perfection proper to the Divine Nature; and loſing none, he loſt not this of unchangeableneſs, which is none of the meaneſt belonging to the Deity: Why by his Union with the Human Nature ſhould he loſe this, any more than he loſt his Omniſcience, which he diſcovered by his knowledge of the thoughts of Men; or his Mercy, which he manifeſted to the height in the time of his ſuffering? That is truly a change, when a thing ceaſeth to be what it was before; This was not in Chriſt, He aſſumed our Nature without laying aſide his own. * When the Soul is united to the Body, doth it loſe any of thoſe perfections that are proper to its Nature? Is there any change either in the ſubſtance or qualities of it? No, but it makes a change in the Body, and of a dull Lump it makes it a living Maſs, conveys vigor and ſtrength to it; and by its power, quickens it to ſence and motion; So did the Divine Nature and Human remain intire; there was no change of the one into the other, as Chriſt by a Miracle changed Water into Wine, or Men by Art change Sand or Aſhes into Glaſs: And when *he prays for the Glory he had with God before the World was* *, he prays that a Glory he had in his Deity, might ſhine forth in his Perſon as Mediator, and be evidenced in that height and ſplendor ſutable to his Dignity which had been ſo lately darkned by his abaſement; that as he had appeared to be the Son of Man in the infirmity of the Fleſh, he might appear to be the Son of God in the glory of his Perſon, that he might appear to be the Son of God and the Son of Man in one Perſon.

* *Zanch.* de Immutab. Dei. * *Goulart* de Immutab. de Dieu.

* John 17. 5.

* Again, there could be no change in this Union; for in a real change, ſomething is acquired which was not poſſeſſed before, neither formally nor eminently; But the Divinity had from Eternity before the Incarnation, all the perfections of the Human Nature eminently in a nobler manner than they are in themſelves, and therefore could not be changed by a real Union.

* *Gamach.* in part. 1. Aquin. qu. 9. cap. 1.

3. The third Propoſition. *Repentance and other Affections aſcribed to God in Scripture, argue no change in God.* We often read of Gods *repenting*, repenting of the *Good* he promiſed*, and of the *Evil* he threatned*, or of the *Work* he hath wrought.*

* Jer. 18. 10. * Exod. 32. 14. John 3. 10. * Gen. 6. 6.

We muſt *obſerve* therefore that

1. *Repentance is not properly in God.* He is a *pure Spirit*, and is not capable of thoſe

thoſe Paſſions, which are ſigns of weakneſs and impotence, or ſubject to thoſe regrets, we are ſubject to: Where there is a proper repentance, there is a want of foreſight, an ignorance of what would ſucceed or a defect, in the examination of the occurrences, which might fall within conſideration: All repentance of a fact, is grounded upon a miſtake in the event, which was not foreſeen; or upon an after knowledge of the evil of the thing which was acted by the perſon repenting: But God is ſo wiſe that he cannot err; ſo holy he cannot do evil; and his certain preſcience or foreknowledge, ſecures him againſt any unexpected events: God doth not act but upon clear and infaillible reaſon: And a change upon paſſion is accounted by all ſo great a weakneſs in man, that none can entertain ſo unworthy a conceit of God. Where he is ſaid to repent, * he is alſo ſaid to grieve; now no proper grief can be imagined to be in God: As repentance is inconſiſtent with infallible foreſight, ſo is grief no leſs inconſiſtent with undefiled bleſſedneſs: *God is bleſſed for ever*, * and therefore nothing can befall him that can ſtain that bleſſedneſs; his bleſſedneſs would be impaired, and interrupted, while he is repenting, tho he did ſoon rectifie that which is the cauſe of his repentance: *God is of one mind and who can turn him? what his Soul deſires that he doth.* *

* Gen. 6. 6.

* Rom. 9. 8.

* Job. 23. 13.

2. But *God accommodates himſelf in the Scripture to our weak capacity.* God hath no more of a proper repentance, than he hath of a real body; tho he, in accommodation to our weakneſs aſcribes to himſelf the members of our bodies to ſet out to our underſtanding the greatneſs of his perfections; we muſt not conclude him a body like us; ſo becauſe he is ſaid to have anger and repentance, we muſt not conclude him to have paſſions like us? When we cannot fully comprehend him as he is, he cloaths himſelf with our nature in his expreſſions that we may apprehend him as we are able, and by an inſpection into our ſelves, learn ſomething of the nature of God; yet thoſe human wayes of ſpeaking ought to be underſtood in a manner agreeable to the infinite excellency and Majeſty of God; and are only deſigned to mark out ſomething in God which hath a reſemblance with ſomething in us: As we cannot ſpeak to God as Gods, but as men; ſo we cannot underſtand him ſpeaking to us as a God, unleſs he condeſcends to ſpeak to us like a man. God therefore frames his language to our dulneſs, not to his own ſtate; and informs us by our own phraſes, what he would have us learn of his nature; as Nurſes talk broken language to young Children. In all ſuch expreſſions, therefore we muſt aſcribe the perfection we conceive in them to God, and lay the imperfection at the door of the Creature.

3. Therefore *repentance in God is only a change of his outward conduct, according to his infallible foreſight and immutable Will.* He changes the way of his Providential proceeding according to the *carriage* of the Creature, without changing his *Will*, which is the Rule of his Providence; when God ſpeaks of his *repenting that he had made man*; * 'tis only his changing his conduct from a way of kindneſs to a way of ſeverity, and is a word ſuted to our capacities to ſignifie his deteſtation of ſin and his reſolution to puniſh it, after man had made himſelf quite another thing, than God had made him; *It repents me*, that is, I am purpoſed to deſtroy the world; as he that repents of his work throws it away: * As if a Potter caſt away the veſſel he had framed, it were a teſtimony, that he repented that ever he took pains about it: So the deſtruction of them ſeems to be a repentance in God that ever he made them; tis a change of events, not of Counſels. *Repentance* in us is a grief for a former fact, and a changing of our courſe in it: Grief is not in God, * but his repentance is a willing a thing ſhould not be as it was, which Will was fixed from Eternity; for God foreſeeing Man would fall, and decreeing to permit it, he could not be ſaid to repent in time of what he did not repent from Eternity; and therefere if there were no repentance in God from Eternity; there could be none in time. But God is ſaid to repent, when he changes the diſpoſition of affairs without himſelf; as men when they repent, alter the courſe of their actions, ſo God alters things *extra ſe* or without himſelf, but changes nothing of his own purpoſe within himſelf. It rather notes the action he is about to do, than any thing in his own nature, or any change in his eternal purpoſe. Gods repenting of his kindneſs is nothing but an inflicting of puniſhment, which the Creature by the change of his carriage hath merited: As his repentiug of the evil threatned is the with-holding the puniſhment denounced

* Gen. 6. 6.

* Mercer *in loc.*

* Petavius *Theol. Dogmat.*

denounced; when the Creature hath humbly ſubmitted to his Authority and acknowledged his crime.

Or elſe we may underſtand thoſe expreſſions of joy, and grief, and repentance, to ſignifie thus much, * that the things declared to be the objects of joy, and grief, and repentance, are of that nature, that if God were capable of our paſſions, he would diſcover himſelf in ſuch caſes as we do: As when the *Prophets* mention the joys and applaudings of Heaven, Earth and the Sea, they only ſignifie that the things they ſpeak of are ſo good, that if the Heavens, and the Sea had natures capable of joy, they would expreſs it upon that occaſion in ſuch a manner as we do: So would God have joy at the obedience of men, and grief at the unworthy carriage of men, and repent of his kindneſs, when men abuſe it; and repent of his puniſhment, when men reform under his rod, were the Majeſty of his nature capable of ſuch affections.

* *Daille*, in Sermon on 2 Pet. 3. 9. pa. 60.

4. Propoſition. *The not fulfilling of ſome predictions in Scripture, which ſeem to imply a changeableneſs of the Divine Will, do not argue any change in it.* As when he *reprieved Hezekiah* from death, *after* a *meſſage* ſent by the *Prophet Iſaiah, that he ſhould die*, * and when he made an *arreſt* of that Judgment he had threatned by *Jonah* againſt *Niniveh.* *

* 2 Kings 20. 1. 5. Iſa. 38. 1, 5. * Jon. 3 4, 10.

There is not indeed the ſame reaſon of promiſes and threatnings altogether, for in promiſing the obligation lies upon God, and the right to demand, is in the party that performs the condition of the promiſe: But in threatnings, the obligation lies upon the ſinner, and God's right to puniſh is declared thereby: So that tho God doth not puniſh, his Will is not changed; becauſe his Will was to declare the demerit of ſin, and his right to puniſh upon the Commiſſion of it; tho he may not puniſh according to the ſtrict letter of the threatning the perſon ſinning, but relax his own law for the honour of his Attributes, and transfer the puniſhment from the offender to a perſon ſubſtituted in his room; this was the caſe in the firſt threatning againſt man, and the ſubſtituting a ſurety in the place of the Malefactor.

* *Rivet* in Geneſ. exercita. 58. pa. 213.

But the *anſwer* to theſe caſes in this, * that where we find *predictions in Scripture* declared, and yet not executed, we muſt conſider them, not as abſolute but conditional, or as the Civil Law calls it, an *interlocutory Sentence.* God declared what would follow by natural cauſes, or by the demerit of man, not what he would abſolutely himſelf do: And in many of thoſe predictions, tho the condition be not expreſt, yet it is to be underſtood; ſo the promiſes of God are to be underſtood with the condition of perſeverance in well doing; and threatnings with a clauſe of revocation annext to them, provided that men repent: And this God lays down as a general caſe, alway to be remembred as a rule for the interpreting his threatnings againſt a Nation, and the ſame reaſon will hold in threatnings againſt a particular perſon. *Jer.* 18. 7, 8, 9, 10. *At what inſtant I ſhall ſpeak concerning a Nation and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and pull down, and deſtroy it; If that Nation againſt whom I have pronounc'd, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them*, and ſo when he ſpeaks of planting a Nation, if they do evil, he will repent of the good, &c. 'Tis a *Univerſal rule* by which all particular caſes of this nature are to be tried; ſo that when mans repentance arrives, God remains firm in his firſt Will, always equal to himſelf, and it is not he that changes, but man. For ſince the interpoſition of the Mediator, with an eye to whom God governed the world after the fall, the right of puniſhing was taken off if men repented, and mercy was to flow out, if by a converſion men returned to their duty, *Ezek.* 18. 20, 21. This I ſay is grounded upon Gods entertaining the *Mediator*; for the Covenant of works diſcovered no ſuch thing as repentance or pardon. Now theſe general rules are to be the interpreters of particular caſes: So that predictions of good are not to be counted abſolute, if men return to evil; nor predictions of evil, if men be thereby reduced to a repentance of their crimes.

So *Niniveh* ſhall be deſtroyed, that is, according to the general rule, unleſs the inhabitants repent, which they did; they manifeſted a belief of the threatning, and gave glory to God by giving credit to the *Prophet*: and they had a notion of this rule God lays down in the other *Prophets*; for they had an apprehenſion that upon their humbling themſelves, they might eſcape the threatned vengeance, and

ſtop

ſtop the ſhooting thoſe Arrows that were ready in the *Bow.** Though *Jonah* proclaimed deſtruction without declaring any hopes of an arreſt of Judgement; yet their natural Notions of God afforded ſome natural hopes of relief, if they did their duty, and ſpurned not againſt the *Prophet*'s meſſage; and therefore ſaith one *[God did not always expreſs this condition, becauſe it was needleſs; his own Rule revealed in Scripture was ſufficient to ſome, and the natural Notion all men had of Gods Goodneſs upon their Repentance, made it not abſolutely neceſſary to declare it: And beſides, ſaith he, it is bootleſs; The expreſſing it can do but little good; ſecure ones will repent never the ſooner, but rather preſume upon their hopes of Gods forbearance, and linger out their Repentance till it be too late: And to work men to Repentance, whom he hath purpoſed to ſpare, he threatens them with terrible Judgements; which by how much the more terrible and peremptory they are, are likely to be more effectual for the end God in his prrpoſe deſigns them, *viz.* to humble them under a ſenſe of their demerit, and an acknowledgment of his righteous Juſtice; and therefore though they be *abſolutely* denounced, yet they are to be *conditionally* interpreted with a reſervation of Repentance: As for that *Anſwer* which one gives, that by *forty days* was not meant *forty Natural days*, but *forty Prophetical days*, that is, years, a day for year; and that the City was deſtroyed forty years after by the *Medes*: The expreſſion of Gods repenting upon their Humiliation, puts a Bar to that Interpretation: God *repented*, that is, he did not bring the puniſhment upon them according to thoſe days the *Prophet* had expreſt; and therefore *forty natural days* are to be underſtood; and if it were meant of *forty years*, and they were deſtroyed at the end of that term, how could God be ſaid to repent, ſince according to that, the puniſhment threatned was according to the time fixed brought upon them? And the deſtruction of it *forty years* after, will not be eaſily evinced, if *Jonah* lived in the time of *Jeroboam* the *ſecond King of* Iſrael, as he did *; And *Niniveh* was deſtroyed in the time of *Joſiah* King of *Judah*. But the other *Anſwer* is plain. God did not fulfil what he had threatned, becauſe they reformed what they had committed: When the threatning was made, they were a fit Object for Juſtice; but when they repented, they were a fit Object for a merciful Reſpite. To threaten when ſins are high, is a part of Gods Juſtice; not to execute when ſins are revok'd by Repentance, is a part of Gods Goodneſs. And in the Caſe of *Hezekiah* *, *Iſaiah* comes with a Meſſage from God, that he ſhould *ſet his houſe in order*, for he ſhall dye; that is, the Diſeaſe was mortal, and no outward Applications could in their own nature reſiſt the Diſtemper. *Behold, I will add to thy days fifteen years; I will heal thee*: It ſeems to me to be one entire Meſſage, becauſe the latter part of it was ſo ſuddenly after the other committed to *Iſaiah* to be delivered to *Hezekiah*; for he was not gone out of the Kings houſe, before he was ordered to return with the news of his health, by an extraordinary indulgence of God againſt the power of Nature and force of the Diſeaſe: *Behold I will add to thy Life*; noting it an extraordinary thing: He was in the *ſecond Court* of the Kings Houſe when this word came to him *; the Kings houſe having three Courts, ſo that he was not gone above half way out the Palace. God might ſend this Meſſage of Death, to prevent the Pride *Hezekiah* might ſwell with for his deliverance from *Senacherib*: As *Paul* had a *Meſſenger of Satan* to buffet him to prevent his lifting up *; and this good man was ſubject to this ſin, as we find afterwards in the Caſe of the *Babyloniſh* Embaſſadors: And God delayed this other part of the Meſſage to humble him, and draw out his Prayer; and as ſoon as ever he found *Hezekiah* in this temper, he ſent *Iſaiah* with a comfortable meſſage of recovery: So that the Will of God was to ſignifie to him the mortality of his diſtemper, and afterwards to relieve him by a meſſage of an extraordinary Recovery.

* *Sanderſon's* Sermon par. 2. p. 257. 158.

* 2 King. 14.25.

* 2 Kings 20.1, 5.

* Iſa. 38. 1, 5.

* 2 Kings 20.4.

* 2 Cor. 12. 7.

5. Propoſition. *God is not changed, when of loving to any Creatures he becomes angry with them, or of angry he becomes appeaſed.* The change in theſe caſes is in the Creature; according to the alteration in the Creature, it ſtands in a various relation to God: an *innocent* Creature is the Object of his Kindneſs, an *offending* Creature is the Object of his Anger; there is a change in the diſpenſation of God, as there is a change in the Creature making himſelf capable of ſuch diſpenſations. God always acts according to the immutable nature of his Holineſs, and can no more change in his Affections to good and evil, than he can in his Eſſence. When the

Devils, now fallen, ſtood as glorious Angels, they were the Objects of Gods love, becauſe holy: When they fell, they were the Objects of Gods hatred, becauſe impure; the ſame reaſon which made him love them while they were pure, made him hate them, when they were criminal: The reaſon of his various diſpenſations to them was the ſame in both, as conſidered in God, his immutable holineſs; but as reſpecting the Creature, different; the nature of the Creature was changed, but the Divine holy nature of God remain'd the ſame; * *With the pure thou wilt ſhew thy ſelf pure, and with the froward thou wilt ſhew they ſelf froward:* He is a refreſhing light to thoſe that obey him, and a conſuming fire to thoſe that reſiſt him. Tho the ſame Angels were not always loved; yet the ſame reaſon that moved him to love them, moved him to hate them. It had argued a change in God, if he had loved them alway, in whatſoever poſture they were towards him: It could not be counted love, but a weakneſs and impotent fondneſs; the change is in the object not in the affection of God: For the object loved before, is not beloved now, becauſe that which was the motive of love, is not now in it: So that the Creature having a different ſtate from what it had, falls under a different affection or diſpenſation.

* Pſal. 18. 26.

It had been a mutable affection in God, to love that which was not worthy of love, which the ſame love wherewith he loved that which had the greateſt reſemblance to himſelf: Had God loved the fallen Angels in that ſtate and for that ſtate, he had hated himſelf, becauſe he had loved that which was contrary to himſelf and the image of his own holineſs, which made them appear before, good in his ſight. The Will of God is unchangeably ſet to love righteouſneſs and hate iniquity, and from this hatred to puniſh it: And if a righteous Creature Contracts the wrath of God, or a ſinful Creature hath the communications of Gods love; it muſt be by a change in themſelves. Is the Sun changed when it hardens one thing and ſoftens another, according to the diſpoſition of the ſeveral ſubjects? Or when the Sun makes a flower more fragrant, and a dead Carcaſs more noyſome? There are divers effects, but the reaſon of that diverſity is not in the Sun, but in the ſubject; the Sun is the ſame, and produceth thoſe different effects, by the ſame quality of heat: So if an unholy Soul approach to God; God looks angrily upon him; If a holy Soul come before him, the ſame immutable perfection in God draws out his kindneſs towards him: As ſome think, the Sun would rather refreſh than ſcorch us, if our bodies were of the ſame nature and ſubſtance with that Luminary.

As the Will of God for Creating the World, was no new, but an Eternal Will, tho it manifeſted it ſelf in time; ſo the Will of God for the puniſhment of ſin, or the reconciliation of the ſinner, was no new Will: Tho his wrath in time break out in the effects of it upon ſinners, and his love flows out in the effects of it upon penitents. Chriſt by his death reconciling God to man, did not alter the Will of God, but did what was conſonant to his Eternal Will: He came not to change his Will but to execute his Will. *Lo I come to do thy Will, O God.* * And the grace of God in Chriſt, was not a new grace, but an old grace in a new appearance; *the Grace of God hath appeared.* *

* Heb. 10. 7.
* Tit. 2. 11.

6. Propoſition, *A change of Laws by God argues no change in God, when God abrogates ſome Laws which he had ſettled in the Church and enacts others.* I ſpake of this ſomething the laſt day: I ſhall only add this. God commanded one thing to the *Jews*, when the Church was in an *infant* ſtate; and removed thoſe Laws, when the Church came to ſome *growth.* The *Elements* of the world were ſuited to the ſtate of *Children.* * A Mother feeds not the *Infant* with the ſame diet as ſhe doth, when it is grown up. Our *Saviour* acquainted not his Diſciples with ſome things at one time which he did at another, becauſe they were not able to bear them; Where was the change, in Chriſts Will, or in their growth from a ſtate of weakneſs to that of ſtrength? A *Phyſitian* preſcribes not the ſame thing to a perſon in health, as he doth to one conflicting with a diſtemper; nor the ſame thing in the beginning, as he doth in the ſtate or declination of the diſeaſe. The *Phyſitians* Will and Skill are the ſame, but the capacity and neceſſity of the Patient for this or that Medicine or Method of proceeding are the ſame.

* Gal. 4. 3.

When God changed the *Ceremonial* Law, there was no change in the Divine

Will

Will, but an execution of his Will; For when God commanded the obſervance of the Law he intended not the perpetuity of it; nay, in the *Prophet* he declares the ceſſation of it; he decreed to command it, but he decreed to command it only for ſuch a time; ſo that the abrogation of it was no leſs an execution of his Decree, than the eſtabliſhment of it for a ſeaſon was; The commanding of it was purſuant to his Decree for the appointing of it, and the nulling of it was purſuant to his Decree of continuing it only for ſuch a ſeaſon: So that in all this there was no change in the Will of God.

The Counſel of God ſtands ſure; what changes ſoever there are in the World, are not in God or his Will, but in the events of things, and the different relations of things to God: 'Tis in the Creature, not in the Creator. The *Sun* alway remains of the ſame hue, and is not diſcoloured in it ſelf, becauſe it ſhines green through a green Glaſs, and blew through a blew Glaſs; the different colours come from the Glaſs, not from the Sun: The change is alway in the diſpoſition of the Creature, not in the Nature of God or his Will.

5. *Uſe.*

1. For *Information.*

1. If God be unchangeable in his Nature, and Immutability be a Property of God, *Then Chriſt hath a Divine Nature.* This in the *Pſalm* is applyed to Chriſt in the *Hebrews*, Heb. 1. 11. where he joyns the citation out of this Pſalm with that out of *Pſalm* 45. 6, 7. *Thy Throne O God is for ever and ever; thou haſt loved Righteouſneſs and hated Iniquity, therefore God even thy God hath anointed thee with the Oyl of Gladneſs above thy Fellows; and thou Lord in the beginning haſt laid the Foundation of the Earth*, &c. As the firſt muſt neceſſarily be meant of Chriſt the Mediator, and therein he is diſtinguiſh'd from God, as one anointed by him; ſo the other muſt be meant of Chriſt, whereby he is made one with God in regard of the Creation and Diſſolution of the World, in regard of Eternity and Immutability. Both the Teſtimonies are linkt together by the Copulative [*and*] *and thou Lord*, declaring thereby that they are both to be underſtood of the ſame Perſon the Son of God: The deſign of the Chapter is to prove Chriſt to be God; and ſuch things are ſpoken of him as could not belong to any Creature, no, not to the moſt excellent of the Angels: The ſame Perſon that is ſaid to be anointed above his Fellows, and is ſaid to lay the foundation of the Earth and Heavens, is ſaid to be *the ſame*, that is, the ſame in himſelf. The Prerogative of *ſameneſs* belongs to that Perſon as well as Creation of Heaven and Earth.

The *Socinians* ſay it is ſpoken of God, and that God ſhall deſtroy the Heavens by Chriſt; if ſo, Chriſt is not a meer Creature, not created when he was incarnate; for the ſame Perſon that ſhall change the World, did create the World; If God ſhall change the world by him, God alſo created the world by by him; He was then before the world was; for how could God create the world by one that was not? That was not in Being till after the Creation of the World? The Heavens ſhall be changed, but the Perſon who is to change the Heavens, is ſaid to be the ſame, or unchangeable in the Creation as well as the Diſſolution of the World. This *ſameneſs* refers to the whole Sentence.

*The *Pſalm* wherein the *Text* is, and whence this in the *Hebrews* is cited, is properly meant of Chriſt, and Redemption by him, and the compleating of it at the laſt day, and not of the *Babyloniſh* captivity; That captivity was not ſo deplorable, as the ſtate the *Pſalmiſt* deſcribes: *Daniel* and his Companions flouriſhed in that Captivity; It could not reaſonably be ſaid of them, that their days were conſumed like Smoke, their heart withered like Graſs; that they forgot to *eat their Bread**: beſides, he complains of *ſhortneſs of Life** *; But none had any more reaſon to complain of that in the time of the Captivity, than before and after it, than at any other time: Their Deliverance would contribute nothing to the natural length of their lives. Beſides, when *Sion* ſhould be built, the *Heathen* ſhould *fear the Name of the Lord*, (that is, worſhip God) and *all the Kings of the Earth* his *Glory*. The rearing the *ſecond Temple* after the deliverance, did not proſelyte the Nations; nor did the Kings of the Earth worſhip the Glory of God; nor did God appear in ſuch Glory at the erecting the *ſecond Temple*: The *ſecond Temple* was leſs glorious than the *firſt*, for it wanted ſome of the Ornaments which were the Glory of the firſt;

* *Placeus* de deitate Chriſti.

* *as it is* V. 34.
* V. 11.

* V. 15.

But

But it is ſaid of this ſtate, * That when the Lord ſhould *build up Sion*, he ſhould *appear in his Glory*; his proper Glory, and extraordinary Glory. Now *that God who ſhall appear* in Glory and build up *Sion*, is the *Son of God*, the Redeemer of the World; He builds up the Church, he cauſes the Nations to fear the Lord, and the Kings of the Earth his Glory; He broke down the partition Wall, and opened a Door for the Entrance of the *Gentiles*; He ſtruck the Chains from off the Priſoners, and looſed thoſe that *were appointed to death* by the Curſe of the Law *: And to this Perſon is aſcribed the Creation of the World; and he is pronounced to remain the *ſame* in the midſt of an infinite number of changes in inferior things: And it is likely the *Pſalmiſt* conſiders not only the beginning of Redemption, but the compleating of it at the *ſecond coming* of Chriſt; for he complains of thoſe evils, which ſhall be removed by his ſecond coming, *viz.* The ſhortneſs of Life, perſecutions and reproaches wherewith the Church is afflicted in this World; and comforts not himſelf with thoſe attributes which are directly oppoſed to ſin, as the mercy of God, the Covenant of God, but with thoſe that are oppoſed to mortality and calamities; as the unchangeableneſs and Eternity of God; and from thence infers a perpetual eſtabliſhment of Believers. * *The Children of thy Servants ſhall continue and their ſeed ſhall be eſtabliſhed before thee*: So that the *Pſalm* it ſelf ſeems to aim in the whole diſcourſe at Chriſt, and aſſerts his Divinity, which the *Apoſtle* as an interpreter doth fully evidence; applying it to him, and manifeſting his Deity by his *immutability* as well as Eternity. * While all other things loſe their forms, and paſs through multitudes of variations, he conſtantly remains the ſame, and ſhall be the ſame, when all the *Empires* of the world ſhall ſlide away, and a *Period* be put to the preſent motions of the Creation: And as there was no change made in his being by the Creation of things, ſo neither ſhall there be by the final alteration of things; he ſhall ſee them finiſh, as he ſaw them riſe up into being, and be the ſame after their reign, as he was before their original; he is the firſt and the laſt. *

* Ver. 16.

* Ver. 20.

* Ver. 28.

* *Daile* Melang. des *S*ermons Part 2. Sect. 1. p. 8, 9, 10. &c.

* Revel. 1. 17.

2. *Here is ground and encouragement for Worſhip.* An *Atheiſt* will make another uſe of this: If God be immutable, why ſhould we worſhip him, why ſhould we pray to him; Good will come if he wills it, evil cannot be averted by all our ſupplications, if he hath ordered it to fall upon us?

But certainly ſince unchangeableneſs in knowing, and willing goodneſs is a perfection: An adoration and admiration is due to God, upon the account of this excellence. If he be God he is to be reverenced, and the more highly reverenc'd, becauſe he cannot but be God.

Again what comfort could it be to pray to a God, that like the *Chameleon* changed colours every day, every moment? What encouragement could there be to lift up our eyes to one that were of one mind this day, and of another mind to morrow? Who would put up a Petition to an Earthly Prince that were ſo mutable, as to grant a Petition one day, and deny it another, and change his own act? But if a Prince promiſe this or that thing upon ſuch or ſuch a condition, and you know his promiſe to be as unchangeable as the Laws of the *Medes* and *Perſians*, would any Man reaſon thus? Becauſe it is unchangeable we will not ſeek to him, we will not perform the condition, upon which the fruit of the Proclamation is to be enjoyed. Who would not count ſuch an inference ridiculous? What bleſſings hath not God promiſed upon the condition of ſeeking him? Were he of an unrighteous nature, or changeable in his mind, this would be a bar to our ſeeking him, and fruſtrate our hopes: But ſince it is otherwiſe, is not this excellency of his nature the higheſt encouragement to ask of him the bleſſings he hath promiſed, and a beam from Heaven to fire our zeal in asking? If you deſire things againſt his Will, which he hath declared he will not grant? Prayer then would be an act of diſobedience, an injury to him, as well as an act of folly in it ſelf; his unchangeableneſs then might ſtifle ſuch deſires: But if we ask according to his Will, and according to our reaſonable wants, what ground have we to make ſuch a ridiculous argument? He hath Willed every thing that may be for our good, if we perform the condition he hath required; and hath put it upon record, that we may know it and regulate our deſires and ſupplications according to it: If we will not ſeek him, his immutability cannnot be a bar, but

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our own folly is the cauſe; and by our neglect we diſpoil him of this perfection as to us, and either imply that he is not ſincere, and means not as he ſpeaks; or, that he is as changeable as the Wind, ſometimes this thing ſometimes that, and not at all to be confided in. If we ask according to his revealed Will, the unchangeableneſs of his Nature will aſſure us of the Grant; and what a preſumption would it be in a Creature dependent upon his Soveraign, to ask that which he knows he has declared his Will againſt; ſince there is no good we can want, but he hath promiſed to give, upon our ſincere and ardent deſire for it.

God hath decreed to give this or that to Man, but conditionally, and by the means of *enquiring* after him, and *asking* for it: * *Ask and you ſhall receive*, as much as to ſay, you ſhall not receive unleſs you ask. When the higheſt promiſes are made, God expects they ſhould be put in ſute: Our Saviour joyns the Promiſe and the Petition together; the Promiſe to encourage the Petition; and the Petition to enjoy the Promiſe: He doth not ſay *perhaps* it ſhall be given, but *it ſhall*, that is, it certainly ſhall; your heavenly Father is unchangeably willing to give you thoſe things. We muſt depend upon his Immutability for the thing, and ſubmit to his Wiſdom for the time. Prayer is an acknowledgment of our dependence upon God, which dependence could have no firm foundation without unchangeableneſs. Prayer doth not deſire any change in God, but is offered to God that he would confer thoſe things which he hath immutably willed to communicate, but he willed them not without Prayer as the means of beſtowing them. The light of the Sun is ordered for our comfort, for the diſcovery of viſible things, for the ripening the fruits of the Earth; but withal tis required that we uſe our faculty of ſeeing, that we employ our induſtry in ſowing and planting, and expoſe our fruits to the view of the Sun, that they may receive the influence of it. If a man ſhuts his eyes, and complains that the Sun is changed into darkneſs, it would be ridiculous; the Sun is not changed, but we alter our ſelves; Nor is God changed in not giving us the bleſſings he hath promiſed, becauſe he hath promiſed in the way of a due addreſs to him, and opening our Souls to receive his influence; and to this, his Immutability is the greateſt encouragement. * Ezek. 36. 37. Mat. 7. 7.

3. This ſhews *how contrary Man is to God in regard of his inconſtancy.* What an infinite diſtance is there between the immutable God, and mutable Man, and how ſhould we bewail this flittingneſs in our Nature?

There is a Mutability in us as Creatures, and a Creature cannot but be mutable by Nature, otherwiſe it were not a Creature but God. The eſtabliſhment of any Creature is from Grace and Gift; Naturally we tend to nothing, as we come from nothing: This Creature-mutability is not our ſin, yet it ſhould cauſe us to lye down under a ſenſe of our own nothingneſs, in the preſence of the Creator. The Angels as Creatures, though not corrupt, cover their faces before him: And the Arguments God uſes to humble *Job*, though a fallen Creature, are not from his Corruption; for I do not remember that he taxed him with that; but from the *greatneſs of his Majeſty and excellency of his Nature declared in his Works* * And therefore Men that have no ſenſe of God, and humility before him, forget that they are Creatures as well as corrupt ones. * Job. 38. 39. 40, 41.

How great is the diſtance between God and us, in regard of our inconſtancy in good, which is not natural to us by Creation? For the mind and affections were regular, and by the great Artificer were pointed to God as the Object of Knowledge and Love. We have the ſame faculties of Underſtanding, Will and Affection as *Adam* had in Innocence; but not with the ſame Light, the ſame Bias, and the ſame Ballaſt. Man by his fall, wounded his head and heart; the wound in his head made him unſtable in the Truth, and that in his heart unſtedfaſt in his Affections: He changed himſelf from the Image of God to that of the Devil, from Innocence to Corruption; and from an ability to be ſtedfaſt, to a perpetual Inconſtancy: *His Silver became Droſs, and his Wine was mixed with Water.* * He changed, * Iſa. 1. 22.

1. *To inconſtancy in Truth, oppoſed to the Immutability of Knowledge in God.* How are our Minds floting between Ignorance and Knowledge? Truth in us is like thoſe *Ephemera*, Creatures of a days continuance, ſprings up in the Morning and expires at Night. How ſoon doth that fly away from us, which we have had, not only ſome weak flaſhes of, but which we have learned and have had ſome reliſh of? *The Devil*

vil ſtood not in the Truth, * and therefore manages his Engines to make us as unſtable as himſelf: Our Minds reel, and corrupt reaſonings overſway us; like Spunges we ſuck up Water, and a light compreſſion makes us ſpout it out again. Truths are not engraven upon our hearts, but writ as in Duſt, defaced by the next puff of Wind; *carried about with every Wind of Doctrin*, Eph. 4. 14. Like a Ship without a Pilot and Sails, at the courteſie of the next Storm; or like Clouds that are Tenants to the Wind and Sun, moved by the Wind, and melted by the Sun. The *Galatians* were no ſooner called into the Grace of God, but they were *removed from it* *; Some have been reported to have *menſtruam fidem*, kept an Opinion for a Month; and many are like him that believed the Souls Immortality, no longer than he had *Plato*'s Book of that Subject in his hand *: One likens ſuch to *Children*; they play with Truths as Children do with Babies, one while embrace them, and a little after throw them into the Durt. How ſoon do we forget what the Truth is delivered to us, and what it repreſented us to be *? Is it not a thing to be bewailed, that Man ſhould be ſuch a Weather-cock, turned about with every Breath of Wind, and ſhifting Aſpects as the Wind ſhifts Points?

* John 8. 44.

* Gal. 1. 6.

* *Sedgwick* Chriſts Counſel, p. 230.

* James 1. 23. 24.

2. *Inconſtancy in Will and Affections oppoſed to the Immutability of Will in God.* We waver between *God* and *Baal*; and while we are not only reſolving, but upon motion a little way, look back with a hankring after *Sodom*; Sometimes lifted up with heavenly intentions, and preſently caſt down with earthly cares; like a Ship that by an advancing Wave ſeems to aſpire to Heaven, and the next fall of the Waves makes it ſink down to the Depths. We change Purpoſes oftner than Faſhions; and our Reſolutions are like Letters in water, whereof no mark remains: We will be as *John* to day to love Chriſt, and as *Judas* to morrow to betray him, and by an unworthy levity, paſs into the Camp of the Enemies of God; reſolv'd to be as holy as *Angels* in the Morning, when the Evening beholds us as impure as Devils: How often do we hate what before we loved, and ſhun what before we longed for? And our Reſolutions are like Veſſels of Chryſtal, which break at the firſt knock, are daſht in pieces by the next Temptation. *Saul* reſolved not to perſecute *David* any more, but you ſoon find him upon his old game. *Pharaoh more than once promiſed*, and probably reſolved to *let* Iſrael *go*; but at the end of the ſtorm his purpoſes vaniſh.* When an Affliction pincheth Men, they intend to change their courſe; and the next news of eaſe changes their intentions: Like a Bow, not fully bent in their inclinations, they cannot reach the Mark, but live many years between reſolutions of Obedience, and affections to *Rebellion* *: And what promiſes men make to God are often the fruit of their Paſſion, their Fear, not of their Will. The *Iſraelites* were ſtartled at the *terrors* wherewith the Law was delivered, and promiſed obedience *, but a Month after *forgat* them, and make a *Golden Calf*, and in the ſight of *Sinai* call for, and *dance before their Gods* *; Never people more unconſtant, *Peter*, who vowed an Allegiance to his Maſter, and a Courage to ſtick to him, forſwears him almoſt with the ſame breath. Thoſe that cry out whith a zeal, *the Lord he is God*, ſhortly after return to the ſervice of their *Idols*.* That which ſeems to be our pleaſure this day, is our vexation to morrow: A Fear of a Judgment puts us into a religious pang, and a Love to our Luſts reduceth us to a rebellious inclination; As ſoon as the danger is over, the aint is forgotten: Salvation and Damnation preſent themſelves to us, touch us and ingender ſome weak wiſhes, which are diſſolved by the next allurements of a carnal intereſt. No hold can be taken of our promiſes; no credit is to be given to our reſolutions.

* Exod. 8. 27, 32.

* Pſal. 78. 17.

* Exod. 20. 19.

* Exod. 32.

* 1 Kings 18. 39.

3. *Inconſtancy in practice.* How much beginning in the Spirit, and ending in the Fleſh; one day in the Sanctuary, another in the Stews; clear in the morning as the Sun, and clouded before noon; in Heaven by an excellency of Gifts, in Hell by a courſe of prophaneſs? Like a Flower, which ſome mention, that changes its colour three times a day; one part white, then purple, then yellow. The Spirit luſts againſt the Fleſh, and the Fleſh quickly triumphs over the Spirit. In a good man how often is there a Spiritual Lethargy? Tho he doth not openly defame God yet he doth not alwayes glorifie him; He doth not forſake the truth, but he doth not alwayes make the attainment of it, and ſettlement in it his buſineſs. This levity diſcovers it ſelf in religious duties, *when I would do good, evil is preſent with me.* Never more preſent, than when we have a mind to

* Rom. 7. 21.

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do good, and never more present than when we have a mind to do the best and greatest good: How hard is it to make our thoughts and affections keep their stand? place them upon a good Object, and they will be frisking from it, as a Bird from one bough, one fruit to another. We vary postures according to the various objects we meet with. The course of the world is a very airy thing, suted to the uncertain motions of that Prince of the power of the Air, which works in it. * Eph. 2. 2.

This ought to be bewail'd by us. Tho we may stand fast in the truth, tho we may spin our resolutions into a firm web, tho the Spirit may triumph over the flesh in our practice, yet we ought to bewail it, because inconstancy is our nature, and what fixedness we have in good is from grace. What we find practised by most men, is natural to all *: *As face answers to face in a glass*, so doth *heart* to *heart* *; a face in the glass is not more like a natural face, whole image it is, than one mans heart is naturally like another. * *Lawrence* of Faith p. 262. * Pro. 27. 19.

1. *'Tis natural to those out of the Church.* *Nebuchadnezzar* is so affected with *Daniels* prophetick Spirit, that he would have none accounted the true God, but the *God of Daniel.** How soon doth this notion slip from him, and an image must be set up for all to worship, upon pain of a most cruel painful death? *Daniels God* is quite forgotten: The miraculous deliverance of the *three Children* for not worshipping his Image, makes him settle a Decree to secure the *Honour of God* from the reproach of his Subjects *; yet a little while after, you have him strutting in his Palace, as if there were no God but himself. * Dan. 2. 47. * Dan. 3. 29.

2. *'Tis natural to those in the Church.* The *Israelites* were the only Church God had in the World, and a notable Example of inconstancy. After the Miracles of *Ægypt they* murmured against God, when they saw *Pharaoh* marching with an Army at their Heels. They desired food, and soon nauseated the *Manna* they were before fond of: When they came into *Canaan*, they sometimes worshipped God, and sometimes Idols, not only the Idols of one Nation, but of all their Neighbours: In which regard God calls this his *Heritage or speckled Bird** a Peacock saith *Hierom*, inconstant, made up of varieties of Idolatrous colours and Ceremonies. * Jer. 12. 9.

This levity of Spirit is the root of all mischief; it scatters our thoughts in the Service of God, it is the cause of all revolts and Apostacies from him, it makes us unfit to receive the communications of God; whatsoever we hear is like words writ in sand, ruffled out by the next gale; whatsoever is put into us is like precious liquor in a palsie hand soon spilt: It breeds distrust of God; when we have an uncertain judgment of him, we are not like to confide in him: An uncertain judgment will be followed with a distrustful heart. In fine, where it is prevalent, it is a certain sign of ungodliness; to be driven with the wind like chaffe, and to be ungodly is all one, in the judgment of the Holy Ghost, *Psal.* 1. 4. The *ungodly* are *like the chaff which the wind drives away*, which signifies not their destruction, but their disposition, for their destruction is inferred from it, *ver.* 5. *Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in judgment.*

How contrary is this to the unchangeable God, who is always the same, and would have us the same, in our religious *Promises* and *Resolutions* for good?

4. If God be immutable, 'tis *sad news to those that are resolved in Wickedness, or careless of returning to that duty he requires.* Sinners must not expect, that God will alter his will, make a breach upon his nature, and violate his own Word to gratifie their lusts: No, 'tis not reasonable God should dishonour himself to secure them, and cease to be God, that they may continue to be wicked, by changing his own nature, that they may be unchanged in their vanity. God is the same; goodness is as amiable in his sight, and Sin as abominable in his eyes now, as it was at the beginning of the world: Being the same God, he is the same Enemy to the Wicked, as the same Friend to the Righteous; He is the same in Knowledge, and cannot forget sinful acts; He is the same in Will, and cannot approve of unrighteous Practices: Goodness cannot but be alway the Object of his Love, and Wickedness cannot but be alway the Object of his Hatred: And as his aversion to Sin is alway the same, so as he hath been in his Judgments upon Sinners, the same he will be still; for the same perfection of Immutability belongs to his Justice for the punishment of Sin, as to his Holiness for his disaffection to Sin. Though the Covenant of Works was changeable by the crime of man violating it; yet it was unchangeable in regard of Gods justice vindicating it, which is inflexible in the punishment of the

breaches of his Law. The aw had a Lpreceptive part, and a minatory part; When man changed the obſervation of the Precept, the righteous nature of God could not null the execution of the threatning: He could not upon the account of this perfection neglect his juſt word, and countenance the unrighteous tranſgreſſion. Tho there were no more rational Creatures in being but *Adam* and *Eve*, yet God ſubjected them to that death he had aſſured them of: And from this immutability of his Will, ariſeth the neceſſity of the ſuffering of the Son of God, for the relief of the Apoſtate Creature. His Will in the *ſecond Covenant* is as unchangeable, as that in the *firſt*, only repentance is ſettled as the condition of the *ſecond*, which was not indulged in the *firſt*; and without repentance the ſinner muſt irrevocably periſh or God muſt change his nature: There muſt be a change in Man, there can be none in God; *his bow is bent, his arrows are ready, if the wicked do not turn.* * There is not an Atheiſt, an hypocrite, a prophane perſon, that ever was upon the Earth, but Gods Soul abhorred him as ſuch, and the like he will abhor for ever: While any therefore continue ſo, they may ſooner expect the Heavens ſhould roul as they pleaſe, the Sun ſtand ſtill at their order, the Stars change their courſe at their beck, than that God ſhould change his nature, which is oppoſite to prophaneſs and vanity: *Who hath hardned himſelf againſt him and hath proſpered?* *

* Pſal. 7. 11.

* Job. 9. 4.

Uſe 2. *Of Comfort.*

The *immutability of a good God is a ſtrong ground of conſolation.* Subjects wiſh a good Prince to live for ever, as being loath to change him; but care not how ſoon they are rid of an Oppreſſor. This unchangeableneſs of Gods Will, ſhews him as ready to accept any that come to him as ever he was; ſo that we may with confidence make our addreſſes to him, ſince he cannot change his affections to goodneſs. The fear of change in a friend hinders a full reliance upon him; An aſſurance of ſtability encourages hope and confidence. This attribute is the ſtrongeſt Prop for faith in all our addreſſes; tis not a ſingle perfection, but the glory of all thoſe, that belong to his nature; for he is *unchangeable in his love*, Jer. 31. 3. *in his truth*, Pſal. 117. 2. The more ſolemn Revelation of himſelf in this name *Jehovah*, which ſignifies chiefly his Eternity and immutability, was to ſupport the *Iſraelites* faith, in expectation of a deliverance from *Egypt*, that he had not retracted his purpoſe, and *his promiſe* made to *Abraham* for giving *Canaan* to his Poſterity. * Herein is the *baſis* and ſtrength of all his promiſes; therefore ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, *thoſe that know thy name, will put their truſt in thee*; * Thoſe that are Spiritually acquainted with thy name *Jehovah*, and have a true ſenſe of it upon their hearts, will put their truſt in thee. His goodneſs could not be diſtruſted, if his unchangeableneſs were were well apprehended and conſidered: All diſtruſt would fly before it as darkneſs before the Sun; it only gets advantage of us, when we are not well grounded in his name; and if ever we truſted God, we have the ſame reaſon to truſt him for ever, Iſa. 26. 4. *Truſt in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength* or as tis in the Hebrew, *a Rock of Ages*; that is, perpetually unchangeable. We find the traces of Gods immutability in the Creatures; he has by his peremptory decree, ſet bounds to the Sea, *hitherto ſhalt thou come but no further, and here ſhall thy proud, waves be ſtayed.* * Do we fear the Sea overflowing us in this *Iſland*? No, becauſe of his fixt decree: And is not his promiſe in his Word, as unchangeable as his Word concerning inanimate things, as good a ground to reſt upon?

* Exod. 3. 14, 15, 16, 17.

* Pſal. 9. 10.

* Job. 38. 11.

1. *The Covenant ſtands unchangeable.* Mutable Creatures break their Leagues and Covenants, and ſnap them aſunder like *Sampſons* Cords, when they are not accommodated to their intereſts. But an unchangeable God keeps his; *the Mountains ſhall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, nor ſhall the Covenant of my peace be removed.* * The Heaven and Earth ſhall ſooner fall aſunder, and the ſtrongeſt and firmeſt parts of the Creation crumble to duſt ſooner than one *Iota* of my Covenant ſhall fail. It depends upon the unchangeableneſs of his Will, and the unchangeableneſs of his word, and therefore is called *the immutability of his Counſel*, Heb. 6. 17. Tis the fruit of the everlaſting purpoſe of God; whence the *Apoſtle* links *purpoſe* and *grace* together. * A Covenant with a Nation may be changeable, becauſe it may not be built upon the Eternal purpoſe of God *to put his fear in the heart*; but with reſpect to the Creatures obedience. Thus God choſe *Jeruſalem*, as the place wherein he would *dwell for ever*, * yet he threatens to

* Iſa. 54. 10.

* 2 Tim. 1. 9.

* Pſal. 132. 14.

departed

depart from them, when they had broken Covenant with him, *and the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the City to the Mountain on the east side.* * The Covenant of grace doth not run *I will be your God, if you will be my people*: But *I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* Hos. 2. 19. &c. *I will betroth thee to me for ever, I will say thou art my people, and they shall say thou art my God.* His everlasting purpose, is to write his Laws in the hearts of the Elect. He puts a condition to his Covenant of Grace, the condition of Faith, and he resolves to work that condition in the hearts of the Elect; and therefore Believers have two immutable pillars for their support, stronger than those erected by *Solomon* at the porch of the Temple, 1 *Kings* 7. 21. Called *Jakin* and *Boaz*, to note the firmness of that building dedicated to God; these are *Election* or the standing Counsel of God, and the *Covenant of grace*: He will not revoke the Covenant and blot the names of his Elect out of the Book of Life. * Ezek. 11. 33.

2. *Perseverance is ascertained.* It consists not with the Majesty of God to call a person effectually to himself to day, to make him fit for his Eternal love, to give him faith and take away that faith to morrow; his effectual Call is the fruit of his Eternal Election, and that Counsel hath no other foundation, but his constant and unchangeable Will; a foundation that stands sure, and therefore called the foundation of God, and not of the Creature; *the foundation of God stands sure, the Lord knows who are his.* * Tis not founded upon our own natural strength, it may be then subject to change, as all the products of nature are: The fallen Angels had Created Grace in their innocency, but lost it by their fall. * Were this the foundation of the Creature, it might soon be shaken; since man after his revolt can ascribe nothing constant to himself, but his own inconstancy: But the foundation is not in the infirmity of nature, but the strength of grace, and of the grace of God who is immutable, who wants not vertue to be able, nor kindness to be willing to preserve his own foundation. To what purpose doth our Saviour tell his Disciples, *their names were written in Heaven,* * but to mark the infallible certainty of their Salvation, by an opposition to those things which perish and have their *names written in the Earth*; * or upon the sand, where they may be defaced? And why should Christ order his Disciples to rejoyce, that their names were written in Heaven, if God were changeable to blot them out again? Or why should the *Apostle* assure us, that tho God had rejected the greatest part of the *Jews*, he had not therefore rejected his people elected according to his purpose and immutable Counsel; because there are none of the Elect of God but will come to Salvation; For saith he; the *Election hath obtained it*; * that is, all those that are of the Election have obtained it, and the others are hardened: Where the Seal of Sanctification is stampt, it is a testimony of Gods Election, and that foundation shall stand sure. *The foundation of the Lord stands sure having this Seal, the Lord knows who are his*, that is the foundation, the *naming* the *name of Christ*, or believing in Christ, and *departing from iniquity* is the Seal. * As tis impossible, when God calls those things that are not, but that they should spring up into being and appear before him: So it is impossible, but that the seed of God by his Eternal purpose, should be brought to a spiritual life; and that calling cannot be retracted; for that *gift and calling is without Repentance.* * And when repentance is removed from God in regard of some works, the immutability of those works is declared: And the reason of that immutability is their pure dependance on the Eternal favour and unchangeable grace of God, * [*purpos'd in himself*] and not upon the mutability of the Creature. Hence their happiness is not as Patents among men, *quam diu bene se gesserint*, so long as they behave themselves well, but they have a promise, that they shall behave themselves so as never wholly to depart from God, Jer. 32. 40. *I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* God will not turn from them, to do them good, and promiseth that they shall not turn from him for ever or forsake him: And the bottom of it is the everlasting Covenant, and therefore *believing and sealing*, for security, are linkt together, *Eph.* 1. 13. And When God doth inwardly teach us his Law, he puts in a will not depart from it: *Psalm* 119. 102. *I have not departed from thy Judgments*; what is the reason? *For thou hast taught me.* * 2 Tim. 2. 19. * *Turretin* Ser. p. 322. * Luk. 10. 20. * Jer. 17. 23. * Rom. 11. 7. * *Cocceius.* * Rom. 11. 29. * Eph. 1. 9, 11.

3. *By* this, *Eternal Happiness is ensured.* This is the *Inference* made from the E-

ternity and Unchangeableneſs of God in the *verſe* following the *Text*, verſe 28. *The Children of thy Servants ſhall continue, and their Seed ſhall be eſtabliſhed before thee*; This is the ſole concluſion drawn from thoſe Perfections of God ſolemnly aſſerted before. The Children which the *Prophets* and *Apoſtles* have begotten to thee, ſhall be totally delivered from the reliques of their Apoſtacy and the puniſhment due to them, and rendred partakers of Immortality with thee, as Sons to dwell in their Fathers houſe for ever. The Spirit begins a ſpiritual Life here, to fit for an immutable Life in Glory hereafter; where Believers ſhall be placed upon a Throne that cannot be ſhaken, and poſſeſs a Crown that ſhall not be taken off their heads for ever.

3. Uſe. Of *Exhortation.*

1. *Let a ſenſe of the changeableneſs and uncertainty of all other things beſide God, be upon us.* There are as many changes as there are figures in the world. The whole faſhion of the world is a tranſient thing; every man may ſay as *Job*,* *Changes and War are againſt me.* *Lot* choſe the plain of *Sodom*, becauſe it was the richer Soyl; He was but a little time there before he was taken Priſoner, and his ſubſtance made the Spoil of his Enemy; that is again reſtored; but a while after, Fire from Heaven devours his wealth, though his Perſon was ſecur'd from the Judgment by a ſpecial Providence. We burn with a deſire to ſettle our ſelves; but miſtake the way, and build Caſtles in the Air, which vaniſh like bubbles of Sope in water.

* Job. 10. 17.

And therefore,

1. *Let not our thoughts dwell much upon them.* Do but conſider thoſe Souls that are in the poſſeſſion of an unchangeable God, that behold his never fading Glory! Would it not be a kind of Hell to them, to have their thoughts ſtarting out to theſe things, or find any deſire in themſelves to the changeable trifles of the Earth? Nay, have we not reaſon to think, that they cover their faces with ſhame, that ever they ſhould have ſuch a weakneſs of Spirit when they were here below, as to ſpend more thoughts upon them than were neceſſary for this preſent Life; much more that they ſhould at any time value and court them above an unchangeable Good? Do they not diſdain themſelves that they ſhould ever debaſe the immutable perfections of God, as to have neglecting thoughts of him at any time, for the entertainment of ſuch a mean and inconſtant Rival?

2. *Much leſs ſhould we truſt in them or rejoyce in them.* The beſt things are mutable, and things of ſuch a nature are not fit Objects of confidence, Truſt not in Riches they have their wanes as well as increaſes; they riſe ſometimes like a Torrent and flow in upon men, but reſemble alſo a Torrent in as ſuddain a fall and departure, and leave nothing but ſlime behind them. Truſt not in Honour, all the Honour and Applauſe in the World, is no better than an Inheritance of Wind, which the *Pilot* is not ſure of, but ſhifts from one corner to another, and ſtands not perpetually in the ſame point of the Heavens. How in a few Ages did the houſe of *David* a great Monarch, and a man after Gods own heart, deſcend to a mean condition, and all the glory of that houſe ſhut up in the ſtock of a Carpenter? *David*'s Sheep-hook was turned into a Scepter, and the Scepter by the ſame hand of Providence turned into a Hatchet in *Joſeph* his Deſcendent.

Rejoyce not immoderately in wiſdom; That and Learning languiſh with Age. A wound in the head may impair that which is the Glory of a Man. If an Organ be out of frame, Folly may ſucceed, and all a mans Prudence be wound up in an irrecoverable Dotage. *Nebuchadnezzar* was no Fool, yet by a ſuddain hand of God he became not only a Fool or a mad Man, but a kind of Brute. Rejoyce not in ſtrength, that decays; and a mighty Man may live to ſee his ſtrong Arm withered, and a *Graſſ-hopper to become a Burthen.** *The ſtrong men ſhall bow themſelves, and the Grinders ſhall ceaſe becauſe they are few.** Nor rejoyce in Children; they are like Birds upon a Tree, that make a little chirping muſick, and preſently fall into the Fowlers Net. Little did *Job* expect ſuch ſad news as the loſs of all his Progeny, at a blow, when the Meſſenger knocked at his Gate: And ſuch changes happen oftentimes, when our expectations of comfort, and a contentment in them are at the higheſt. How often doth a ſtring crack when the *Muſitian* hath wound it up to a juſt height for a Tune, and all his pains and delight marr'd in a Moment? Nay, all theſe things change while we are uſing them, like Ice that melts between our fingers, and Flowers that wither while we are ſmelling to them: The *Apoſtle* gave them a good title,

* Eccleſ. 12. 5. * V. 3.

when

when he called them *uncertain riches*, and thought it a ſtronge argument to diſſwade them *from truſting in them.** The wealth of the Merchant depends upon the Winds and Waves, and the revenue of the Husbandman upon the Clouds; and ſince they depend upon thoſe things which are uſed to expreſs the moſt changeableneſs, they can be no fit Object for truſt. Beſides, God ſometimes kindles a *Fire under all a mans Glory*, which doth inſenſibly conſume it* ; and while we have them, the fear of loſing them renders us not very happy in the fruition of them; we can ſcarce tell whether they are contentments or no, becauſe ſorrow follows them ſo cloſe at the heels. 'Tis not an unneceſſary exhortation for good men; the beſt men have been apt to place too much truſt in them. *David* thought himſelf immutable in his Proſperity; and ſuch thoughts could not be without ſome immoderate outlets of the heart to them, and confidences in them: And *Job* promiſed himſelf to dye in his Neſt, and *multiply his days as the Sand* without any interruption*; but he was miſtaken and diſappointed.

* 1 Tim. 6. 17.

* Iſa. 10. 16.

* Job. 29. 18; 19. &c.

Let me add this; truſt not in men who are as inconſtant as any thing elſe, and often change their moſt ardent affections into implacable hatred: And though their affections may not be changed, their Power to help you may. *Hamans* Friends that depended on him one day, were creſt-fallen the next, when their Patron was to exchange his Chariot of State for an ignominious Gallows.

3. *Prefer an immutable God before mutable Creatures.* Is it not a horrible thing to ſee what we are, and what we poſſeſs, daily crumbling to duſt, and in a continual flux from us; and not ſeek out ſomething that is permanent, and always abides the ſame, for our portion? In *God*, or *Wiſdom*, which is Chriſt, there is *ſubſtance*, * in which reſpect he is oppoſed to all the things in the world, that are but ſhadows, that are ſhorter or longer according to the motion of the Sun; mutable alſo, by every little body that intervenes. God is ſubject to no decay within, to no force without; nothing in his own nature can change him from what he is, and there is no Power above can hinder him from being what he will to the Soul: He is an Ocean of all Perfection; He wants nothing without himſelf to render him bleſſed, which may allure him to a change: His Creatures can want nothing out of him to make them happy, whereby they may be inticed to prefer any thing before him. If we enjoy other things, 'tis by Gods donation, who can as well withdraw them as beſtow them; and it is but a reaſonable as well as a neceſſary thing, to endeavour the enjoyment of the immutable Benefactor, rather than his revocable Gifts.

* Pro. 8. 21.

If the Creatures had a ſufficient vertue in themſelves to raviſh our thoughts and engroſs our Souls; yet when we take a proſpect of a fixed and unchangeable being, what beauty, what ſtrength have any of thoſe things to vie with him? How can they bear up and maintain their intereſt againſt a lively thought and ſenſe of God? All the Glory of them would fly before him like that of the Stars before the Sun: They were once nothing, they may be nothing again; as their own nature brought them not out of nothing, ſo their Nature ſecures them not from being reduced to nothing. What an unhappineſs is it, to have our our affections ſet upon that which retains ſomething of its *non eſſe* with its *eſſe*, its not being with its being; that lives indeed, but in a continual flux and may loſe that pleaſureableneſs to morrow which charms us to day?

2. This Doctrin will *teach us Patience under ſuch Providences as declare his unchangeable Will.* The rectitude of our Wills conſiſts in conformity to the Divine, as diſcovered in his Words, and manifeſted in his Providence, which are the effluxes of his immmutable Will. The time of tryal is appointed by his *immutable Will**; 'tis not in the Power of the Sufferer's will to ſhorten it, nor in the Power of the Enemies will to lengthen it. Whatſoever doth happen, hath been decreed by God, (Eccleſ. 6. 10. *That which hath been is named already*) therefore to murmur or be diſcontented, is to contend with God, who is mightier than we to maintain his own purpoſes. God doth act all things conveniently for that immutable end intended by himſelf, and according to the reaſon of his own Divine Will, in the true point of time moſt proper for it and for us, not too ſoon or too ſlow, becauſe he is unchangeable in Knowledge and Wiſdom. God doth not act any thing barely by an immutable Will, but by an immutable Wiſdom, and an unchangeable Rule of Goodneſs; and therefore we ſhould not only acquieſce in what he works, but have a complacency in it; and by having our Wills thus knitting themſelves with the immutable Will

* Dan. 11. 36.

of

of God, we attain ſome degree of likeneſs to him in his own Unchangeableneſs. When therefore God hath manifeſted his VVill in opening his Decree to the world by his work of Providence, we muſt ceaſe all diſputes againſt it, and with *Aaron* hold our peace, though the affliction be very ſmart, * *All fleſh muſt be ſilent before God* *; For whatſoever is his Counſel ſhall ſtand, and cannot be recall'd; all ſtruggling againſt it, is like a brittle Glaſs contending with a Rock; For *if he cut off and ſhut up, or gather together*, then *who can hinder him?* Job 11. 10. Nothing can help us, if he hath determined to afflict us; as nothing can hurt us, if he hath determined to ſecure us. The more clearly God hath evidenced this or that to be his Will, the more ſinful is our ſtruggling againſt it. *Pharaoh's* ſin was the greater in keeping *Iſrael*, by how much the more Gods Miracles had been Demonſtrations of his ſettled VVill to deliver them. Let nothing ſnatch our hearts to a contradiction to him, but let us *fear* and give Glory to him, when the hour of Judgment, which he hath appointed, *is come* *; that is, comply with the unchangeable will of his Precept, the more he declares the immutable will of his Providence: VVe muſt not think, God muſt diſgrace his Nature and change his Proceedings for us: Better the Creature ſhould ſuffer, than God be impair'd in any of his Perfections. If God changed his Purpoſe, he would change his Nature. Patience is the way to perform the immutable VVill of God, and a means to attain a gracious Immutability for our ſelves by receiving the Promiſe. Heb. 10. 36. *Ye have need of Patience, that after ye have done the Will of God, ye might receive the Promiſe.*

* Rev. 10. 3.
* Zach. 2. 13.
* Revel. 14. 7.

3. This Doctrin will teach us *to imitate God in this perfection by ſtriving to be immoveable in goodneſs.* God never goes back from himſelf, he finds nothing better than himſelf for which he ſhould change; and can we find any thing better than God to allure our hearts to a change from him? The Sun never declines from the Ecliptick line, nor ſhould we from the paths of Holineſs. A ſtedfaſt obedience is encouraged by an unchangeable God to reward it, 1 Cor. 15. 58. *Be ſtedfaſt and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.* Unſtedfaſtneſs is the note of an Hypocrite, *Pſal.* 78. 37. Stedfaſtneſs is that which is good, is the mark of a Saint, 'tis the Character of a righteous perſon to *keep the truth*, Iſa. 26. 2, And it is as poſitively ſaid, that *he that abides not in the Doctrin of Chriſt hath not God*, 2 *Epiſt. John* 9. but he that doth, *hath both the Father and the Son.* So much of uncertainty, ſo much of nature; ſo much of firmneſs in duty, ſo much of Grace. We can never honour God unleſs we finiſh his work; as Chriſt did not glorifie God but in *finiſhing the work God gave him to do.* * The nearer the world comes to an end, the more is Gods immutability ſeen in his promiſes and predictions, and the more muſt our unchangeableneſs be ſeen in our obedience, Heb. 10. 23, 35. *Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering, and ſo much the more as you ſee the day approaching.* The Chriſtian *Jews* were to be the more tenacious of their faith, the nearer they ſaw the day approaching, the day of *Jeruſalems* deſtruction propheſied of by *Daniel*, * which accompliſhment muſt be a great argument to eſtabliſh the Chriſtian *Jews* in the profeſſion of Chriſt to be the *Meſſiah*; becauſe the deſtruction of the City was not to be, before the cutting off the *Meſſiah.* Let us be therefore conſtant in our profeſſion and ſervice of God, and not ſuffer our ſelves to be driven from him by the ill uſage, or flatter'd from him by the Careſſes of the world.

* John 17. 4.
* Dan. 9. 26.

1. 'Tis *reaſonable.* If God be unchangeable in doing us good, it is reaſon we ſhould be unchangeable in doing him ſervice: If he aſſure us that he is our God, our I *am*, he would alſo that we ſhould be his people. His we are. If he declare himſelf conſtant in his promiſes, he expects we ſhould be ſo in our obedience: As a Spouſe, we ſhould be unchangeably faithful to him as a Husband: As Subjects, have an unchangeable allegiance to him as our Prince. He would not have us *faithful* to him for an hour or a day, but *to the death*; * And it is reaſon we ſhould be his; and if we be his Children imitate him in his conſtancy of his holy purpoſes.

* Rev. 2. 10.

2. *'Tis our glory and intereſt.* To be a reed ſhaken with every wind, is no commendation among men, and tis leſs a ground of praiſe with God. It was *Jobs* glory, that he held faſt in his integrity; * *In all this* Job *ſinned not*; In all this, which whole Cities and Kingdoms would have thought ground enough of high exclamations

* Job 1. 22.

mations againſt God: And alſo againſt the temptation of his Wife, he retained his integrity, Job. 2. 9. *Doſt thou ſtill retain thy integrity?* The *Devil*, who by Gods permiſſion ſtript him of his goods and health, yet could not ſtrip him of his grace. As a Traveller, when the wind and ſnow beats in his face, wrapes his clock more cloſely about him to preſerve that and himſelf. Better we had never made profeſſion, than afterwards to abandon it; ſuch a withering profeſſion ſerves for no other uſe than to aggravate the crime, if any of us fly like a coward or revolt like a Traytor: What profit will it be to a Souldier, if he hath withſtood many aſſaults and turn his back at laſt? If we would have God Crown us with an immutable glory, we muſt Crown our beginnings with a happy perſeverance, Rev. 2. 10. *Be faithful to the Death and I will give thee a Crown of life*: Not as tho this were the cauſe to merit it, but a neceſſary condition to poſſeſs it: Conſtancy in good is accompanied with an immutability of Glory.

3. *By an unchangeable diſpoſition to good we ſhould begin the happineſs of Heaven upon Earth.* This is the perfection of bleſſed Spirits, thoſe that are neareſt to God, as Angels and glorified Souls, they are immutable: Not indeed by nature, but by grace; yet not only by a neceſſity of grace, but a liberty of Will: Grace will not let them change; and that grace doth animate their Wills that they would not change; an immutable God fills their underſtandings and affections, and gives ſatisfaction to their deſires. The Saints when they were below, tried other things and found them deficient: But now they are ſo fully ſatisfied with the beatifick viſion, that if *Satan* ſhould have entrance among the Angels and Sons of God, 'tis not likely he ſhould have any influence upon them; he could not preſent to their underſtandings any thing, that could either at the firſt glance, or upon a deliberate view be preferable to what they enjoy and are fixed in.

Well then let us be immoveable in the Knowledge and Love of God. 'Tis the delight of God to ſee his Creatures reſemble him in what they are able. Let not our Affections to him be as *Jonah*'s Goard, growing up in one Night and withering the next. Let us not only fight a good Fight, but do ſo till we have finiſhed our courſe, and imitate God in an unchangeableneſs of holy purpoſes; and to that purpoſe, examin our ſelves daily what fixedneſs we have arrived unto; And to prevent any temptation to a revolt, let us often poſſeſs our minds with thoughts of the immutability of Gods Nature and Will, which like Fire under Water, will keep a good matter boiling up in us, and make it both retain and increaſe its heat.

4. Let this Doctrin teach us *to have recourſe to God, and aim at a near conjunction with him.* When our Spirits begin to flag, and a cold aguiſh temper is drawing upon us; let us go to him, who can only fix our hearts, and furniſh us with a Ballaſt to render them ſtedfaſt. As he is only immutable in his Nature, ſo he is the only Principle of Immutability as well as Being in the Creature. Without his Grace, we ſhall be as changeable in our appearances as a *Chamelion*, and in our turnings as the Wind. When *Peter* truſted in himſelf, he changed to the worſe: It was his Maſters recourſe to *God* for him that preſerved in him a reducing Principle, which changed him again for the better and fixed him in it. *

* Luke 22. 32.

It will be our Intereſt to be in conjunction with him, that moves not about with the Heavens, nor is turned by the force of Nature, nor changed by the accidents in the world; but ſits in the Heavens, moving all things by his powerful Arm, according to his infinite Skill: While we have him for our God, we have his Immutability as well as any other Perfection of his Nature for our advantage; The nearer we come to him, the more ſtability we ſhall have in our ſelves; the further from him, the more lyable to change. The Line that is neareſt to the place where it is firſt fixed, is leaſt ſubject to motion; the further it is ſtretched from it, the weaker it is, and more liable to be ſhaken. Let us alſo affect thoſe things which are neareſt to him in this perfection; the righteouſneſs of Chriſt that ſhall never wear out, and the graces of the Spirit that ſhall never burn out; by this means what God is infinitely by Nature, we ſhall come to be finitely immutable by Grace, as much as the capacity of a Creature can contain.

A DISCOURSE UPON God's Omnipresence.

Jeremiah 23. 24.

Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I fill Heaven and Earth, saith the Lord?

THE occasion of this Discourse begins *verse* 16. where God admonisheth the people, not to hearken to the words of the false Prophets which spake a Vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. They made the people vain by their insinuations of Peace, when God had proclaimed War and Calamity; and uttered the Dreams of their Phansies, and not the Visions of the Lord; and so turned the people from the expectation of the evil day which God had threatned, ver. 17. *They say still unto them, that despise me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace: and they say unto every one that walks after the Imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.* And they invalidate the Propheſies of those, whom God had sent, *v.* 18. *Who hath stood in the Counsel of the Lord, and hath perceived and heard his word? Who hath marked his word, and heard it? Who hath stood in the Counsel of the Lord?* Are they acquainted with the Secrets of God more than we? Who have the word of the Lord, if we have not? Or, it may be a continuation of Gods Admonition: Believe not those Prophets; for who of them have been acquainted with the Secrets of God? or by what means should they learn his Counsel? No, assure your selves, *a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind, it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked.* v. 19. A whirlwind shall come from *Babylon*, 'tis just at the door, and shall not be blown over, it shall fall with a witness upon the wicked people, and the deceiving Prophets, and sweep them together into Captivity. For *v.* 20. *The anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart.* My fury shall not be a childish fury that quickly languisheth, but shall accomplish whatsoever I threaten; and burn so hot, as not to be cool, till I have satisfied my vengeance; *in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly*, v. 20. when the storm shall beat upon you, you shall then know, that the Calamities shall answer the words you have heard. When the Conquerour shall waste your Grounds, demolish your Houses, and manacle your hands, then shall you consider it, and have the wishes of Fools, that you had had your eyes in your heads before; you shall then know the falsness of your Guides, and the truth of my Prophets, and discern who stood in the Counsel of the Lord, and subscribe to the Messages, I have sent you.

Some understand this not only of the *Babylonish* Captivity, but refer it to the time of Christ, and the false Doctrine of mens own Righteousness in opposition to the Righteousness of God; understanding this *verse* to be partly a threatning of Wrath, which shall end in an advantage to the *Jews*, who shall in the latter time consider the falsness of their Notions about a legal Righteousness, and so make it a promise; they shall then know the intent of the Scripture, and in the latter days, the latter end of the World, when time shall be near the rouling up, they shall reflect upon

upon themſelves; they ſhall *look upon him whom they have pierced*; and till theſe *latter days*, they ſhall be hardened, and believe nothing of Evangelical truths.

Now God denieth that he ſent thoſe Prophets, *v.* 21. *I have not ſent theſe Prophets, yet they ran; I have not ſpoken to them, yet they propheſied.* They have intruded themſelves without a Commiſſion from me, whatſoever their Brags are. The reaſon to prove it, is *v.* 22. *If they had ſtood in my Counſel*, if they had been inſtructed, and inſpired by me, *they would have cauſed my people to hear my words*; they would have regulated themſelves according to my word, *and have turned them from their evil way*; i. e. endeavoured to ſhake down their falſe confidences of peace, and make them ſenſible of their falſe Notions of me, and my ways. Now becauſe thoſe falſe Prophets could not be ſo impudent as to boaſt, that they Propheſied in the Name of God, when they had not Commiſſion from him, unleſs they had ſome ſecret Sentiment, that they and their intentions were hid from the Knowledge and Eye of God; He adds, *v.* 23. *Am I a God at hand, and not a God a far off? Can any hide himſelf in ſecret places, that I ſhall not ſee him?* Have I not the power of ſeeing and knowing what they do, what they deſign, what they think? Why ſhould I not have ſuch a power, ſince *I fill Heaven and Earth* by my Eſſence? *Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off?* He excludes here the Doctrine of thoſe that excluded the Providence of God from extending its ſelf to the inferior things of the earth; which error was ancient, as ancient as the time of *Job*, as appears by their opinion. That Gods eyes were hood-winkt and muffled by the thickneſs of the Clouds, and could not pierce through their dark and denſe body: * *Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he ſeeth not.*

* Job. 22. 14.

* Some refer it to time. Do you imagine me a God new fram'd like your Idols, beginning a little time ago, and not exiſting before the foundation of the World; yea, from Eternity? *a God afar off*, further than your acuteſt underſtandings can reach? I am of a longer ſtanding, and you ought to know my Majeſty. But it rather refers to place, than time. Do you think I do not behold every thing in the earth, as well as in Heaven? Am I lockt up within the walls of my Palace, and cannot peep out to behold the things done in the World? Or that I am ſo linkt to pleaſure in the place of my Glory, as earthly Kings are in their Courts, that I have no mind, or leaſure to take notice of the carriages of men upon earth? God doth not ſay, He was a far off, but only gives an account of the inward thoughts of their minds, or at leaſt, of the Language expreſt by their Actions.

* *Munſter, Vatablus, Caſtalio Oecolamp.*

The Interrogation carries in it a ſtrong Affirmation, and aſſures us more of Gods care, and the folly of men in not conſidering it. *Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himſelf in ſecret places?* Heb. *in Hiddeneſſes*, in the deepeſt Cells: What? are you beſotted by your baſe Luſts, that you think me a God careleſs, ignorant, blind, that I can ſee nothing, but as a purblind man, what is very near my eye? Are you ſo out of your wits, that you imagine you can deceive me? Do not all your behaviours ſpeak ſuch a Sentiment to lie ſecret in your heart, tho not form'd into a full conception, yet teſtified by your Actions? No, you are much miſtaken, 'tis impoſſible but that I ſhould ſee and know all things, ſince I am preſent with all things, and am not at a greater diſtance from the things on earth, than from the things in Heaven; for I fill all that vaſt Fabrick which is divided into thoſe two parts of *Heaven* and *Earth*; and he that hath ſuch an infinite eſſence, cannot be diſtant, cannot be ignorant, nothing can be far from his eyes, ſince every thing is ſo near to his Eſſence.

So that it is an Elegant Expreſſion of the *Omniſcience* of God, and a ſtrong Argument for it. He aſſerts, firſt the Univerſality of his Knowledge; but leſt they ſhould miſtake, and confine his preſence only to Heaven; he adds, That he *fills Heaven and Earth*. I do not ſee things ſo, as if I were in one place, and the things ſeen in another, as it is with man; but whatſoever I ſee, I ſee not without my ſelf, becauſe every corner of Heaven and Earth is fill'd by me. He that fills all, muſt needs ſee and know all.

And indeed, men that queſtion the knowledge of God, would be more convinc'd by the Doctrine of his immediate preſence with them. And this ſeems to be the deſign and manner of Arguing in this place. Nothing is remote from my knowledge, becauſe nothing is diſtant from my preſence.

I fill Heaven and Earth: He doth not ſay, I am in Heaven and Earth, but I *fill* Heaven and Earth, *i. e.* * ſay ſome, with my Knowledge; others, with my Authority, or my Power. But,

* *Tum perſpicacia, tum efficacia*, Grot.

1. The word *filling* cannot properly be referred to *the act of underſtanding* and will. A preſence by knowledge is to be granted, but to ſay ſuch a preſence fills a a place, is an improper Speech. Knowledge is not enough to conſtitute a preſence. A Man at *London* knows there is ſuch a City as *Paris*, and knows many things in it; can he be concluded therefore to be preſent in *Paris*, or fill any place there, or be preſent with the things he knows there? If I know any thing to be diſtant from me, how can it be preſent with me? For by knowing it to be diſtant, I know it not to be preſent. Beſides, *filling* Heaven and Earth, is diſtinguiſht here from Knowing or Seeing. His preſence is rendred as an Argument to prove his Knowledge. Now a Propoſition, and the proof of that Propoſition, are diſtinct, and not the ſame.

It cannot be immagin'd, that God ſhould prove *idem per idem*, as we ſay; for what would be the import of the Speech then? I know all things, I ſee all things, becauſe I know and ſee all things *. The Holy Ghoſt here accommodates himſelf to the Capacity of men; becauſe we know that a man ſees and knows that which is done, where he is corporally preſent; ſo he proves, that God knows all things that are done in the moſt ſecret Caverns of the Heart, becauſe he is every where in Heaven and Earth, as light is every where in the air, and air every where in the World. Hence the *Schools* uſe the term *repletivè* for the preſence of God.

* Suarez.

2. Nor by *filling* of Heaven and Earth, is meant *his Authority and Power*. It would be improperly ſaid of a King, that in regard of the Government of his Kingdom, is every where by his Authority, that he fills all the Cities and Countrys of his Dominions. [*I, do not I fill* *?] That [*I*] notes the Eſſence of God, as diſtinguiſht according to our capacity, from the perfections pertaining to his Eſſence; and is in reaſon better referred to the ſubſtance of God, than to thoſe things we conceive as Attributes in him. Beſides, were it meant only of his Authority or Power, the Argument would not run well. I ſee all things, becauſe my Authority and Power fills Heaven and Earth. Power doth not always rightly infer knowledge, no not in a rational Agent. Many things in a Kingdom are done by the Authority of the King, that never arrive to the Knowledge of the King. Many things in us are done by the Power of our Souls, which yet we have not a diſtinct Knowledge of in our underſtandings. There are many motions in ſleep, by the vertue of the Soul informing the body, that we have not ſo much as a ſimple knowledge of in our minds. Knowledge is not rightly inferr'd from power, or power from knowledge.

* Amyrald. *de Trinitate*. p. 57.

By *filling* Heaven and Earth is meant therefore, *a filling it with his Eſſence*. No place can be imagin'd, that is deprived of the preſence of God; and therefore when the Scripture any were ſpeaks of the *preſence* of God, it joyns Heaven and Earth together: He ſo fills them, that there is no place without him. We do not ſay a veſſel is full, ſo long as there is any ſpace to contain more. Not a part of Heaven, nor a part of Earth, but the whole Heaven, the whole Earth at one and the ſame time. If he were only in one part of Heaven, or one part of Earth; nay, if there were any part of Heaven, or any part of Earth void of him, he could not be ſaid to fill them. I fill Heaven and Earth; not a part of me fills one place, and another part of me fills another; but I, God, fill Heaven and Earth; I am whole God filling the Heaven; and whole God, filling the Earth. I fill Heaven, and yet fill Earth; I fill Earth, and yet fill Heaven, and fill Heaven and Earth at one and the ſame time. *God fills his own works*, a *Heathen Philoſopher* ſaith *.

* Seneca *de Benefic. lib.* 4. *cap.* 8. *Ipſe opus ſuum implet.*

Here is then a Deſcription of *Gods Preſence*.

1. *By Power, Am I not a God afar off?* a God in the extenſion of his Arm.

2. *By Knowledge; Shall I not ſee them?*

3. *By Eſſence*; as an undeniable ground for inferring the two former: I *fill* Heaven and Earth.

Doct. *God is Eſſentially every where preſent in Heaven and Earth.*

If God be, he muſt be ſomewhere; that which is no where, is nothing. Since God is, he is in the world; not in one part of it; for then he were circumſcrib'd by it: if in the world, and only there, though it be a great ſpace, he were alſo limited. * Some therefore ſaid, God was *every where*, and *no where*. No where, *i. e.* not bounded

* Chryſoſtom.

bounded by any place, nor receiving from any place any thing for his preservation or sustainment. He is every where, because no creature either Body or Spirit, can exclude the presence of his Essence; for he is not only near, but in every thing; * *In him we live, and move, and have our being.* Not absent from any thing, but so present with them, that they live and move in him, and move more in God, than in the air or earth wherein they are; nearer to us than our flesh to our bones, than the air to our breath; he cannot be far from them that live, and have every motion in him. The *Apostle* doth not say, *By him*, but *in him*, to shew the inwardness of his *Presence.* * Acts 17. 28.

As *Eternity* is the perfection whereby he hath neither beginning nor end; *Immutability* is the perfection whereby he hath neither increase, nor diminution: so *Immensity* or *Omnipresence* is that whereby he hath neither bounds nor limitation. As he is in all time, yet so as to be above time; so is he in all places, yet so as to be above limitation by any place. It was a good Expression of a *Heathen* to illustrate this, that God is a Sphere or Circle, whose *Center is every where, and Circumference no where.* His meaning was, that the Essence of God was indivisible; *i. e.* could not be divided. It cannot be said, here and there the lines of it terminate; 'tis like a line drawn out in infinite spaces, that no point can be conceived where its length and breadth ends. The Sea is a vast mass of waters; yet to that it is said, *Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further.* But it cannot be said of Gods Essence, hitherto it reaches and no further; here it is, and there it is not. Tis plain, that God is thus *immense*, because he is infinite; we have Reason and Scripture to assent to it, though we cannot conceive it. We know that God is eternal, though Eternity is too great to be measured by the short line of a created understanding. We cannot conceive the Vastness and Glory of the Heavens, much less that which is so great, as to *fill* Heaven and Earth; yea, * *not to be contained in the Heaven of Heavens.* * 1 King. 8. 27.

Things are said to be *present*, or *in a place.*

1. *Circumscriptivè*, as circumscribed. This belongs to things that have quantity, as bodies that are encompass'd by that place wherein they are; and a body fills but one particular space wherein it is, and the space is commensurate to every part of it, and every member hath a distinct place. The hand is not in the same particular space, that the foot or head is.

2. *Definitivè*, which belongs to Angels and Spirits, which are said to be in a point, yet so as that they cannot be said to be in another at the same time.

3. *Repletivè*, filling all places; this belongs only to God: As he is not measured by time, so he is not limited by place. A body or Spirit, because finite, fills but one space; God, because infinite, fills all, yet so as not to be contained in them, as Wine and Water is in a Vessel. He is from the height of the Heaven, to the bottom of the Deeps, in every point of the World, and in the whole Circle of it, yet not limited by it, but beyond it.

Now this hath been acknowledged by the wisest in the world.

Some indeed had other Notions of God. The more ignorant sort of the *Jews* confin'd him to the *Temple* *. And God intimates, that they had such a thought when he asserts his *presence in Heaven and Earth*, in opposition to the Temple they built as his House, and *the place* of his *Rest* *, And the Idolaters among them, thought their Gods might be at a distance from them, which *Elias* intimates in the scoff he puts upon them *, *Cry aloud, for he is a God*, meaning *Baal*; *either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey*; and they follow his advice, and cried *louder*, v. 28. Whereby it is evident, they looked not on it as a mock, but as a truth. And the *Syrians* call'd the God of *Israel* the God of the hills, as though his presence were fixed there, and not in the valleys *; and their own Gods in the Valleys, and not in the Mountains; they phansied every God to have a particular Dominion, and presence in one place, and not in another; and bounded the Territories of their Gods, as they did those of their princes. * And some thought him tied to, and shut up in their Temples and Groves wherein they worshipped him *. Some of them thought God to be confined to Heaven, and therefore sacrificed upon the highest Mountains, that the steam might ascend nearer Heaven; and their Praises be heard better in those places which were nearest to the Habitation of God. But the wiser

* Hierom. on Isa. 66. 1.

* Hammond on Matth. 6. 7.

* 1 King. 18. 17.

* 1 King. 20. 23.

* *Med. Diatrib. vol.* 1. *p.* 71, 72.

* *Dought Anat. lec. exerc.* 61. 113.

Jews acknowledged it; and therefore call'd God *place* *, whereby they denoted his *immenſity*; he was not contain'd in any place, every part of the world ſubſiſts by him: He was a place to himſelf, greater than any thing made by him. And the wiſer Heathens acknowledged it alſo.

* מקום *Grot.* upon Mar. 5. 16. *Mareſ.* contra *Volk.* lib. 1. cap. 27. p. 494.

‖ *One* calls God a mind paſſing through the univerſal nature of things; *Another*, that he was an infinite and immenſe Air *; *Another*, That it is as natural to think God is every where, as to think that God is: Hence they call'd God the Soul of the world, that as the Soul is in every part of the body, to quicken it, ſo is God in every part of the World, to ſupport it.

‖ Vide *Minut. Fel.* p. 20.
* *Plotin* Enead 6. lib. 5. cap. 4.

And there are ſome reſemblances of this in the world, though no Creature can fully reſemble God in any one perfection: for then it would not be a Creature, but God. But Air and Light are ſome weak reſemblances of it: Air is in all the ſpaces of the World, in the Pores of all bodies, in the Bowels of the Earth, and extends it ſelf from the loweſt Earth to the higheſt Regions; and the Heavens themſelves are probably nothing elſe but a refin'd kind of Air; and light diffuſeth it ſelf through the whole Air, and every part of it is truly Light, as every part of the Air is truly Air; and though they ſeem to be mingled together, yet they are diſtinct things, and not of the ſame Eſſence; ſo is the Eſſence of God in the whole World, not by diffuſion as Air or Light; not mixed with any Creature; but remaining diſtinct from the Eſſence of any Created Being. Now when this hath been own'd by men inſtructed only in the School of Nature, 'tis a greater ſhame to any acquainted with the Scripture to deny it. For the underſtanding of this, there ſhall be ſome Propoſitions premis'd in general.

1. *This is negatively to be underſtood.* Our knowledge of God is moſt by withdrawing from him, or denying to him, in our conception, any weakneſſes or imperfections in the Cteature. As the infiniteneſs of God is a denial of limitation of Being, ſo Immenſity or Omnipreſence is a denial of limitation of place: And when we ſay, God is *totus* in every place, we muſt underſtand it thus, that he is not every where by parts, as Bodies are, as Air and Light are; He is every where, *i. e.* his Nature hath no bounds, he is not tyed to any place, as the Creature is, who when he is preſent in one place, is abſent from another. As no place can be without God, ſo no place can compaſs and contain him.

2. *There is an influential Omnipreſence of God.*

1. *Univerſal with all Creatures.* He is preſent with all things by his Authority, becauſe all things are ſubject to him: by his power, becauſe all things are ſuſtained by him: By his Knowledge, becauſe all things are naked before him. He is preſent in the world, as a King is in all parts of his Kingdom Regally preſent: Providentially preſent with all, ſince his care extends to the meaneſt of his Creatures. His Power reacheth all, and his Knowledge pierceth all.

As every thing in the VVorld was Created by God, ſo every thing in the VVorld is preſerved by God; and ſince Preſervation is not wholly diſtinct from Creation, 'tis neceſſary God ſhould be preſent with every thing while he preſerves it, as well as preſent with it when he Created it, *Thou preſerveſt man and Beaſt.* * *He upholds all things by the word of his Power.* There is a vertue ſuſtaining every Creature, that it may not fall back into that nothing from whence it was elevated by the Power of God. All thoſe natural Vertues we call the Principles of Operation, are Fountains ſpringing from his Goodneſs and Power, all things are acted and managed by him, as well as preſerved by him; and in this ſenſe God is preſent with all Creatures; for whatſoever acts another, is preſent with that which it acts, by ſending forth ſome vertue and influence, whereby it acts: If free Agents do not only *live*, but *move in him, and by him* *, much more are the motions of other natural Agents, by a vertue communicated to them, and upheld in them in the time of their acting: This vertual preſence of God, is evident to our ſenſe, a preſence we feel; his *eſſential* preſence is evident in our reaſon: This *influential* preſence may be compar'd to that of the Sun, which though at ſo great a diſtance from the Earth, is preſent in the Air and Earth by its Light, and within the Earth by its influence in concocting thoſe Metals which are in the Bowels of it, without being ſubſtantially either of them. God is thus ſo intimate with every Creature, that there is not the leaſt particle of any Creature, but the marks of his Power and goodneſs are ſeen in it, and his goodneſs

* Pſal. 36. 6.
* Heb. 1. 3.
* Acts 17. 28.

doth

doth attend them, and is more ſwift in its effluxes, then the breaking out of Light from the Sun, which yet are more ſwift than can be declar'd; but to ſay he is in the World only by his Vertue, is to acknowledge only the effects of his Power and Wiſdom in the world, that his eye ſees all, his Arm ſupports all, his Goodneſs nouriſheth all, but himſelf and his Eſſence at a diſtance from them *? and ſo the ſoul of man according to its meaſure would have in ſome kind a more excellent manner of Preſence in the body, than God according to the infiniteneſs of his Being with his Creatures; for that doth not only communicate Life to the Body, but is actually preſent with it, and ſpreads its whole Eſſence through the Body and every Member of it: All grant, that God is efficaciouſly in every Creek of the World; but ſome ſay he is only ſubſtantially in Heaven. * Zanch.

2. *Limited to ſuch Subjects that are capacitated for this or that kind of* Preſence. Yet it is an *Omnipreſence*, becauſe it is a Preſence in all the Subjects capacitated for it; thus there is a *ſpecial providential* Preſence of God with ſome, in aſſiſting them when he ſets them on work as his Inſtruments for ſome ſpecial Service in the World: As with *Cyrus* *, *I will go before thee*; and with *Nebuchadnezzer*, and *Alexander*, whom he Protected and directed to execute his Couſels in the World; ſuch a preſence *Judas* and others || that ſhall not enjoy his glorious Preſence, had in the *working of Miracles* in the world: Beſides* as there is an *effective* Preſence of God with all Creatures, becauſe he produced them, and preſerves them; ſo there is an *objective* Preſence of God with rational Creatures, becauſe he offers himſelf to them, to be known and loved by them: He is near to VVicked men in the offers of his Grace, || *call ye upon him while he is near*; Beſides, there is *a gracious* preſence of God with his People in whom he dwells, and make his abode, *as in a Temple* Conſecrated to him by the Graces of the Spirt. **We will come*, i. e. the Father and the Son, *and make our abode with him.* He is preſent with all by the preſence of his Divinity, but only in his Saints by a preſence of a gracious Efficacy; he walks in the midſt of the Golden Candleſticks, and hath Digniſi'd the congregation of his People with the Title of *Jehovah Shammah*, * *The Lord is there: In* Salem *is his Tabernacle, and his dwelling place in* Sion. * As he filled the Tabernacle, ſo he doth the Church with the Signs of his preſence; this is not the preſence wherewith he fills Heaven and Earth. His Spirit is not beſtowed upon all, to reſide in their hearts, enlighten their minds, and bedew them with refreſhing Comforts: When the Apoſtle ſpeaks of Gods being *Above all*, and *through all*; * *Above all* in his Majeſty, *Through all* in his Providence; he doth not appropriate that, as he doth what follows, and *in you all*; in you all by a ſpecial Grace; as God was ſpecially preſent with Chriſt by the Grace of Union, ſo he is ſpecially preſent with his People by the the Grace of Regeneration. So there are ſeveral manifeſtations of his preſence; he hath a preſence of Glory in Heaven, whereby he Comforts the Saints; a preſence of wrath in Hell, whereby he Torments the damned; in Heaven he is a God ſpreading his beam of Light; in Hell, a God diſtributing his ſtrokes of Juſtice; by the one he fills Heaven, by the other he fills Hell; by his Providence and Eſſence he fills both Heaven and Earth.

* Isa. 43. 2.

|| Mat. 7. 22. *In thy name we have done many wonderful works.*

* Cajetan in Aquin Par. 1. Qu. 8. Artic. 3

|| Isa. 55. 6.

* John. 14. 23.

* Ezek. 48. 35.

* Pſal. 76. 2.

* Eph. 4. 6.

3. *There is an Eſſential preſence of God in the world.* He is not only every where, by his Power upholding the Creatures, by his VViſdom underſtanding them, but by his Eſſence containing them. That any thing is eſſentially preſent any where, it hath from God; God is therefore much more preſent every where, for he cannot give that which he hath not.

1. *He is Eſſentially preſent in all places* *. Tis as reaſonable to think the Eſſence of God to be every where, as to be always; Immenſity is as rational as Eternity; That indiviſible Eſſence which reaches through all times, may as well reach through all places; Tis more excellent to be always, than to be every where; for to be always in duration is Intrinſical; to be every where is Extrinſick; if the greater belongs to God, why not the leſs? As all times are a moment to his Eternity, ſo all places are as a point to his Eſſence; As he is larger than all time, ſo he is vaſter than all place: The Nations of the World are to him *as the Duſt of the Ballance*, or *Drop of a Bucket* *. *The Nations are accounted as the ſmall Duſt*; The Eſſence of God may well be thought to be preſent every where with that which is no more than a grain of Duſt to him, and in all thoſe Iſles, which if put together, *are a very little thing* in his hand: Therefore ſaith a learned Jew *, If a man were ſet in the higheſt

* Ficin.

* Iſa. 40. 15.

* Maimonid.

higheſt Heavens, he would not be nearer to the Eſſence of God than if he were in the Center of the Earth. Why may not the Preſence of God in the World be as noble as that of the Soul in the Body, which is generally granted to be eſſentially in every part of the body of man. Which is but a little World, and animates every Member by its actual preſence, though it exerts not the ſame operation in every part * ? The world is leſs to the Creator, than the body to the Soul; and needs more the preſence of God, than the Body needs the preſence of the Soul. That glorious body of the Sun viſits every part of the Habitable Earth in 24 hours by its beams; which reaches the Troughs of the loweſt Valleys, as well as the Pinacles of the higheſt Mountains; muſt we not acknowledge in the Creator of this Sun an infinite greater proportion of preſence? Is it not as eaſie with the Eſſence of God to over-ſpread the whole body of Heaven and Earth, as it is for the Sun to pierce and diffuſe its ſelf through the whole Air between it and the Earth, and ſend up its light alſo as far to the Regions above? Do we not ſee ſomething like it in Sounds and Voices? Is not the ſame Sound of a Trumpet, or any other Muſical Inſtrument, at the firſt breaking out of a Blaſt, in ſeveral places within ſuch a compaſs, at the ſame time? Doth not every Ear that hears it, receive alike the whole ſound of it? And fragrant Odors ſcented in ſeveral places at the ſame time, in the ſame manner; and the Organ proper for Smelling takes in the ſame in every perſon within the compaſs of it: How far is the noiſe of Thunder heard alike to every Ear, in places ſomething diſtant from one another? and do we daily find ſuch a manner of preſence in thoſe things of ſo low a concern, and not imagine a kind of preſence of God greater than all thoſe? Is the ſound of Thunder, the *Voice of God*, as it is call'd, every where in ſuch a compaſs, and ſhall not the Eſſence of an Infinite God be much more every where? Thoſe that would confine the Eſſence of God only to Heaven and exclude it from the Earth, run into great inconveniencies. It may be demanded, whether he be in one part of the Heavens, or in the whole vaſt body of them? If in one part of them, his Eſſence is bounded; if he moves from that part, he is mutable, for he changes a place wherein he was, for another wherein he was not. If he be always fixed in one part of the Heavens, ſuch a notion would render him little better than a living Statue *: If he be in the whole Heaven, why cannot his Eſſence poſſeſs a greater ſpace than the whole Heavens which are ſo vaſt? How comes he to be confin'd within the compaſs of that, ſince the whole Heaven compaſſeth the Earth? If he be in the whole Heaven, he is in places farther diſtant one from another, than any part of the Earth can be from the Heavens; ſince the Earth is like a Center in the midſt of a Circle, it muſt be nearer to every part of the Circle, than ſome parts of the Circle can be to one another: If therefore his Eſſence poſſeſſes the whole Heavens, no reaſon can be render'd why he doth not alſo poſſeſs the Earth, ſince alſo the Earth is but a little *point* in compariſon of the vaſtneſs of the Heavens; If therefore he be in every part of the Heavens, why not in every part of the Earth.

* *Ficin.*

* *Hornbeck Soun. Part 1. p. 303.*

This Scripture is plain *, *Whither ſhall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither ſhall I flie from thy Preſence? If I aſcend up to Heaven, thou art there; If I make my Bed in Hell, behold thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt parts of the Sea, even there ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall uphold me.* If he be in heaven, Earth, Hell, Sea, he fills all places with his Preſence; his Preſence is here aſſerted in places the moſt diſtant from one another; all the places then between Heaven and Earth are poſſeſſed by his Preſence: 'Tis not meant of his Knowledge, for that the Pſalmiſt had ſpoken of before, *ver.* 2, 3. *Thou underſtandeth my thoughts afar off, thou art acquainted with all my ways.* Beſides, *Thou art there*, not thy wiſdom or knowledge; but *Thou*, thy Eſſence, not only thy Vertue. For having before ſpoken of his Omniſcience, he proves that ſuch Knowledge could not be in God, unleſs he were preſent in his Eſſence in all places, ſo as to be excluded from none: He fills the depths of Hell, the Extenſion of the Earth, and the heights of the Heavens. When the Scripture mentions the Power of God only, it expreſſeth it by Hand or Arm; but when it mentions the Spirit of God, and doth not intend the *Third Perſon* in the Trinity, it ſignifies the Nature and Eſſence of God: and ſo here, when he ſaith *Whither ſhall I go from thy Spirit?* He adds exegetically, *Whither ſhall I flie from thy preſence*, or *Heb. Face?* and the Face of God

* Pſal. 139. 7, 8, 9.

God in Scripture ſignifies the Eſſence of God *; *Thou canſt not ſee my face*, and *my face ſhall not be ſeen*; the effects of his Power, Wiſdom, Providence, are ſeen, which are his Back-parts, but not his face: The effects of his Power and Wiſdom are ſeen in the World, but his Eſſence is inviſible; and this the Pſalmiſt elegantly expreſſeth. Had I Wings endued with as much quickneſs as the firſt Dawnings of the morning light, or the firſt darts of any Sun-beam that ſpreads its ſelf through the Hemiſphere, and paſſes many Miles in as ſhort a ſpace as I can think a Thought, I ſhould find thy preſence in all places before me, and could not flie out of the infinite compaſs of thy Eſſence. * Exod. 33. 20, 23.

2. *He is Eſſentially preſent with all Creatures.* If he be in all places, it follows that he is with all Creatures in thoſe places; as he is in Heaven, ſo he is with all Angels; as he is in Hell, ſo is he with all Devils; as he is in the Earth and Sea, he is with all Creatures inhabiting thoſe Elements: As his Eſſential Preſence was the ground of the firſt Being of things by Creation, ſo it is the ground of the continued Being of things by Conſervation. As his Eſſential Preſence was the Original, ſo it is the ſupport of the exiſtence of all the Creatures. What are all thoſe magnificent expreſſions of his Creative vertue, but Teſtimonies of his Eſſential Preſence at the laying the Foundation of the World *? *When he meaſured the Waters in the hollow of his hand, meted out Heaven with the Span, and comprehended the Duſt of the Earth in a Meaſure, and weighed the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Ballance.* He ſets forth the Power and Majeſty of God in the Creation and Preſervation of things, and every Expreſſion teſtifies his Preſence with them: The Waters that were upon the face of the Earth at firſt, were no more than a drop in the palm of a mans hand, which in every part is touched by his hand. And thus he is equally preſent with the blackeſt Devils, as well as the brighteſt Angels; with the loweſt Duſt, as well as with the moſt ſparkling Sun. He is equally preſent with the Damned and the Bleſſed, as he is an Infinite Being, but not in regard of his Goodneſs and Grace. He is equally preſent with the Good and the Bad, with the ſcoffing *Athenians*, as well as the believing Apoſtles, in regard of his Eſſence, but not in regard of the breathing of his Divine Vertues upon them to make them like himſelf *: *He is not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our Being*: The Apoſtle includes all; he tells them they ſhould ſeek the Lord; the Lord that they were to ſeek, is God eſſentially conſidered: We are indeed to ſeek the Perfections of God, that glitter in his works, but to the end that they ſhould direct us to the ſeeking of God himſelf in his own Nature and Eſſence *: And therefore what follows, *In him we live*, is to be underſtood not of his Power and Goodneſs, Perfections of his Nature, diſtinguiſht according to our manner of conception, from his Eſſence; but of the Eſſential Preſence of God with his Creatures. If he had meant it of his efficacy in preſerving us, it had not been any proof of his nearneſs to us. Who would go about to prove the body or ſubſtance of the Sun to be near us becauſe it doth warm and enlighten us, when our ſenſe evidenceth the diſtance of it? We live in the beams of the Sun, but we cannot be ſaid to live in the Sun, which is ſo far diſtant from us. The Expreſſion ſeems to be more emphatical than to intend any leſs than his Eſſential Preſence: But we live in him not only as the efficient cauſe of our Life, but as the foundation, ſuſtaining our lives and motions, as if he were like Air, diffuſed round about us. And we move in him, as *Auſtin* ſaith, as a Spunge in the Sea, not containing him, but being contained by him: He compaſſeth all, is incompaſs'd by none; he fills all, is comprehended by none. The Creator contains the World, the World contains not the Creator: As the hallow of the hand contains the water, the water in the hollow of the hand contains not the hand; and therefore ſome have choſe to ſay rather, That the World is in God, it lives and moves in him, than that God is in the World: If all things thus live and move in him, then he is preſent with every thing that hath Life, and Motion; and as long as the Devils and Damned have life, and motion, and being, ſo long is he with them; for whatſoever lives and moves, lives and moves in him. * Iſa. 40. 12. * Act. 17. 28. * *Amyrald.* de Trinit.

But now this Eſſential Preſence is

1. *Without any mixture.* I fill Heaven and Earth, not, I am mixed with Heaven and Earth; his Eſſence is not mixed with the Creatures; it remains intire in its ſelf. The Spunge retains the nature of a Spunge, though encompaſs'd by the Sea, and moving

ving in it; and the Sea ſtill retains its own nature. God is moſt ſimple; his Eſſence therefore it is not mixed with any thing. The Light of the Sun is preſent with the air, but not mixed with it, it remains light, and the air remains air; the light of the Sun is diffuſed through all the Hemiſphere, it pierceth all tranſparent bodies, it ſeems to mix it ſelf with all things, yet remains unmixed and undivided; the light remains light, and the air remains air; the air is not light though it be enlightened. Or, take this ſimilitude; When many Candles are lighted up in a Room, the light is all together, yet not mixed with one another; every Candle hath a particular light belonging to it, which may be ſeparated in a moment, by removing one Candle from another; but if they were mixed, they could not be ſeparated, at leaſt ſo eaſily. God is not formally one with the World, or with any Creature in the World by his Preſence in it: Nor can any Creature in the World, no, not the Soul of man, or an Angel, come to be Eſſentially one with God, though God be Eſſentially preſent with it.

2. *The Eſſential Preſence is without any diviſion of himſelf. I fill Heaven and Earth*, not part in Heaven, and part in Earth; I fill one as well as the other: One part of his Eſſence is not in one place, and another part of his Eſſence in another place, he would then be changeable; for that part of his Eſſence which were now in this place, he might alter it to another, and place that part of his Eſſence which were in another place, to this; but he is undivided every where. As his Eternity is one indiviſible point, though in our conception we divide it into paſt, preſent, and to come. So the whole World is as a point to him, in regard of place as before was ſaid; 'tis as a ſmall *Duſt*, and grain of Duſt: 'Tis impoſſible that one part of his Eſſence can be ſeparated from another, for he is not a Body, to have one part ſeparable from another. The light of the Sun cannot be cut into parts, it cannot be ſhut into any place and kept there, 'tis intire in every place; ſhall not God, who gives the light that power, be much more preſent himſelf? whatſoever hath parts is finite, but God is infinite, therefore hath no parts of his Eſſence. Beſides, if there were ſuch a Diviſion of his Being, he would not be the moſt ſimple and uncompounded Being, but would be made up of various parts; he would not be a Spirit for parts are evidences of compoſition; and it could not be ſaid that God is here or there, but only a part of God here, and a part of God there. But *he fills Heaven and Earth*, he is as much a God in the *Earth beneath* as in *Heaven above* *; intirely in all places, not by ſcrapes and fragments of his Eſſence.

* Dent. 4. 39.

3. *This Eſſential Preſence is not by Multiplication.* For that which is infinite cannot multiply it ſelf, or make it ſelf more or greater than it was.

4. *This Eſſential Preſence is not by extenſion or diffuſion.* As a piece of Gold may be beaten out to cover a large compaſs of ground; no, if God ſhould Create Millions of Worlds he would be in them all, not by ſtretching out his Being, but by the Infiniteneſs of his Being; not by a new growth of his Being, but by the ſame Eſſence he had from Eternity: Upon the ſame reaſons mention'd before, his Simplicity and Indiviſibility.

5. *But Totally.* There is no ſpace, not the leaſt, wherein God is not wholly according to his Eſſence, and wherein his whole Subſtance doth not exiſt; not a part of Heaven can be deſign'd wherein the Creator is not wholly; as he is in one part of Heaven, he is in every part of Heaven. Some kind of reſemblance we may have from the water of the Sea, which fills the great ſpace of the World, and is diffuſed through all; yet the Eſſence of Water is in every drop of Water in the Sea, as much as the whole; and the ſame quality of Water, tho it comes ſhort in quantity; and why ſhall we not allow God a nobler way of Preſence without diffuſion, as is in that? Or take this reſemblance, ſince God likens himſelf to *Light* in the Scripture *, *he covereth himſelf with Light*; A Chryſtal Globe hung up in the Air hath Light all about it, all within it, every part is pierced by it, whereever you ſee the Chryſtal you ſee the Light; the Light in one part of the Chryſtal cannot be diſtinguiſht from the Light in the other part; and the whole Eſſence of Light is in every part; and ſhall not God be as much preſent with his Creatures, as one Creature can be with another *? God is totally every where by his own ſimple ſubſtance.

* Pſal. 104. 2. 1 John 1. 5. *God is Light, and in him is no darkneſs at all.*

* Bernard.

Propoſition 4. *God is preſent beyond the World.* He is within and above all pla-

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ces, though places ſhould be infinite in number; as he was before and beyond all Time, ſo he is above and beyond all place; being from Eternity before any real time, he muſt alſo be without as well as within any real ſpace; if God were only confin'd to the World, he would be no more infinite in his Eſſence than the World is in quantity; as a moment cannot be conceived from Eternity, wherein God was not in Being, ſo a ſpace cannot be conceived in the mind of man, wherein God is not preſent; he is not contained in the World nor in the Heavens. * *But will God indeed dwell on the Earth? Behold the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Thee.* *Solomon* wonders that God ſhould appoint a Temple to be erected to him upon the Earth, when he is not contained in the vaſt Circuit of the Heavens; his Eſſence is not ſtraitned in the limits of any Created work, he is not contained in the Heavens, *i. e.* in the manner that he is there; but he is there in his Eſſence, and therefore cannot be contain'd there in his Eſſence. If it ſhould be meant only of his Power and Providence, it would conclude alſo for his Eſſence; if his Power and Providence were infinite, his Eſſence muſt be ſo too; for the infiniteneſs of his Eſſence is the ground of the infiniteneſs of his Power: It can never enter into any thought, that a finite Eſſence can have an infinite Power, and that an infinite Power can be without an infinite Eſſence; it cannot be meant of his Providence, as if *Solomon* ſhould ſay, *the Heaven of Heaven cannot contain thy Providence*; for naming the Heaven of Heavens, that which encircles and bounds the other parts of the World, he could not ſuppoſe a Providence to be exercis'd where there was no object to exerciſe it about; as no Creature is mention'd to be beyond the uttermoſt Heaven, which he calls here the Heaven of Heavens: Beſides to underſtand it of his Providence, doth not conſiſt with *Solomon*'s admiration: He wonders that God, that hath ſo immenſe an Eſſence, ſhould dwell in a Temple made with hands; he could not ſo much wonder at his Providence in thoſe things that immediately concern his Worſhip. *Solomon* plainly aſſerts this of God, That he was ſo far from being bounded within the rich Wall of the Temple, which with ſo much coſt he had fram'd for the Glory of his Name, that the richer Palace of the Heaven of Heavens could not contain him; 'tis true, it could not contain his Power and Wiſdom, becauſe his Wiſdom could contrive other kind of Worlds, and his Power erect them: But doth the meaning of that wiſe King reach no farther than this? Will the Power and Wiſdom of God reſide on the Earth? He was too wiſe to ask ſuch a queſtion, ſince every object that his eyes met with in the World reſolv'd him, That the Wiſdom and Power of God dwelt upon the Earth, and glitter'd in every thing he had Created; and Reaſon would aſſure him, That the Power that had fram'd this World, was able to frame many more: but *Solomon* conſidering the immenſity of Gods Eſſence, wonders that God ſhould order a Houſe to be built for him, as if he wanted Roofs, and Coverings, and Habitation, as bodily Creatures do. Will God indeed dwell in a Temple, who hath an Eſſence ſo immenſe as not to be contain'd in the Heaven of Heavens? 'tis not the Heaven of Heavens that can contain *Him*, his Subſtance. Here he aſſerts the immenſity of his Eſſence, and his Preſence not only in the Heaven, but beyond the Heavens; he that is not contain'd in the Heavens, as a man is in a Chamber, is without, and above, and beyond the Heavens; 'tis not ſaid they do not contain him, but it is impoſſible they ſhould contain him; they *cannot contain him*. 'Tis impoſſible then but that he ſhould be above them; he that is without the compaſs of the World, is not bounded by the limits of the World; as his Power is not limited by the things he hath made, but can Create innumerable Worlds, ſo can his Eſſence be in innumerable ſpaces; for as he hath power enough to make more Worlds, ſo he hath Eſſence enough to fill them, and therefore cannot be confin'd to what he hath already Created; innumerable Worlds cannot be a ſufficient place to contain God, he can only be a ſufficient place to himſelf*; He that was before the World and place, and all things, was to himſelf a World, a Place, and every thing*: He is really out of the World in himſelf, as he was in himſelf before the Creation of the World: As becauſe God was before the Foundation of the World, we conclude his Eternity; ſo becauſe he is without the bounds of the World, we conclude his Immenſity, and from thence his Omnipreſence. The World cannot be ſaid to contain him, ſince it was Created by him; it cannot contain him now, who was contained by nothing before the World was: As there was no place to con-

* 1 King. 8. 27.

* *Peter.*

* *Maccov. loc. communi. cap.* 19. p. 153.

tain him before the World was, there can be no place to contain him ſince the VVorld was.

God might create more Worlds circular and round as this, and thoſe could not be ſo contiguous, but ſome ſpaces would be left between; as take three round Balls, lay them as cloſe as you can to one another, there will be ſome ſpaces between; none would ſay but God would be in theſe ſpaces, as well as in the World he had created, tho there were nothing real and poſitive in thoſe ſpaces: Why ſhould we then exclude God from thoſe imaginary ſpaces without the World? God might alſo create many Worlds, and ſeparate them by diſtances, that they might not touch one another, but be at a great diſtance from one another; and would not God fill them as well as he doth this? if ſo, he muſt alſo fill the ſpaces between them: For if he were in all thoſe worlds, and not in the ſpaces between thoſe Worlds, his Eſſence would be divided; there would be gaps in it, his Eſſence would be out into parts, and the diſtance between every part of his Eſſence would be as great as the ſpace between each World: The Eſſence of God may be conceived then well enough to be in all thoſe infinite ſpaces where he can erect new Worlds.

I ſhall give one place more to prove both theſe Propoſitions, *viz.* That *God is Eſſentially in every part of the World*, and *Eſſentially above ours without the World.*

* Iſa. 66. 1. * *The Heaven is my Throne and the Earth is my Foot-ſtool.* He is Eſſentially in every part of the World; he is in Heaven and Earth at the ſame time; as a Man is upon his Throne and his Foot-ſtool. God deſcribes himſelf in a human ſhape, accommodated to our Capacity; as if he had his Head in Heaven and his Feet on Earth; doth not his Eſſence then fill all intermediate ſpaces between Heaven and Earth? As when the head of a Man is in the upper part of a Room, and his Feet upon the floor, his body fills up the ſpace between the head and his Feet; this is meant of the Eſſence of God, 'tis a Similitude drawn from Kings ſitting upon the Throne, and not their Power and Authority, but the Feet of their perſons are ſupported by the Foot-ſtool; ſo here it is not meant only of the Perfections of God, but the Eſſence of God: Beſides, God ſeems to tax them with an erroneous conceit they had, as tho his Eſſence were in the Temple, and not in any part of the World; therefore God makes an Oppoſition between Heaven and Earth, and the Temple; *Where is the Houſe that you built unto me? and where is the place of my Reſt?* Had he underſtood it only of his Providence, it had not been any thing againſt their miſtake; for they granted his Providence to be not only in the Temple, but in all parts of the World? *Where is the Houſe that you Build to me*; to *Me*, not to my Power or Providence, but think to include *Me* within thoſe Walls.

Again, It ſhews God to be above the Heavens, if the Heavens be his Throne; he ſits upon them, and is above them as Kings are above the Thrones on which they ſit; ſo it cannot be meant of his Providence, becauſe no Creature being without the Sphere of the Heavens, there is nothing of the Power and the Providence of God viſible there; for there is nothing for him to employ his Providence about. For Providence ſuppoſeth a Creature in actual being; It muſt be therefore meant of his Eſſence, which is above the world, and in the world.

And the like proof you may ſee, *Job* 11. 7, 8. *'Tis as high as heaven, what canſt thou do? deeper than Hell, what canſt thou know? the meaſure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea.* Where he intends the unſearchableneſs of Gods wiſdom, but proves it by the infiniteneſs of his Eſſence, *Hebr. He it the height of the Heavens*, he is the top of all the Heavens; ſo that when you have begun at the loweſt part, and traced him through all the Creatures, you will find his Eſſence filling all the Creatures to be at the top of the VVorld, and infinitely beyond it.

5. Fifth Propoſition. *This is the property of God, incommunicable to any Creature.* As no Creature can be eternal and immutable, ſo no Creature can be immenſe, becauſe it cannot be infinite; nothing can be of an infinite nature, and therefore nothing of an immenſe Preſence but God: It cannot be communicated to the human Nature of Chriſt, tho in Union with the Divine; ſome indeed argue, that Chriſt in regard of his humn nature is every where, becauſe he ſits at the right hand of God; and the right hand of God is every where: His ſitting at the right hand of God ſignifies his Exaltation, and cannot with any reaſon be extended to ſuch a kind of arguing; *The Hearts of Kings are in the hand of God*; are the hearts

* Rivet. 110. Pſal. p. 301. Col 2.

of

of Kings every where, becauſe Gods hand is every where? The Souls of the Righteous are in the hand of God, is the Soul therefore of every Righteous man every where in the World? The right hand of God is from Eternity, is the Humanity of Chriſt therefore from Eternity, becauſe it ſits at the right hand of God? The right hand of God made the World, did the Humanity of Chriſt therefore make Heaven and Earth? The Humanity of Chriſt muſt then be confounded with his Divinity; be the ſame with it, not united to it. All Creatures are diſtinct from their Creator, and cannot inherit the Properties Eſſential to his Nature; as *Eternity*, *Immenſity*, *Immutability*, *Omnipreſence*, *Omniſcience*; no Angel, no Soul, no Creature can be in all places at once; before they can be ſo, they muſt be Immenſe, and ſo muſt ceaſe to be Creatures, and commence God; this is impoſſible.

II *Reaſons* to prove Gods Eſſential Preſence.

1*ſt.* Reaſon. *Becauſe he is infinite.* As he is infinite, he is every where; as he is Simple, his whole Eſſence is every where; for in regard of his infiniteneſs, he hath no bounds; in regard of his Simplicity, he hath no parts: And therefore thoſe that deny Gods Omnipreſence, tho they pretend to own him Infinite, muſt really conceive him Finite.

1. *God is Infinite in his Perfections.* None can ſet bounds to terminate the greatneſs and excellency of God *. *His greatneſs is unſearchable*, Sept. οὐκ ἔστι πέρας there is no end, no limitation; what hath no end is infinite; his Power is infinite *, *which doth great things and unſearchable*, no end of thoſe things he is able to do; His Wiſdom infinite *: He underſtands all things paſt, preſent, and to come; what is already made, what is poſſible to be made; his duration infinite *. *The number of his Years cannot be ſearched out.* ἀνεξιχνίαστος To make a finite thing of nothing, is an Argument of an infinite Vertue; Infinite power can only extract ſomething out of the Barren Womb of nothing, but all things were drawn forth by the Word of God, the Heavens and all the Hoſt of them; The Sun, Moon, Stars, the rich embelliſhments of the World appear'd in Being, *at the Breath of his Mouth* *, the Author therefore muſt be infinite: And ſince nothing is the cauſe of God, or of any Perfection in him; ſince he derives not his being, or the leaſt ſpark of his glorious nature from any thing without him, he cannot be limited in any part of his nature by any thing without him; and indeed the infiniteneſs of his power and his other Perfections is aſſerted by the Prophet, when he tells us that *the Nations are as a Drop of a Bucket, or the Duſt of the Ballance, and leſs than nothing and Vanity* *, they are all ſo in regard of his Power, Wiſdom, &c. Conceive what a little thing a grain of Duſt or Sand is to all the Duſt that may be made by the rubbiſh of a Houſe, what a little thing the heap of the rubbiſh of a Houſe is to the vaſt heap of the rubbiſh of a whole City; ſuch a one as *London*; how little that alſo would be to the Duſt of a whole Empire; how inconſiderable that alſo to the Duſt of one quarter of the world, *Europe* or *Aſia* how much leſs that ſtill to the Duſt of the whole World; the whole World is compos'd of an unconceiveable number of Atoms, and the Sea of an unconceivable number of Drops; Now what a little grain of Duſt is in compariſon of the Duſt of the whole world; a Drop of Water from the Sea, to all the Drops remaining in the Sea, That is the whole world to God. Conceive it ſtill leſs, a meer nothing, yet is it all leſs than this, in compariſon of God; there can be nothing more magnificently expreſſive of the infiniteneſs of God to a human conception, than this expreſſion of God himſelf in the Prophet.

* Pſal. 145. 3.
* Job 5. 9.
* Pſal. 147. 5.
* Job 36. 26.
* Pſal. 33. 6.
* Iſa. 40. 15, 17.

In the Perfection of a Creature, ſomething ſtill may be thought greater to be added to it; But God containing all perfections in himſelf formally, if they be meer perfections; and eminently, if they be but perfections in the Creature mixed with imperfection; nothing can be thought greater, and therefore every one of them is infinite,

2. *If his Perfections be infinite, his Eſſence muſt be ſo.* How God can have infinite Perfections, and a finite Eſſence is unconceivable by a Humane or Angelical underſtanding; an infinite Power, an infinite Wiſdom, an infinite Duration, muſt needs ſpeak an infinite Eſſence; ſince the infiniteneſs of his Attributes is grounded upon the infiniteneſs of his Eſſence: To own infinite perfections in a finite Subject, is contradictory. The manner of Acting by his Power, and Knowing by his Wiſdom,

cannot exceed the manner of being by his Eſſence. His Perfections flow from his Eſſence, and the principle muſt be of the ſame rank with what flows from it; and if we conceive his Eſſence to be the cauſe of his perfections; 'tis utterly impoſſible that an infinite effect ſhould ariſe from a finite Cauſe; but indeed his perfections are his Eſſence, for tho we conceive the Eſſence of God as the ſubject, and the Attributes of God as faculties and qualities in that Subject according to our weak model, who cannot conceive of an infinite God without ſome manner of likeneſs to our ſelves; who find Underſtanding, and Will, and Power in us diſtinct from our Subſtance; yet truly and really there is no diſtinction between his Eſſence and Attributes; one is inſeparable from the other; his Power and Wiſdom are his Eſſence; and therefore to maintain God infinite in the one, and finite in the other, is to make a Monſtrous God, and have an unreaſonable notion of the Deity; for there would be the greateſt diſproportion in his nature, ſince there is no greater diſproportion can poſſibly be between one thing and another, than there is between finite and infinite: God muſt not only then be compounded, but have parts of the greateſt diſtance from one another in nature; but God being the moſt Simple Being without the leaſt compoſition, both muſt be equally infinite: If then his Eſſence be not infinite, his Power and Wiſdom cannot be infinite, which is both againſt Scripture and Reaſon,

Again, how ſhould his Eſſence be finite, and his perfections be infinite; ſince nothing out of himſelf gave them either the one or the other?

* *Amyrald* de Trinitat. p. 89.

* Again, either the Eſſence can be infinite, or it cannot; if it cannot, there muſt be ſome cauſe of that impoſſibility; that can be nothing without him; becauſe nothing without him can be as powerful as himſelf, much leſs too powerful for him; nothing within him can be an Enemy to his higheſt perfection; ſince he is neceſſarily what he is, he muſt be neceſſarily the moſt perfect Being, and therefore neceſſarily infinite; ſince to be ſomething infinitely, is a greater perfection than to be ſomething finitely *; if he can be infinite, he is infinite; otherwiſe he could be greater than he is, and ſo more Bleſſed and more perfect than he is, which is impoſſible; for being, the moſt perfect Being, to whom nothing can be added, he muſt needs be infinite.

* *Deus eſt actus purus & nullam habet potentiam paſſivam.*

If therefore God have an infinite Eſſence, he hath an infinite Preſence. An infinite Eſſence cannot be contained in a finite place; as thoſe things which are finite have abounded ſpace, wherein they are; ſo that which is infinite hath an unbounded ſpace; for as finiteneſs ſpeaks limitedneſs; ſo infiniteneſs ſpeaks unboundedneſs; and if we grant to God an infinite duration; there is no difficulty in acknowledging an infinite preſence: Indeed the infiniteneſs of God is a property belonging to him in regard of time and place; he is bounded by no place, and limited to no time.

Again, Infinite Eſſence may as well be every where, as infinite power reach every thing; it may as well be preſent with every Being, as infinite power in its working may be preſent with nothing to bring it into being. Where God works by his power he is preſent in his Eſſence; becauſe his power and his Eſſence cannot be ſeparated; and therefore his power, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, cannot be any where, where his Eſſence is not: His Eſſence cannot be ſever'd from his power, nor his Power from his Eſſence; for the power of God is nothing but God acting, and the wiſdom of God nothing, but God knowing. As the power of God is always, ſo is his Eſſence; as the power of God is every where, ſo is his Eſſence; whatſoever God is, he is alway, and every where: To confine him to a place, is to meaſure his Eſſence; as to confine his actions, is to limit his power; his Eſſence, being no leſs infinite than his power and his Wiſdom, can be no more bounded than his Power and Wiſdom; but they are not ſeparable from his Eſſence, yea they are his Eſſence; if God did not fill the whole World, he would be determin'd to ſome place, and excluded from others; and ſo his ſubſtance would have bounds and limits, and then ſomething might be conceived greater than God; for we may conceive that a Creature may be made by God of ſo vaſt a greatneſs as to fill the whole World; for the power of God is able to make a body that ſhould take up the whole ſpace between Heaven and Earth, and reach to every corner of it; but nothing can be conceived by any Creature greater than God; he exceeds all things, and

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is exceeded by none; God therefore cannot be included in Heaven, nor included in the Earth; cannot be contained in either of them; for if we ſhould imagine them vaſter than they are; yet ſtill they would be finite; and if his Eſſence were contain'd in them, it could be no more infinite than the world which contains it; As Water is not of a larger compaſs than the Veſſel which contains it. If the Eſſence of God were limited either in the Heavens or Earth, it muſt needs be finite, as the Heavens and Earth are; But there is no proportion between finite and infinite; God therefore cannot be contain'd in them: If there were an infinite body, that muſt be every where; certainly then an infinite Spirit muſt be every where: Unleſs we will account him finite, we can render no reaſon why he ſhould not be in one Creature as well as in another; if he be in Heaven, which is his Creature, why can he not be in the earth, which is as well his Creature as the Heavens.

2. Reaſon. *Becauſe of the continual operation of God in the World.* This was one reaſon made the Heathen believe that there was an infinite Spirit in the vaſt body of the World, acting in every thing, and producing thoſe admirable motions which we ſee every where in Nature: The cauſe which acts in the moſt perfect manner, is alſo in the moſt perfect manner preſent with its effects.

God preſerves all, and therefore is in all, The *Apoſtle* thought it a good induction* ; *He is not far from us: For in him we live. For* being as much as *becauſe*, ſhews that from his operation he concluded his real preſence with all: Tis not his vertue is not far from every one of us; but *He*, his ſubſtance, himſelf; for none that acknowledge a God, will deny the abſence of the vertue of God from any part of the World. He works in every thing, every thing lives and works in him; therefore he is preſent with all*, Or rather if things live, they are in God, who gives them life. If things live, God is in them, and gives them life: If things move, God is in them, and gives them motion: If things have any Being, God is in them, and gives them Being; if God withdraws himſelf, they preſently loſe their Being; and therefore ſome have compar'd the Creature to the impreſſion of a Seal upon the Wafer, that cannot be preſerved but by the *Preſence* of the *Seal*. As his preſence was actual with what he Created, ſo his Preſence is actual with what he preſerves, ſince Creation and Preſervation do ſo little differ; if God Creates things by his eſſential Preſence, by the ſame he ſupports them; If his ſubſtance cannot be disjoyn'd from his preſerving Power, his power and wiſdom cannot be ſeparated from his Eſſence; where there are the marks of the one, there is the preſence of the other; for it is by his Eſſence that he is powerful and wiſe; no man can diſtinguiſh the one from the other in a ſimple Being: God doth not preſerve and act things by a vertue diffus'd from him. It may be demanded whether that vertue be diſtinct from God? If it be not, 'tis then the Eſſence of God; if it be diſtinct, 'tis a Creature, and then it may be ask't how that vertue which preſerves other things, is preſerved it ſelf? it muſt be ultimately reſolv'd into the Eſſence of God, or elſe there muſt be a running *in infinitum*: or elſe, *is that vertue of God a ſubſtance or not; Is it endued with underſtanding or not? If it hath underſtanding, how doth it differ from God? If it wants underſtanding, can any imagine that the ſupport of the World, the guidance of all Creatures, the wonders of Nature can be wrought, preſerv'd, manag'd by a vertue that hath nothing of underſtanding in it? If it be not a ſubſtance, it can much leſs be able to produce ſuch excellent Operations, as the preſerving all the kinds of things in the World, and ordering them to perform ſuch excellent ends; this vertue is therefore God himſelf, the infinite Power and Wiſdom of God; and therefore whereſoever the effects of theſe are ſeen in the World God is eſſentially preſent; ſome Creatures indeed act at a diſtance by a vertue diffus'd; but ſuch a manner of acting comes from a limitedneſs of nature, that ſuch a nature cannot be every where preſent, and extend its ſubſtance to all parts; To act by a vertue, ſpeaks the Subject finite, and it is a part of indigence: Kings act in their Kingdoms by Miniſters and Meſſengers, becauſe they cannot act otherwiſe; but God being infinitely perfect, *works all things in all* immediately*; Illumination, Sanctification, Grace, &c.* are the immediate Works of God in the heart, and immediate Agents are preſent with what they do; tis an Argument of the greater Perfection of a Being, to know things immediately, which are done in ſeveral places, than to know them at the ſecond hand by Inſtruments: tis no leſs a

Act. 17. 27.

* *Pont.*

N. B.

* *Amyrald de Trinitat.* p. 106, 107.

1 Cor. 12. 6.

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Perfection to be every where, rather than to be tyed to one place of action; and to act in other places by Inſtruments, for want of a Power to act immediately it ſelf: God indeed acts by means and ſecond cauſes in his providential diſpenſations in the World, but this is not out of any Defect of power to Work all immediately himſelf; but he thereby accommodates his way of acting to the Nature of the Creature, and the Order of things which he hath ſettled in the VVorld; And when he works by means, he acts with thoſe means, in thoſe means; ſuſtains their faculties and vertues in them, concurs with them by his power; ſo that Gods acting by means, doth rather ſtrengthen his Eſſential preſence than weaken it; ſince there is a neceſſary dependance of the Creatures upon the Creator in their Being and Acting; and what they are, they are by the power of God; what they act, they act in the power of God, concurring with them; they have their Motion in him as well as their Being; and where the power of God is, his Eſſence is, becauſe they are inſeparable; and ſo this Omnipreſence ariſeth from the Simplicity of the Nature of God; the more vaſt any thing is, the leſs confin'd. All that will acknowledge God ſo great, as to be able to work all things by his VVill, without an Eſſential preſence, cannot imagine him upon the ſame reaſon, ſo little as to be contain'd in, and bounded by any place.

3. Reaſon, *Becauſe of his Supream Perfection.*

No Perfection is wanting to God; but an unbounded Eſſence is a perfection; a limited one is an Imperfection. Tho it be a Perfection in a man to be Wiſe, yet it is an Imperfection that his Wiſdom cannot rule all the things that concern him; tho it be a perfection to be preſent in a place where his affairs lye, yet is it his Imperfection that he cannot be preſent every where, in the midſt of all his Concerns; if any man could be ſo, it would be univerſally own'd as a prime Perfection in him above others; is that which would be a Perfection in man, to be deny'd to God *? As that which hath life, is more perfect than that which hath not life; and that which hath ſenſe is more perfect than that which hath only life, as the Plants have; and what hath reaſon, is more perfect than that which hath only life and ſenſe, as the Beaſts have; ſo what is every where, is more perfect than that which is bounded in ſome narrow confines; if a power of motion be more excellent than to be Bed-rid; and ſwiftneſs in a Creature, be a more excellent endowment than to be ſlow and Snail like; Then to be every where without motion, is unconceivably a greater excellency than to be every where ſucceſſively by motion. God ſets forth his readineſs to help his People and puniſh his Enemies; or his Omnipreſence, by ſwiftneſs, or *flying upon the Wings of the Wind* *: The Wind is in every part of the Air, where it blows; it cannot be ſaid that it is in this or that Point of the Air where you feell it, ſo as to exclude it from another part of the Air where you are not; it ſeems to poſſeſs all at once.

* *Amyrald* de Trinitat. *p.* 74, 75.

Pſal 18. 10.

If the Divine Eſſence had any bounds of place, it would be imperfect, as well as if it had bounds of time; where any thing hath limitation, it hath ſome defect in Being; and therefore if God were confined or concluded, he would be as good as nothing in regard of infiniteneſs: Whence ſhould this reſtraint ariſe? There is no Power above him to reſtrain him to a certain ſpace; if ſo, then he would not be God, but that power which reſtrained him would be God: Not from his own nature, for the being every where, implies no contradiction to his nature; if his own Nature determin'd him to a certain place, then if he removed from that place, he would act againſt his Nature; to conceive any ſuch thing of God, is highly abſurd. It cannot be thought God ſhould voluntarily impoſe any ſuch reſtraint or confinement upon himſelf; this would be to deny himſelf a perfection he might have; if God have not this perfection, it is either becauſe it is inconſiſtent with his nature; or becauſe he cannot have it; or, becauſe he will not. The former cannot be; for if he hath impreſt upon Air and Light a reſemblance of his excellency, to diffuſe themſelves and fill ſo vaſt a ſpace; Is ſuch an Excellency inconſiſtent with the Creator more than the Creature? Whatſoever perfection the Creature hath, is eminently in God *. *Underſtand, O ye brutiſh among the people; and ye fools when will you be wiſe? He that planted the ear, ſhall he not hear? he that formed the eye, ſhall he not ſee? He that teacheth man knowledge, ſhall not he know?*

* Pſal. 94. 8, 9.

By

By the ſame reaſon he that hath given ſuch a Power to thoſe Creatures, Air and Light, ſhall not he be much more filling all ſpaces of the World? 'Tis ſo clear a Rule, that the *Pſalmiſt* fixes a folly and brutiſhneſs upon thoſe that deny it; 'tis not therefore inconſiſtent with his Nature, it were not then a Perfection, but an Imperfection; but whatſoever is an Excellency in Creatures, cannot in a way of eminency be an Imperfection in God; if it be then a Perfection, and God want it, 'tis becauſe he cannot have it; Where then is his Power? How can he be then the Fountain of his own Being? If he will not, where is his love to his own Nature and Glory? ſince no Creature would deny that to it ſelf which it can have, and is an Excellency to it; God therefore hath not only a Power or fitneſs to be every where, but he is actually every where.

4. Reaſon. *Becauſe of his Immutability.*

If God did not fill all the ſpaces of Heaven and Earth, but only poſſeſs one, yet it muſt be acknowledg'd that God hath a Power to move himſelf to another: It were abſurd to fix God in a part of the Heavens, like a Star in an Orb, without a power of motion to another place. If he be therefore Eſſentially in Heaven, may he not be upon the Earth if he pleaſe, and transfer his Subſtance from one place to another? to ſay he cannot, is to deny him a Perfection which he hath beſtow'd upon his Creatures; the Angels his Meſſengers, are ſometimes in Heaven, ſometimes on the Earth; the Eagles, meaner Creatures, are ſometimes in the Air out of Sight, ſometimes upon the Earth. If he doth move therefore and recede from one place, and ſettle in another, doth he not declare himſelf mutable by changing places? by being where he was not before, and in not being where he was before? He would not fill Heaven and Earth at once, but ſucceſſively; no man can be ſaid to fill a Room, that moves from one part of a Room to another; if therefore any in their imaginations, ſtake God to the Heavens, they render him leſs than his Creatures; If they allow him a power of motion from one place to another, they conceive him changeable; and in either of them they own him no greater than a finite and limited Being; limited to Heaven, if they fix him there; limited to that ſpace to which they imagine him to move.

5. Reaſon. *Becauſe of his Omnipotency.*

The Almightineſs of God is a Notion ſetled in the minds of all, That God can do whatſoever he pleaſes, every thing that is not againſt the purity of his Nature, and doth not imply a contradiction in its ſelf; he can therefore create Millions of Worlds greater than this; and Millions of Heavens greater than this Heaven he hath already Created; If ſo, he is then in unconceivable ſpaces beyond this World, for his Eſſence is not leſs and narrower than his Power; and his Power is not to be thought of a further extent than his Eſſence; he cannot be excluded therefore from thoſe vaſt ſpaces where his Power may fix thoſe Worlds if he pleaſe; if ſo, 'tis no wonder that he ſhould fill this World; and there is no reaſon to exclude God from the narrow ſpace of this World, that is not contain'd in infinite ſpaces beyond the World. God is whereſoever he hath a Power to act, but he hath a power to act every where in the world, every where out of the World; he is therefore every where in the World, every where out of the VVorld. Before this VVorld was made, he had a Power to make it in the ſpace where now it ſtands, Was he not then unlimitedly where the VVorld now is, before the VVorld received a Being by his powerful VVord? VVhy ſhould he not then be in every part of the World now? Can it be thought that God, who was Immenſe before, ſhould, after he had Created the VVorld, contract himſelf to the limits of one of his Creatures, and tie himſelf to a particular place of his own Creation, and be leſs after his Creation than he was before?

This might alſo be proſecuted by an Argument from his *Eternity.* VVhat is eternal in duration, is immenſe in Eſſence; the ſame reaſon which renders him *Eternal,* renders him *Immenſe*; That which proves him to be always, will prove him to be every where.

The third thing is; *Propoſitions for the further clearing this Doctrine from any exceptions.*

1. *This*

1. *This truth is not weakned by the expreſſions in Scripture, where God is ſaid to dwell in Heaven, and in the Temple.*

* Pſal. 2. 4. * Pſal. 113. 5. 1. He is indeed ſaid *to ſit in heaven* *, and to *dwell on high* *; but *he is no where ſaid to dwell only in the Heavens, as confin'd to them.* 'Tis the Court of his Majeſtical preſence, but not the Priſon of his Eſſence. For when we are told, that the * Iſa. 66. 1. *heaven is his Throne*, we are told with the ſame breath, that the *earth is his footſtool* *. He dwells on high in regard of the excellency of his nature; but he is in all places in regard of the diffuſion of his preſence. The Soul is eſſentially in all parts of the body; but it doth not exert the ſame operations in all; the more noble diſcoveries of it are in the Head and Heart: In the Head, where it exerciſeth the chiefeſt ſenſes for the enriching the underſtanding. In the heart, where it vitally reſides, and communicates life and motion to the reſt of the body. It doth not underſtand with the foot or toe, tho it be in all parts of the body it informs. And ſo God may be ſaid to dwell in Heaven, in regard of the more excellent and majeſtick repreſentation of himſelf both to the Creatures that inhabit the place, as Angels and bleſſed Spirits; and alſo in thoſe marks of his greatneſs which he hath planted there, thoſe ſpiritual natures which have a nobler ſtamp of God upon them, and thoſe excellent bodies, as *Sun* and *Stars*, which as ſo many Tapers light us to * Pſal. 19. 1. behold his *glory* *, and aſtoniſh the minds of men when they gaze upon them. 'Tis his Court, where he hath the moſt ſolemn Worſhip from his Creatures, all his Courtiers attending there with a pure love, and glowing zeal. He reigns there in a ſpecial manner, without any oppoſition to his Government; 'tis therefore call'd his * 2 Chron. 3. 27. *holy dwelling place* *: The Earth hath not that title, ſince ſin caſt a ſtain, and a ruining curſe upon it. The Earth is not his Throne, becauſe his government is oppos'd. But Heaven is none of Satans precinct, and the Rule of God is uncontradicted by the Inhabitants of it. 'Tis from thence alſo he hath given the greateſt diſcoveries of himſelf: Thence he ſends the Angels his Meſſengers, his Son upon Redemption, his Spirit for Sanctification. From *Heaven* his gifts drop down upon * James 3 17. our heads, and his grace upon our hearts *. From thence the chiefeſt bleſſings of Earth deſcend. The motions of the heavens fatten the earth; and the heavenly bodies are but ſtewards to the earthly comforts for man by their influence. Heaven is the richeſt, vaſteſt, moſt ſtedfaſt and Majeſtick part of the viſible Creation. 'Tis there were he will at laſt manifeſt himſelf to his people in a full conjunction of grace and glory, and be for ever open to his people in uninterrupted expreſſions of goodneſs, and diſcoveries of his preſence, as a reward of their labour and ſervice. And in theſe reſpects it may peculiarly be call'd his *Throne*. And this doth no more hinder his eſſential preſence in all parts of the earth, than it doth his gracious preſence in all the hearts of his people. God is in heaven in regard of the manifeſtation of his glory: In hell by the expreſſions of his juſtice: In the earth by the diſcoveries of his Wiſdom, Power, Patience and Compaſſion: In his people by the monuments of his grace; and in all in regard of his Subſtance.

2. *He is ſaid alſo to dwell in the Ark and Temple.* 'Tis called *Pſal.* 26. 8. *The habitation of* his *houſe*, and the *place where* his *honour dwells*; and to dwell in *Jeruſalem* as in * Zec. 8. 3. his holy Mountain; *The Mountain of the Lord of Hoſts* *, in regard of publiſhing his Oracles, anſwering their prayers, manifeſting more of his goodneſs to the *Iſraelites*, than to any other Nation in the world, erecting his true Worſhip among them, which was not ſettled in any part of the world beſides; and his worſhip is principally intended in that *Pſalm.* The Ark is the place where his honour dwells; the worſhip of God is called the glory of God, *They changed the glory of God into an image made like to corrup-* * Rom. 1. 23. *tible men* *, *i. e.* they changed the worſhip of God into idolatry; and to that alſo doth the place in *Zechary* refer.

Now becauſe he is ſaid to dwell in heaven, is he eſſentially only there? Is he not as eſſentially in the Temple and Ark, as he is in heaven, ſince there are as high expreſſions of his habitations there, as of his dwelling in heaven? If he dwell only in heaven, how came he to dwell in the Temple? both are aſſerted in Scripture, one as much as the other. If his dwelling in heaven did not hinder his dwelling in the Ark, it could as little hinder the preſence of his eſſence on the earth. To dwell in heaven, and in one part of the earth at the ſame time, is all one as to dwell in all parts of heaven, and all parts of earth. If he were in Heaven, and in the Ark

and

and Temple, it was the ſame eſſence in both, tho not the ſame kind of manifeſtation of himſelf. If by his dwelling in heaven be meant his whole eſſence, why is it not alſo to be meant by his dwelling in the Ark? It was not ſure part of his eſſence that was in heaven, and part of his eſſence that was on earth, his eſſence would then be divided; and can it be imagined, that he would be in Heaven and the Ark at the ſame time, and not in the ſpaces between? Could his eſſence be ſplit into fragments, and a gap made in it, that two diſtant ſpaces ſhould be fill'd by him, and all between be empty of him. So that God's being ſaid to dwell in Heaven, and in the Temple, is ſo far from impairing the truth of this doctrine, that it more confirms and evidences it.

2. *Nor do the Expreſſions of God's coming to us, or departing from us, impair this Doctrine of his Omnipreſence.*

God is ſaid *to hide his face* from his People *; to be *far from the Wicked*; and the Gentiles are ſaid to be *afar off, viz.* From God ||; and upon the manifeſtation of Chriſt *made near*; Theſe muſt not be underſtood of any diſtance or nearneſs of his Eſſence, for that is equally near to all perſons and things; but of ſome other ſpecial way and manifeſtation of his Preſence. Thus God is ſaid to be in believers by Love, as they are in him *; *He that abides in love, abides in God, and God in him:* He that loves is in the thing beloved; and when two love one another, they are in one another; God is in a Righteous man by a ſpecial grace, and *far from* the wicked in regard of ſuch ſpecial Works; and God is ſaid to be in a place by a ſpecial manifeſtation, as when he was in the Buſh *; or manifeſting his Glory upon Mount *Sinai* ||; *The Glory of the Lord abode upon Mount* Sinai: God is ſaid to hide his face, when he withdraws his comforting Preſence, diſturbs the repoſe of our hearts, flaſheth Terror into our Conſciences, when he puts men under the ſmart of the Croſs, as tho he had ordered his Mercy utterly to depart from them; or when he doth withdraw his ſpecial aſſiſting Providence from us in our affairs; ſo he departed from *Saul*, when he withdrew his direction and protection from him in the concerns of his Government *; *The Spirit of the Lord departed from* Saul, *i. e.* the Spirit of Government. God may be far from us in one reſpect, and near to us in another; far from us in regard of Comfort, yet near to us in regard of Support, when his Eſſential preſence continues the ſame; this is a neceſſary conſequent upon the infiniteneſs of God, the other is an act of the Will of God; ſo he was ſaid to forſake Chriſt, in regard of his obſcuring his Glory from his humane Nature, and inflicting his Wrath; tho he was near to him in regard of his Grace, and preſerved him from contracting any ſpot in his Sufferings. We do not ſay the Sun is departed out of the Heavens when it is be-miſted; it remains in the ſame part of the Heavens, paſſes on its courſe, tho its Beams do not reach us by reaſon of the Bar between us and it: The Soul is in every part of the Body, in regard of its Subſtance, and conſtantly in it, tho it doth not act ſo ſpritely and vigorouſly at one time as at another in one and the ſame Member, and diſcover it ſelf ſo ſenſibly in its Operations; ſo all the various effects of God towards the Sons of men, are but divers Operations of one and the ſame Eſſence: He is far from us, or near to us, as he is a Judge or a Benefactor; when he comes to puniſh, it notes not the approach of his Eſſence, but the ſtroak of his Juſtice; when he comes to benefit, 'tis not by a new acceſs of his Eſſence, but an efflux of his Grace; he departs from us when he leaves us to the Frowns of his Juſtice; he comes to us when he encircles us in the Arms of his Mercy; but he was equally preſent with us in both diſpenſations, in regard of his Eſſence: And likewiſe God is ſaid to *come down* *, *And the Lord came down to ſee the City*; when he doth ſome ſignal and wonderful Works which attract the minds of men to the acknowledgment of a Supream Power and Providence in the World, who judg'd God abſent and careleſs before.

* Pſal. 10. 1.
|| Prov. 15. 29.
|| Eph. 2. 17.
* 1 Joh. 4. 15.
* Exod. 3.
|| Exod. 24. 16.
* 1 Sam. 16. 14.
* Gen. 11. 5.

3. *Nor is the Eſſential Preſence of God with all Creatures any diſparagement to him.* Since it was no diſparagement to Create the Heaven and the Earth, 'tis no diſparagement to him to fill them; if he were Eſſentially preſent with them when he created them, 'tis no diſhonour to him to be Eſſentially preſent with them, to ſupport them; if it were his Glory to create them by his Eſſence, when they were nothing; Can it be his diſgrace to be preſent by his Eſſence, ſince they are ſomething, and ſomething good, and very good in his Eye *? God ſaw every thing,

* Gen. 1. 31.

and behold it was very good, or mighty good; all ordered to declare his Goodneſs, Wiſdom, Power, and to make him adorable to man, and therefore took complacency in them: There is a Harmony in all things, a Combination in them for thoſe glorious Ends for which God Created them; and is it a diſgrace for God to be preſent with his own Harmonious compoſition? Is it not a Muſicians Glory to touch with his fingers the Trebble, the leaſt and tendereſt ſtring, as well as the ſtrongeſt and greateſt baſe? Hath not every thing ſome Stamp of Gods own Being upon it, ſince he eminently contains in himſelf the perfections of all his Works? Whatſoever hath Being, hath a Foot-ſtep of God upon it, who is all Being; every thing in the Earth is his Foot-Stool, having a mark of his Foot upon it; all declare the Being of God, becauſe they had their Being from God; and will God account it any diſparagement to him to be preſent with that which confirms his Being, and the glorious Perfections of his nature to his intelligent Creatures? the meaneſt things are not without their Vertues, which may boaſt Gods being the Creator of them; and rank them in the midſt of his Works of Wiſdom as well as Power. Doth God debaſe himſelf to be preſent by his Eſſence, with the things he hath made, more than he doth to know them by his Eſſence? Is not the leaſt thing known by him? How? not by a faculty or act diſtinct from his Eſſence; but by his Eſſence it ſelf: How is any thing diſgraceful to the Eſſential Preſence of God, that is not diſgraceful to his Knowledge by his Eſſence? Beſides, would God make any thing that ſhould be an invincible reaſon to him to part with his own infiniteneſs, by a contraction of his own Eſſence into a leſs compaſs than before? it was Immenſe before, it had no bounds; and would God make a World that he would be aſhamed to be preſent with, and continue it to the diminution and leſſening of himſelf, rather than annihilate it to avoid the diſparagement? This were to impeach the Wiſdom of God, and caſt a blemiſh upon his infinite Underſtanding, that he knows not the conſequences of his Work, or is well contented to be impaired in the immenſity of his own Eſſence by it. No man thinks it a diſhonour to Light, a moſt excellent Creature, to be preſent with a Toad or Serpent; and tho there be an infinite diſproportion between Light, a Creature, and the Father of Lights, the Creator: Yet * God being a Spirit, knows how to be with Bodies as if they were not Bodies. And being jealous of his own Honor, would not, could not do any thing that might impair it.

* *Gaſſend.*

4. *Nor will it follow, That becauſe God is Eſſentially every where, that every thing is God.* God is not every where by any conjunction, compoſition or mixture with any thing on Earth; when Light is in every part of a Chryſtal Globe, and encircles it cloſe on every ſide, do they become one? No, the Chryſtal remains what it is, and the Light retains its own nature: God is not in us as a part of us, but as an efficient and preſerving Cauſe; 'tis not by his Eſſential Preſence, but his efficacious Preſence that he brings any perſon into a likeneſs to his own Nature: God is ſo in his Eſſence with things, as to be diſtinct from them as a Cauſe from the Effect; as a Creator different from the Creature, preſerving their Nature, not communicating his own; his Eſſence touches all, is in conjunction with none; *Finite* and *Infinite* cannot be joyn'd, he is not far from us, therefore near to us; ſo near that we *live* and *move* in him *; Nothing is God becauſe it moves in him, any more than a Fiſh in the Sea, is the Sea, or a part of the Sea, becauſe it moves in it; Doth a man that holds a thing in the hollow of his hand, transform it by that action, and make it like his hand? The Soul and Body are more ſtraitly united, than the Eſſence of God is by his Preſence with any Creature: The Soul is in the Body as a form in matter, and from their Union doth ariſe a man; yet in this near conjunction, both Body and Soul remain diſtinct; the Soul is not the Body, nor the Body the Soul; they both have diſtinct natures and eſſences; the Body can never be changed into a Soul, nor the Soul into a Body; no more can God into the Creature, or the Creature into God. Fire is in heated Iron in every part of it, ſo that it ſeems to be nothing but Fire; yet is not Fire and Iron the ſame thing But ſuch a kind of arguing againſt Gods Omnipreſence, that if God were Eſſentially preſent, every thing would be God; would exclude him from Heaven as well as from Earth. By the ſame reaſon, ſince they acknowledge God eſſentially in Heaven, the Heaven where he is, ſhould be chang'd into the nature of God; and

* Acts 17. 28.

Amyrald de Trinit. *p.* 99. 100.

by

by arguing against his Presence in Earth; upon this ground they run such an inconvenience, that they must own him to be no where, and that which is no where is nothing. Doth the Earth become God, because God is Essentially there, any more than the Heavens, where God is acknowledged by all to be Essentially present?

Again, if where God is Essentially, that must be God, then if they place God in a Point of the Heavens, not only that Point must be God, but all the World; because if that point be God, because God is there, then the point touched by that Point must be God, and so consequently as far as there are any Points touched by one another. We live and move in God, so we live and move in the Air; we are no more God by that, than we are meer Air, because we breath in it, and it enters into all the pores of our body: Nay, where there was a straiter Union of the Divine nature to the Human in our Saviour, yet the Nature of both was distinct, and the Humanity was not chang'd into the Divinity, nor the Divinity into the Humanity.

5. *Nor doth it follow, that because God is every where, therefore a Creature may be worshipt without Idolatry.* Some of the Heathens who acknowledged Gods Omnipresence, abus'd it to the countenancing Idolatry; because God was resident in every thing, they thought every thing might be worshipped; and some have us'd it as an Argument against this Doctrine; the best Doctrines may by mens corruption be drawn out into unreasonable and pernicious conclusions. Have you not met with any, that from the Doctrin of Gods Free Mercy, and our Saviours satisfactory Death, have drawn Poyson to feed their Lusts, and consume their Souls; a Poyson compos'd by their own corruption, and not offer'd by those Truths. The Apostle intimates to us, that some did, or at least were ready to be more lavish in sinning, because God was abundant in Grace * ; *Shall we continue in Sin, that Grace may abound?* When he prevents an Objection that he thought might be made by some: But as to this case; since tho God be present in every thing, yet every thing retains its nature, distinct from the nature of God; therefore it is not to have a Worship due to the excellency of God: As long as any thing remains a Creature, 'tis only to have the respect from us, which is due to it in the rank of Creatures. When a Prince is present with his Guard, or if he should go Arm in Arm with a Peasant, is therefore the Veneration and Honour due to the Prince, to be paid to the peasant, or any of his Guard? Would the presence of the Prince excuse it, or would it not rather aggravate it? He acknowledged such a person equal to me, by giving him my rights, even in my Sight. Tho God dwelt in the temple, would not the *Israelites* have been accounted guilty of Idolatry, had they Worshipped the *Images* of the *Cherubims*, or the *Ark*, or the *Altar*, as objects of Worship, which were erected only as means for his Service? Is there not as much reason to think God was as Essentially present in the Temple, as in Heaven; since the same Expressions are used of the one and the other? The Sanctuary is called the *Glorious high Throne* * ; and he is said to *dwell between the Cherubims* ||, *i. e.* the two Cherubims that were at the two ends of the *Mercy Seat*, appointed by God as the two sides of his Throne in the Sanctuary, *Exod.* 25. 18. Where he was to *dwell*, ver. 8. and meet and *commune with his people*, ver. 22. Could this excuse *Manasseh's* Idolatry in bringing in a Carved Image into the House of God *? Had it been a good Answer to the Charge, God is present here, and therefore every thing may be Worshipped as God? if he be only Essentially in Heaven, would it not be Idolatry to direct a Worship to the Heavens, or any part of it as a due object, because of the presence of God there? Though we look up to the Heavens, where we pray and Worship God, yet Heaven is not the object of Worship, the Soul abstracts God from the Creature.

*Rom. 6. 1, 2, 15. *Shall we Sin, because we are not under the Law but under Grace.*

* Jer. 17. 12. || Psal. 80. 1, 1 Chron. 33. 7

6. *Nor is God defil'd by being present with those Creatures which seems filthy to us.* Nothing is filthy in the Eye of God as his Creature; he could never else have pronounced all good; whatsoever is filthy to us, yet as it is a Creature, it ows it self to the power of God: His Essence is no more defil'd by being present with it, than his power by producing it: No Creature is foul in it self, tho it may seem so to us; Doth not an Infant lye in a Womb of filthiness and rottenness? Yet is not the power of God present with it, in working it *curiously in the lower parts of the Earth*? Are his eyes defil'd by seeing the *Substance* when it is yet imperfect? Or his

his hand defiled by writing every Member in his *Book**? Have not the vileſt and moſt noiſom things, excellent Medicinal Vertues? How are they endued with them? How are thoſe qualities preſerved in them? By any thing without God, or no? Every Artificer looks with pleaſure upon the work he hath wrought with Art and Skill; can his Eſſence be defil'd by being preſent with them, any more than it was in giving them ſuch vertues, and preſerving them in them? God meaſures the Heaven and the Earth with his hand, is his hand defil'd by the evil influences of the Planets, or the Corporeal impurities of the Earth? Nothing can be filthy in the Eye of God but *Sin*, ſince every thing elſe owes its Being to him. What may appear deform'd and unworthy to us, is not ſo to the Creator; he ſees Beauty where we ſee Deformity; finds goodneſs where we behold what is nauſeous to us. All Creatures being the effects of his Power, may be the objects of his preſence; Can any place be more foul than *Hell*, if you take it either for the Hell of the Damned, or for the Grave where there is rottenneſs? yet there he is*. VWhen *Satan* appear'd before God, and God ſpake with him*, Could God contract any impurity by being preſent where that filthy Spirit was, more impure than any corporeal, noyſom, and defiling thing can be? No, God is purity to himſelf in the midſt of noyſomneſs; a Heaven to himſelf in the midſt of Hell: VWho ever heard of a Sun-beam ſtain'd by ſhining upon a Quag-mire, any more than ſweetned by breaking into a Perfum'd Room*? Tho the Light ſhines upon pure and impure things, yet it mixes not its ſelf with either of them; ſo tho God be preſent with Devils and Wicked men yet without any mixture; he is preſent with their Eſſence to ſuſtain it and ſupport it; not in their defection, wherein lies their defilement; and wich is not a Phyſical but a moral evil; Bodily filth can never touch an incorporeal ſubſtance. Spirits are not preſent with us in the ſame manner that one body is preſent with another; bodies can by a touch only, defile bodies; Is the glory of an Angel ſtained by being in a Coal-mine? Or could the *Angel* that came into the Lions Den, to deliver *Daniel*, be any more diſturb'd by the ſtench of the place, than he could be ſcratcht by the Paws, or torn by the Teeth of the Beaſts? Their ſpiritual nature ſecures them againſt any infection, when they are *miniſtring Spirits* to Perſecuted Believers in their naſty Priſons*. The Soul is ſtraitly united with the body, but it is not made white or black, by the whiteneſs or blackneſs of its habitation; is it infected by the corporeal impurities of the Body, while it continually dwells in a Sea of filthy Pollution? If the Body be caſt into a Common ſhore, is the Soul defil'd by it? Can a Diſeaſed body derive a Contagion to the Spirit that animates it? Is it not often the purer by Grace, the more the body is infected by nature; *Hezekiah*'s Spirit was ſcarce ever more fervent with God, than when the *Sore*, which ſome think to be a Plague Sore, was upon him*; How can any Corporeal filth impair the purity of the Divine Eſſence? It may as well be ſaid, that God is not preſent in Battels and *Fights for his People**, becauſe he would not be diſturbed by the noiſe of Canons and claſhing of Swords, as that he is not preſent in the world, becauſe of the ill ſcents: Let us therefore conclude this with the Expreſſion of a Learned man of our own*; *To deny the Omnipreſence of God, becauſe of ill ſcented places, is to Meaſure God rather by the nicety of Senſe, than by the ſagacity of Reaſon.*

*Pſal. 139. 15, 16.

* Pſal. 139. 8.
* Job 1. 7.

* *Shelford* of the Attributes *p.* 170.

* Dan. 6. 22.

* Acts 12. 7.

*Iſa. 38. 3.

Joſhua 23. 10.

* Dr. *More.*

IV. *USE.*

I. *Of Information.*

1. *Chriſt hath a divine nature.* As Eternity and Immutability, two incommunicable properties of the Divine nature, are aſcrib'd to Chriſt; ſo alſo is this of Omnipreſence or Immenſity*. *No man hath aſcended up to Heaven, but he that came Down from Heaven, even the Son of man which is in Heaven.* Not which *was*, but which *is*; He comes from Heaven by incarnation, and remains in Heaven by his Divinity. He was, while he ſpake to *Nicodemus*, locally on Earth, in regard of his humanity; but in Heaven according to his Deity, as well as upon earth in the union of his divine and human nature. He deſcended upon earth, but he left not Heaven; He was in the World before he came in the fleſh*. *He was in the world, and the world was made by him.* He was in the World, as the *light that enlightens every man that comes into the world.* In the World as God, before he was in the world as man. He

John 3. 13.

John 1. 10.

was

was then in the world as man, while he diſcourſed with *Nicodemus*; yet ſo, that he was alſo in heaven as God. No creature but is bounded in place, either circumſcribed as body, or determin'd as Spirit to be in one ſpace, ſo as not to be in another at the ſame time; to leave a place where they were, and poſſeſs a place where they were not. But Chriſt is ſo on earth, that at the ſame time he is in heaven; he is therefore infinite. To be in Heaven and earth at the ſame moment of time, is a property ſolely belonging to the Deity, wherein no creature can be a partner with him. He was in the world before he came to the world, and *the world was made by him* *. His coming was not as the coming of Angels, that leave Heaven, and begin to be on earth, where they were not before; but ſuch a preſence as can be aſcribed only to God, who fills Heaven and Earth. Again, If all things were made by him, then he was preſent with all things which were made: For where there is a preſence of power, there is alſo a preſence of Eſſence; and therefore he is ſtill preſent: For the right and power of Conſervation, follows the power of Creation. And according to this divine nature, he promiſeth his preſence with his Church. * *There am I in the midſt of them.* And ‖ *I am with you alway, even to the end of the world*, i. e. by his Divinity: For he had before told them, that they were not to have him alway with them, *i. e.* according to his Humanity; but in his Divine nature he is preſent with, and walks in the midſt of the golden Candleſticks. If we underſtand it of a preſence *by his* ſpirit in the midſt of the Church, doth it invalidate his Eſſential preſence? No, he is no leſs than the Spirit whom he ſends; and therefore as little confin'd as the Spirit is, who dwells in every believer: And this may alſo be inferr'd from Joh. 10. 30. *My Father and I are one*; not one by *conſent*, tho that be included; but one in power: For he ſpeaks not of their conſent, but of their *joynt power* in keeping his people, Where there is a Unity of Eſſence, there is a Unity of Preſence.

* John. 1. 10.

* Mat. 18. 20. ‖ Mat. 28. 20. * Mat. 26. 11.

2. *Here is a confirmation of the ſpiritual nature of God.* If he were an infinite body, he could not fill Heaven and Earth, but with the excluſion of all creatures. Two bodies cannot be in the ſame ſpace; they may be near one another, but not in any of the ſame points together. A body bounded he hath not, for that would deſtroy his Immenſity; he could not then fill Heaven and Earth, becauſe a body cannot be at one and the ſame time in two different ſpaces; but God doth not fill Heaven at one time, and the Earth at another, but both at the ſame time. Beſides, a limited body cannot be ſaid to fill the whole earth, but one particular ſpace in the earth at a time. A body may fill the earth with its vertue, as the Sun, but not with its ſubſtance. Nothing can be every where with a corporeal weight and maſs; but God being infinite, is not tied to any part of the World, but penetrates all, and equally acts by his infinite power in all.

3. *Here is an argument for Providence.* His *preſence* is mention'd in the Text, in order to his government of the affairs of the world. Is he every where, to be unconcern'd with every thing? Before the World had a being, God was preſent with himſelf; ſince the world hath a being, he is preſent with his Creatures, to exerciſe his Wiſdom in the ordering, as he did his power in the production of them. As the Knowledge of God is not a bare contemplation of a thing, ſo his Preſence is not a bare inſpection into a thing. Were it an idle careleſs Preſence, it were a Preſence to no purpoſe, which cannot be imagin'd of God. Infinite power, Goodneſs, and Wiſdom being every where preſent with his Eſſence, are never without their exerciſe. He never manifeſts any of his perfections, but the manifeſtation is full of ſome indulgence and benefit to his Creatures. It cannot be ſuppoſed God ſhould neglect thoſe things, wherewith he is conſtanly preſent in a way of efficiency and operation. He is not every where, without acting every where. Whereever his Eſſence is, there is a power and vertue worthy of God every where diſpens'd. He governs by his preſence, what he made by his power; and is preſent as an Agent with all his works. His Power and Eſſence are together, to preſerve them while he pleaſes, as his Power and his Eſſence are together to create them when he ſaw good to do it. Every creature hath a ſtamp of God, and his preſence is neceſſary to keep the impreſſion ſtanding upon the creature. As all things are his works, they are the objects of his care; and the wiſdom he employ'd in framing them, will not ſuffer him to be careleſs of them. His preſence with them, engageth him in ho-

Cyril.

honour not to be a negligent Governour. His Immenſity fits him for government; and where there is a fitneſs, there is an exerciſe of government, where there are objects for the exerciſe of it. He is worthy to have the Univerſal rule of the World, he can be preſent in all places of his Empire, there is nothing can be done by any of his ſubjects, but in his ſight. As his *Eternity* renders him King alway, ſo his *Immenſity* renders him King every where. If he were only preſent in heaven, it might occaſion a ſuſpicion that he minded only the things of heaven, and had no concern for things below that vaſt Body; but if he be preſent here, his preſence hath a tendency to the government of thoſe things with which he is preſent. We are all in him as Fiſh in the Sea; and he bears all Creatures in the womb of his Providence, and the Arms of his Goodneſs. 'Tis moſt certain that his preſence with his people is far from being an idle one; for when he promiſes to be with them, he adds ſome ſpecial Cordial, as, *I will be with thee, and bleſs thee.* * *I am with thee, and I will ſtrengthen thee; I will help thee, I will uphold thee* *. Infinite goodneſs will never countenance a negligent preſence.

* Gen. 26. 3. Jer. 15. 20. *Iſa. 41.10,14.

4. *The Omniſcience of God is inferr'd from hence.* If God be preſent every where, he muſt needs know what is done every where. 'Tis for this end he proclaims himſelf a God filling heaven and earth, in the Text. *Can any hide himſelf in ſecret places, that I ſhall not ſee him, ſaith the Lord?* I have heard what the prophets ſay, that propheſie lyes in my Name: If I fill heaven and earth, the moſt ſecret thing cannot be hid from my ſight. An Intelligent Being cannot be every where preſent, and more intimate in every thing, than it can be in it ſelf; but he muſt know what is done without, what is thought within. Nothing can be obſcure to him, who is in every part of the World, in every part of his Creatures. Not a thought can ſtart up but in his ſight, who is preſent in the Souls and minds of every thing. How eaſie is it with him, to whoſe Eſſence the world is but a point, to know and obſerve every thing done in this world, as any of us can know what is done in one point of place where we are preſent? If Light were an underſtanding being, it would behold and know every thing done, where it diffuſeth it ſelf. God is light (as light in a Chryſtal Glaſs, all within it, all without it) and is not ignorant of what is done within and without; no ignorance can be faſtned upon him who hath an Univerſal preſence.

Hence by the way we may take notice of the wonderful Patience of God, who bears with ſo many provocations; not from a Principle of Ignorance, for he bears with Sins that are committed near him, in his ſight, Sins that he ſees, and cannot but ſee.

5. *Hence may be inferr'd the incomprehenſibility of God.* He that fills Heaven and Earth, cannot be contain'd in any thing; he fills the Underſtandings of men, the underſtandings of Angels, but is comprehended by neither; 'tis a raſhneſs to think to find out any bounds of God; there's no meaſuring of an infinite Being, if it were to be meaſur'd it were not infinite; but becauſe it is infinite, it is not to be meaſured. God fits *above the Cherubims* *, above the fulneſs, above the brightneſs, not only of a humane, but a created underſtanding: Nothing is more preſent than God, yet nothing more hid; he is Light, and yet obſcurity *; his Perfections are viſible, yet unſearchable; we know there is an infinite God, but it ſurpaſſeth the compaſs of our minds; we know there is no number ſo great, but another may be added to it; but no man can put it in practice without loſing himſelf in a maze of Figures. What is the reaſon we comprehend not many, nay moſt things in the World? Partly from the Excellency of the object, and partly from the Imperfection of our underſtanding. How can we then comprehend God who exceeds all, and is exceeded by none; contains all, and is contained by none; is above our underſtanding, as well as above our ſenſe? As conſidered in himſelf infinite; as conſider'd in compariſon with our underſtandings, incomprehenſible; who can with his eye meaſure the breadth, length and depth of the Sea, and at one caſt view every dimenſion of the Heavens: God is greater, and *we cannot know him* *; he fills the underſtanding as he fills Heaven and Earth; yet is above the underſtanding as he is above Heaven and Earth: He is known by Faith, enjoy'd by love, but comprehended by no mind. God is not contain'd in that one Syllable, God; by it we apprehend an excellent and unlimited nature; himſelf only underſtands himſelf, and can unveil himſelf.

* Ezek. 10. 1.

* Κρυφιότης *Dyoniſius* called God.

Job 36. 26.

6. *How*

6. *How wonderful is God, and how nothing are Creatures! Aſcribe the Greatneſs to our God* *; He is admirable in the conſideration of his Power, in the extent of his underſtanding, and no leſs wonderful in the immenſity of his Eſſence; That as *Auſtin* ſaith, he is in the World, yet not confin'd to it; he is out of the World, yet not debarr'd from it; he is above the World, yet not elevated by it; he is below the World, yet not depreſt by it; he is above all, equall'd by none; he is in all, not becauſe he needs them, but they ſtand in need of him; this as well as Eternity, makes a vaſt diſproportion between God and the Creature: The Creature is bounded by a little ſpace, and no ſpace is ſo great as to bound the Creator. By this we may take a proſpect of our own nothingneſs; as in the conſideration of Gods Holineſs we are minded of our own impurity; and in the thoughts of his Wiſdom have a view of our own folly; and in the meditation of his power, have a ſenſe of our weakneſs; ſo his Immenſity ſhould make us according to our own nature, appear little in our own eyes. What little, little, little things are we to God? Leſs than an Atome in the Beams of the Sun; poor drops to a God that fills Heaven and earth, and yet dare we to ſtrut againſt him, and daſh our ſelves againſt a Rock? If the conſideration of our ſelves in compariſon with others, be apt to puff us up, the conſideration of our ſelves in compariſon with God, will be ſufficient to pull us down; If we conſider him in the greatneſs of his Eſſence, there is but little more proportion between him and us, than between being and not being, than between a Drop and the Ocean. How ſhould we never think of God without a Holy Admiration of his greatneſs, and a deep ſenſe of our own littleneſs! and as the Angels cover their faces before him; with what awe ſhould creeping Worms come into his Sight! and ſince God fills Heaven and Earth with his Preſence, we ſhould fill Heaven and Earth with his Glory; for this end he Created Angels to praiſe him in Heaven, and men to Worſhip him on Earth, that the Places he fills with his preſence may be filled with his Praiſe: We ſhould be ſwallow'd up in admirations of the Immenſity of God, as men are at the firſt ſight of the Sea, when they behold a maſs of VVaters, without beholding the bounds and immenſe depth of it. * Deut. 33. 3.

7. *How much is this Attribute of God forgotten or contemned!* VVe pretend to believe him to be preſent every where, and yet many live as if he were preſent no where.

1. *Tis commonly forgotten, or not believ'd.* All the extravagancies of men may be traced to the forgetfulneſs of this Attribute, as their Spring. The firſt Speech *Adam* ſpake in Paradice after his fall, teſtified his unbelief of this *; *I heard thy Voice in the Garden, and I hid my ſelf*; his ear underſtood the voice of God, but his mind did not conclude the preſence of God; he thought the Trees could ſhelter him from him, whoſe eye was preſent in the minuteſt parts of the Earth; he that thought after his Sin, that he could hide himſelf from the preſence of his Juſtice, thought before that he could hide himſelf from the preſence of his knowledge; and being deceived in the one, he would try what would be the fruit of the other: In both he forgets, if not denies this Attribute; either corrupt notions of God, or a ſlight belief of what in general men aſſent unto, gives Birth to every Sin. In all Trangreſſions there is ſomething of Atheiſm; either denying the being of G d, or a daſh upon ſome Perfection of God; a not believing his Holineſs to hate it, his Truth that threatens, his Juſtice to puniſh it, and his preſence to obſerve it. Tho God be not afar off in his Eſſence, he is *afar off in the apprehenſion of the Sinner**. There is no wicked man, but if he be an Atheiſt, he is a Heretick; and to gratifie his Luſt, will fancy himſelf to be out of the preſence of his Judge: His reaſon tells him, God is preſent with him, his Luſt preſſeth him to embrace the ſeaſon of a ſenſual Pleaſure; he will forſake his reaſon, and prove a Heretick, that he may be an undiſturbed Sinner; and Sins doubly both in the error of his mind, and the vileneſs of his practice; he will conceit God with thoſe in *Job**, *Vail'd with thick Clouds*, and not able to pierce into the lower World; as if his preſence and Cares were confin'd to Cœleſtial things, and the Earth were too low a Sphere for his Eſſence to reach, at leaſt with any credit. 'Tis forgotten by good men, when they fear too much the deſigns of their Enemies; *Fear not, for I am with thee**. If the preſence of * Gen. 3. 10. * *Drexel Nicet* lib. 2. cap. 10. * Job. 22. 14. * Iſa. 43. 5.

of God be enough to ſtrengthen againſt fear, then the prevailing of fear iſſues from our forgetfulneſs of it.

2. This Attribute of Gods Omnipreſence is *for the moſt part contemn'd.* VVhen men will commit that in the preſence of God which they would be afraid or aſhamed to do before the eye of Man. Men do not practice that Modeſty before God, as before men. He that would reſtrain his tongue out of fear of mens eye, will not reſtrain either tongue or hands out of fear of Gods; VVhat is the language of this, but that God is not preſent with us, or his preſence ought to be of leſs regard with us, and influence upon us, than that of a Creature? * Ask the *Theif* why he dares to ſteal? VVill he not anſwer, *No eye ſees him?* Ask the *Adulterer* why he ſtrips himſelf of his Chaſtity, and invades the Rights of another? VVill he not anſwer, * *No eye ſees me?* He *diſguiſeth himſelf* to be unſeen by man, but ſlights the all-ſeeing eye of God. If only a *man know them, they are in terror of the ſhadow of death*, they are Planet-ſtruck; but ſtand unſhaken at the preſence of God. || Is not this to account God as limited as man, as ignorant, as abſenting, as if God were ſomething leſs than thoſe things which reſtrains us? 'Tis a debaſing God below a Creature. If we can forbear ſin from any awe of the preſence of man, to whom we are equal in regard of Nature; or from the preſence of a very mean man, to whom we are ſuperior in regard of condition; and not forbear it becauſe we are within the ken of God; VVe reſpect him not only as our inferior, but inferior to the meaneſt man or child of his Creation, in whoſe ſight we would not commit the like action. 'Tis to repreſent him as a ſleepy, negligent, or careleſs God; as tho any thing might be concealed from him, *before whom* the leaſt fibres of *the heart* are anatomiz'd and *open*, who ſees as plainly midnight as noon-day ſins. Now this is a high aggravation of ſin: To break a Kings Law in his ſight, is more bold than to violate them behind his back; as it was *Hammon's* offence when he lay upon *Eſthers* bed, to force the Queen before the Kings face. The leaſt iniquity receives a high tincture from this. And no ſin can be little that is an affront in the face of God, and caſting the filth of the Creature before the eyes of his holineſs. As if a Wife ſhould commit Adultery before her Husbands face, or a Slave diſhonour his Maſter, and diſobey his commands in his preſence. And hath it not often been thus with us? Have we not been diſloyal to God in his ſight, before his eyes, thoſe pure eyes that cannot behold iniquity without anger and grief? * *Ye did evil before my eyes. Nathan* chargeth this home upon *David.* * *Thou haſt deſpiſed the Commandment of the Lord to do evil in his ſight.* And *David* in his repentance, reflects upon himſelf for it, * *Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight.* I obſerved not thy preſence, I neglected thee while thy eye was upon me. And this conſideration ſhould ſting our hearts in all our confeſſions of our Crimes. Men will be afraid of the preſence of others, whatſoever they think in their heart. How unworthily do we deal with God, in not giving him ſo much as an eye-ſervice, which we do man?

* *Drexel. Nicet.* lib. 2. cap. 10.

* Job 24. 15.

|| Job 24. 17.

Heb. 4. 13.

* Iſa. 65. 12.

* 2 Sam. 12. 9.

* Pſal. 51. 4.

8. *How terrible ſhould the thoughts of this Attribute be to Sinners!* How fooliſh is it, to imagin any hiding-place from the Incomprehenſible God, who fills and contains all things, and is preſent in every point of the World! When men have ſhut the door, and made all darkneſs within, to meditate or commit a Crime, they cannot in the moſt intricate receſſes be ſheltered from the preſence of God. If they could ſeparate themſelves from their own ſhadows, they could not avoid his company, or be obſcured from his ſight. * Hypocrites cannot diſguiſe their ſentiments from him, he is in the moſt ſecret nook of their hearts. No thought is hid, no luſt is ſecret, but the eye of God beholds this, and that, and the other. He is preſent with our heart when we imagine, with our hands when we act. We may exclude the Sun from peeping into our ſolitudes, but not the eyes of God from beholding our actions. *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and good.* * He lies in the depths of our Souls, and ſees afar off our deſigns before we have conceived them. He is in the greateſt darkneſs, as well as the cleareſt light; in the cloſeſt thought of the mind, as well as the openeſt expreſſions. Nothing can be hid from him, no not in the darkeſt Cells, or thickeſt Walls. *He compaſſeth our path wherever we are,* * and *is acquainted with all our ways.* He is as much preſent with wicked men to obſerve their ſins, as he is to deteſt them. Where he is preſent in his Eſſence, he

Quo fugis Encelade quas cunq; acceſſeris oras, ſub Jove ſemper eris.

* Pſal. 139. 12. *The darkneſs and light are both alike to him.*

* Prov. 15. 3.

* Pſal. 139. 3.

he is preſent in his Attributes: His Holineſs to hate, and his Juſtice to puniſh, if he pleaſe to ſpeak the word. 'Tis ſtrange men ſhould not be mindful of this, when their very ſins themſelves might put them in mind of his preſence. Whence haſt thou the power to act? who preſerves thy being, whereby thou art capable of committing that evil? Is it not his Eſſential preſence that ſuſtains us, and his Arm that ſupports us? And where can any man *flye from his preſence*? Not the vaſt Regions of Heaven could ſhelter a ſinning Angel from his eye: How was *Adam* ferreted out of his hiding-places in Paradiſe? Nor can we find the depths of the Sea a ſufficient covering to us. If we were with *Jonah* cloſeted up in the belly of a Whale; if we had the *wings of the morning*, as quick a motion as the light at the dawning of the day, that doth in an inſtant ſurpriſe and over-power the regions of darkneſs; and could paſs to the *utmoſt parts of the earth* or *hell*, there we ſhould find him, *there his eye would be upon us*, there would his hand lay hold of us, and lead us as a Conqueror triumphing over a captive *. Nay, if we could leap out of the compaſs of heaven and earth, we ſhould find as little reſerves from him. He is without the World in thoſe infinite ſpaces which the mind of man can imagine. In regard of his Immenſity, nothing in being can be diſtant from him, whereſoever it is.

* Pſal. 139. 8, 9, 10.

2d. Uſe is for *Comfort*. That God is preſent every where, is as much a Comfort to a good man, as it is a Terror to a wicked one. He is every where for his people, not only by a neceſſary perfection of his nature, but an immence diffuſion of his goodneſs. He is in all creatures as their preſerver, in the damned as their terror, in his people as their Protector. He fills hell with his ſeverity, heaven with his glory, his people with his grace. He is with his people as light in darkneſs, a fountain in a garden, as Manna in the Ark. God is in the World as a ſpring of preſervation, in the Church as his Cabinet, a ſpring of grace and conſolation. A man is preſent ſometimes in his field, but more delightfully in his garden. A Vineyard, as it hath more of coſt, ſo more of care, and a watchful preſence of the Owner. Iſa. 27. 3. *I the Lord do keep it*, *viz.* his *Vineyard*; *I will water it every moment*: *leſt any hurt it*, *I will keep it night and day*. As there is a preſence of Eſſence, which is *natural*; ſo there is a preſence of Grace, which is *fœderal*; A preſence by Covenant, *I will not leave thee*, *I will be with thee*; this later depends upon the former; for take away the Immenſity of God, and you leave no foundation for his univerſal gracious preſence with his people in all their emergencies, in all their hearts. And therefore where he is preſent in his eſſence, he cannot be abſent in his grace from them that fear him. 'Tis from his filling heaven and earth he proves his knowledg of the deſigns of the falſe prophets; and from the ſame Topick may as well be inferr'd the employment of his power and grace for his people.

1. *The Omnipreſence of God is comfort in all violent temptations*. No fiery dart can be ſo preſent with us, as God is preſent both with that and the marks-man. The moſt raging *Devils* cannot be ſo near us, as God is to us and them. He is preſent with his people to *relieve* them, and preſent with the Devil to *manage* him to his own holy purpoſes: So he was with *Job*; defeating his enemies, and bringing him triumphantly out of thoſe preſſing trials. This preſence is ſuch a terror, that whatſoever the Devil can deſpoil us of, he muſt leave this untoucht. He might ſcratch the *Apoſtle* with a thorn, but he could not rifle him of the preſence of divine *grace*, which God promiſed him. He muſt prevail ſo far as to make God ceaſe to be God, before he can make him to be diſtant from us: and while this cannot be, the Devils and men can no more hinder the emanations of God to the Soul, than a Child can cut off the Rays of the Sun from imbelliſhing the Earth; 'tis no mean ſupport for a good man, at any time buffeted by a Meſſenger of *Satan*, to think God ſtands near him and beholds how ill he is us'd. It would be a ſatisfaction to a Kings favourite in the midſt of the Violence ſome Enemies might uſe to him upon a Surpriſe, to underſtand that the King who loves him, ſtands behind a Curtain, and through a hole ſees the injuries he ſuffers; and were the Devil, as conſidering as he is malicious, he could not but be in great fear at Gods being in the Generation of the Righteous, as his Serpentine Seed is*: *There were they in great fear*, *for God is in the generation of the Righteous*.

2 Cor. 12. 7, 9

Prov. 3. 6.

2. The Omnipreſence of God is a *comfort in ſharp afflictions.* Good men have a Comfort in this Preſence in their naſty Priſons, oppreſſing Tribunals; in the overflowing *Waters* or ſcorching *Flames*, *he is ſtill with them* *; and many times by his Preſence keeps the *Buſh from Conſuming*, when it ſeems to be all in a Flame: In afflictions God ſhews himſelf moſt preſent, when Friends are moſt abſent; *When my Father and Mother forſake me, then the Lord ſhall take me up* *, then God will ſtoop and gather me into his Protection; *Hebr. ſhall gather me:* alluding to thoſe Tribes that were to bring up the Rear in the *Iſraelites* March, to take care that none were left behind, and expos'd to Famine or wild Beaſts, by reaſon of ſome Diſeaſe that diſenabled them to keep pace with their Brethren; He that is the Sanctuary of his People in all Calamities, is more preſent with them to ſupport them, than their Adverſaries can be preſent with them to afflict them*, *A preſent help in the time of Trouble*; He is preſent with all things for this end; tho' his Preſence be a neceſſary Preſence, in regard of the Immenſity of his Nature; yet the end of this Preſence, in regard that it is for the good of his People, is a voluntary Preſence. 'Tis for the good of man he is preſent in the lower World, and principally for the good of his People, for whoſe ſake he keeps up the World *; *His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in the behalf of them whoſe heart is perfect towards him.* If he doth not deliver good men from Afflictions, he will be ſo preſent as to manage them in them, as that his Glory ſhall iſſue from them, and their Grace be brightned by them*.

* Iſa. 43. 2.

*Pſal. 27. 10.

* Pſal. 46. 2.

2 Chron. 16. 9.

*Chryſoſtome.

What a man was *Paul* when he was lodg'd in a Priſon, or dragged to the Courts of Judicature, when he was torn with Rods, or laden with Chains! then did he ſhew the greateſt Miracles, made the Judg Tremble upon the Bench, and brake the Heart, tho not the Priſon, of the Jaylor; ſo powerful is the Preſence of God in the preſſures of his People. This Preſence outweighs all other Comforts, and is more valuable to a Chriſtian than Barns of *Corn*, or *Cellars* of *Wine* can be to a Covetous man *: It was this preſence was *Davids* Cordial in the mutinying of his Soldiers*. What a *Comfort* is this in Exile, or a forced deſertion of our Habitations! Good men may be Baniſh'd from their Country, but never from the Preſence of their Protector; Ye cannot ſay of any corner of the Earth, or of any Dungeon in a Priſon, God is not here; if you were caſt out of your Country 1000 Miles off, you are not out of Gods Precinct; his Arm is there to cheriſh the good as well as to drag out the wicked; 'tis the ſame God, the ſame Preſence in every Country, as well as the ſame Sun, Moon and Stars; and were not God every where, yet he could not be meaner than his Creature, the Sun in the Firmament, which viſits every part of the habitable World in twenty four hours.

* Pſal. 4. 7.

*1 Sam. 30. 6.

2. The Omnipotence of God is *a Comfort in all Duties of Worſhip.* He is preſent to obſerve, and preſent to accept our Petitions, and anſwer our Suits. Good men have not only the Eſſential Preſence, which is common to all, but his gracious preſence; not only the preſence that flows from his nature, but that which flows from his Promiſe; his Eſſential Preſence makes no difference between this and that man in regard of Spirituals, without this in conjunction with it; his nature is the cauſe of the Preſence of his Eſſence; his Will engag'd by his Truth, is the cauſe of the Preſence of his Grace. He promis'd to meet the *Iſraelites* in the place where he ſhould ſet his name, and in all places where he doth Record it *. *In all places where I Record my Name, I will come unto thee, and I will Bleſs thee*; in every place where I ſhall manifeſt the ſpecial Preſence of my Divinity. In all places, hands may be lifted up, without doubting of his ability to hear; he dwells in the *contrite Hearts*, wherever it is moſt in the exerciſe of contrition; which is uſually in times of ſpecial Worſhip*, and that to revive and refreſh them. Habitation notes a ſpecial Preſence; tho' he dwell in the higheſt Heavens in the ſparklings of his Glory, he dwells alſo in the loweſt Hearts in the beams of his Grace; as none can expel him from his Dwelling in Heaven; ſo none can reject him from his reſidence in the heart. The *Tabernacle* had his *peculiar Preſence* fixed to it*; his Soul ſhould not abhor them as they are waſhed by Chriſt, tho' they are loathſom by Sin: In a greater diſpenſation there cannot be a leſs Preſence, ſince the Church under the New Teſtament, is called the Temple of the Lord, wherein he will both *dwell and walk** ; Or, *I will indwell in them*; as if he ſhould ſay, I will dwell

* Exod. 20. 4.

*Iſa. 57. 15.

*Levit. 26. 11.

* 2 Cor. 6. 6.

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in and in them; I will dwell in them by Grace, and walk in them by exciting their Graces; he will be more intimate with them than their own Souls, and converſe with them as the Living God, *i. e.* as a God that hath Life in himſelf, and Life to convey to them in their Converſe with him; and ſhew his Spiritual Glory among them in a greater meaſure than in the Temple; ſince that was but a heap of Stones, and the figure of the Chriſtian Church, the myſtical Body of his Son. His preſence is not leſs in the Subſtance than it was in the Shadow; this Preſence of God in his Ordinances, is the Glory of a Church; as the Preſence of a King is the Glory of a Court; the Defence of it too, as a *Wall of Fire* *; alluding to the Fire Travellers in a Wilderneſs made to fright away wild Beaſts. 'Tis not the meanneſs of the place of Worſhip can exclude him; the ſecond Temple was not ſo magnificent as the firſt of *Solomon's* Erecting; and the Jews ſeem to deſpond of ſo glorious a Preſence of God in the ſecond, as they had in the firſt; becauſe they thought it not ſo good for the entertainment of him that inhabits Eternity; but God comforts them againſt this conceit again and again *; *Be ſtrong, Be ſtrong, Be ſtrong, I am with you*; the meanneſs of the place ſhall not hinder the grandeur of my Preſence; no matter what the Room is, ſo it be the Preſence-Chamber of the King, wherein he will favour our Suits; he can every where ſlide into our Souls with a perpetual ſweetneſs, ſince he is every where, and ſo intimate with every one that fears him: If we ſhould ſee God on Earth in his amiableneſs, as *Moſes* did, ſhould we not be encouraged by his Preſence, to preſent our Requeſts to him, to *Eccho* out our Praiſes of him? and have we not as great a ground now to do it, ſince he is as really preſent with us, as if he were viſible to us? he is in the ſame room with us, as near to us as our Souls to our Bodies; not a word but he hears, not a motion but he ſees, not a breath but he perceives; he is through all; he is in all.

* Zech. 2. 5.

* Hag. 2. 3, 4.

4. The Omnipreſence of God, is a *comfort in all ſpecial Services.* God never puts any upon a hard taſk, but he makes Promiſes to encourage them and aſſiſt them; and the matter of the Promiſe is that of his Preſence; ſo he did aſſure the Prophets of Old when he ſet them difficult taſks; and ſtrengthned *Moſes* againſt the Face of *Pharaoh*, by aſſuring him *he would be with his Mouth* *; and when Chriſt put his *Apoſtles* upon a Conteſt with the whole World, to Preach a Goſpel that would be Fooliſhneſs to the *Greeks*, and a ſtumbling Block to the *Jews*; he gives them a Cordial only compos'd of his Preſence *, *I will be with you*; 'tis this preſence ſcatters by its Light the darkneſs of our Spirits; 'Tis this that is the cauſe of what is done for his Glory in the World; 'tis this that mingles its ſelf with all that is done for his Honour; 'tis this from whence ſprings all the aſſiſtance of his Creatures, markt out for ſpecial propoſes.

* Exod. 4 12.

* Matth. 28. 20.

5. *This Preſence is not without the ſpecial Preſence of all his Attributes.* Where his Eſſence is, his Perfections are; becauſe they are one with his Eſſence; yea, they are his Eſſence, tho' they have their ſeveral degrees of manifeſtation. As in the Covenant, he makes over himſelf as our God, not a part of himſelf, but his whole Deity; ſo in promiſing of his Preſence, he means not a part of it but the whole, the Preſence of all the Excellencies of his nature to be manifeſted for our good. 'Tis not a piece of God is here, and another parcel there; but God in his whole Eſſence and Perfections; in his Wiſdom to guide us, his Power to protect and ſupport us, his Mercy to pity us, his Fulneſs to refreſh us, and his Goodneſs to relieve us: He is ready to ſparkle out in this or that Perfection, as the neceſſities of his People require, and his own Wiſdom directs for his own Honour: So that being not far from us in any excellency of his nature, we can quickly have recourſe to him upon any emergency; ſo that if we are miſerable, we have the preſence of his Goodneſs; if we want direction, we have the preſence of his Wiſdom; if we are weak, we have the preſence of his power; and ſhould we not rejoyce in it, as a man doth in the Preſence of a powerful, Wealthy and Compaſſionate Friend?

3 USE of *Exhortation.*

1. *Let us be much in the actual Thoughts of his Truth.* How ſhould we enrich our underſtandings with the knowledge of the Excellency of God, whereof this is none of the leaſt; nor hath leſs of Honey in its Bowels, tho' it be more Terrible

to the Wicked than the Preſence of a Lyon; 'tis this that makes all other excellencies of the Divine Nature ſweet: What would Grace, Wiſdom, Power ſignifie at a diſtance from us? Let us frame in our minds a ſtrong *Idea* of it; 'tis this makes ſo great a difference between the actions of one man and another; one maintains actual thoughts of it, another doth not; tho' all believe it as a Perfection pertaining to the infiniteneſs of his Eſſence. *David*, or rather a greater than *David*, had God *always before him*; there was no time, no occaſion wherein he did not ſtir up ſome lively thoughts of him*. Let us have right notions of it; imagine not God as a great King, ſitting only in his Majeſty in Heaven; acting all by his Servants and Miniſters. This, ſaith *one*, * is a Childiſh and unworthy conceit of God, and may in time bring ſuch a conceiver by degrees to deny his Providence; the denyal of this Perfection is an Ax at the Root of Religion; if it be not deeply imprinted in the mind, perſonal Religion grows faint and feeble; who would fear that God that is not imagin'd to be a Witneſs of his actions? Who would worſhip a God at a diſtance both from the Worſhip and Worſhipper*? Let us believe this Truth, but not with an idle Faith, as if we did not believe it; Let us know, that as whereſoever the Fiſh moves, it is in the Water; whereſoever the Bird moves, it is in the Air; ſo whereſoever we move, we are in God: as there is not a moment but we are under his Mercy; ſo there is not a moment that we are out of his Preſence: Let us therefore look upon nothing, without thinking who ſtands by, without reflecting upon him in whom it Lives, Moves, and hath its Being. When you view a man, you fix your eyes upon his Body, but your mind upon that inviſible part that acts every member by life and motion, and makes them fit for your converſe. Let us not bound our thoughts to the Creatures we ſee, but pierce through the Creature to that boundleſs God we do not ſee; we have continual remembrancers of his Preſence, the Light whereby we ſee, and the Air whereby we live, give us perpetual notices of it, and ſome weak reſemblance; why ſhould we forget it? yea, what a ſhame is our unmindfulneſs of it, when every caſt of our Eye, every motion of our Lungs, jogs us to remember it? Light is in every part of the Air, in every part of the World, yet not mixt with any, both remain intire in their own ſubſtance. Let us not be worſe than ſome of the Heathens, who preſſed this notion upon themſelves for the ſpiriting their actions with Vertue, *That all places were full of God*: This was the means *Baſil* uſed to preſcribe, upon a Queſtion was aſkt him, How ſhall we do to be ſerious? *Mind Gods Preſence.* How ſhall we avoid diſtractions in Service? *Think of Gods Preſence.* How ſhall we reſiſt Temptations? Oppoſe to them the Preſence of God.

* Pſal. 16. 8.

* *Muſculus.*

* *Drexel.*

Omnia Diis plena.

1. *This will be a Shield againſt all Temptations.* God is preſent, is enough to blunt the Weapons of Hell; this will ſecure us from a ready complyance with any baſe and vile attractives, and curb that head-ſtrong Principle in our nature, that would joyn hands with them; the Thoughts of this would, like the powerful Preſence of God with the *Iſraelites*, take off the Wheels from the Chariots of our ſenſitive Appetites, and make them perhaps, more ſlower, at leaſt towards a Temptation. How did *Peter* fling off the Temptation which had worſted him, upon a look from Chriſt? the actuated faith of this would ſtifle the Darts of Satan; and fire us with an anger againſt his ſolicitations, as ſtrong as the Fire that inflames the Darts. Moſes *his Sight of him that was inviſible*, ſtrengthned him againſt the coſtly Pleaſures and Luxuries of a Princes Court*: We are utterly ſenſeleſs of a Deity, if we are not moved with this *Item* from our Conſciences, *God is preſent.* Had our firſt Parents actually conſider'd the nearneſs of God to them, when they were Tempted to Eat of the Forbidden Fruit, they had not probably ſo eaſily been overcome by the Temptation: What Soldier would be ſo baſe as to revolt under the Eye of a tender and obliging General? Or what man ſo negligent of himſelf, as to Rob a Houſe in the Sight of a Judg? Let us conſider, That God is as near to obſerve us, as the Devil to ſolicite us, yea nearer; the Devil ſtands by us, but God is in us, we may have a Thought the Devil knows not, but not a Thought but God is actually preſent with, as our Souls are with the Thoughts they think; nor can any Creature attract our heart, if our minds were fixed on that inviſible Preſence that contributes to that exellency, and ſuſtains it, and conſidered that no Creature could be ſo preſent with us as the Creator is.

* Heb. 11. 27.

2. *It*

2. *It will be a Spur to Holy Actions.* What man would do an unworthy action, or ſpeak an unhandſom Word in the Preſence of his Prince? the Eye of the General inflames the Spirit of a Soldier. Why did *David keep Gods Teſtimonies* *? because he conſider'd that *all his ways were before him*; becauſe he was perſwaded his ways were preſent with God, Gods Precepts ſhould be preſent with him. The ſame was the cauſe of *Jobs* Integrity * *Doth he not ſee my ways?* to have God in our Eye is the way to be ſincere *; *walk before me* as in my Sight, *and be thou perfect.* Communion with God conſiſts chiefly in an ordering our Ways as in the Preſence of him that is Inviſible. This would make us ſpiritual, rais'd and watchful in all our Paſſions, if we conſider'd that God is preſent with us in our Shops, in our Chambers, in our Walks, and in our Meetings, as preſent with us as with the Angels in Heaven; who tho' they have a Preſence of Glory above us: yet have not a greater meaſure of his Eſſential Preſence than we have: What an awe had *Jacob* upon him when he conſider'd God was preſent in *Bethel* *! If God ſhould appear viſibly to us when we were alone, ſhould we not be reverent and ſerious before him? God is every where about us, he doth encompaſs us with his Preſence; ſhould not Gods ſeeing, have the ſame influence upon us, as our ſeeing God? He is not more eſſentially preſent if he ſhould ſo manifeſt himſelf to us, than when he doth not; Who would appear beſmear'd in the preſence of a great perſon? or not be aſham'd to be found in his Chamber in a naſty poſture, by ſome viſitant? Would not a man bluſh to be catched about ſome mean action, tho' it were not an immoral Crime? If this Truth were impreſt upon our Spirits, we ſhould more bluſh to have our Souls daub'd with ſome loathſom Luſt, ſwarms of Sin, like *Egyptian* Lice and Frogs, creeping about our Heart in his Sight. If the moſt ſenſual man be aſham'd to do a diſhoneſt action in the ſight of a grave and holy man, one of great reputation for Wiſdom and Integrity; how much more ſhould we lift up our ſelves in the ways of God, who is Infinite and Immenſe, is every where, and infinitely ſuperior to man, and more to be regarded! We could not ſeriouſly think of his Preſence, but there would paſs ſome entercourſe between us; we ſhould be putting up ſome Petition upon the ſenſe of our Indigence; or ſending up our Praiſes to him upon the ſenſe of his Bounty. The actual thoughts of the Preſence of God is the Life and Spirit of all Religion; we could not have ſluggiſh Spirits, and a careleſs watch, if we conſider'd that his Eye is upon us all the day,

3. *It will quell Diſtractions in Worſhip.* The actual thoughts of this would eſtabliſh our thoughts; and pull them back when they begin to rove; The mind could not boldly give God the ſlip, if it had lively thoughts of it; the conſideration of this would blow off all the Froth that lies on the top of our Spirits. An eye taken up with the preſence of one object, is not at leiſure to be fill'd with another: He that looks intently upon the Sun, ſhall have nothing for a while but the Sun in his Eye. Oppoſe to every intruding Thought the *Idea* of the Divine Omnipreſence, and put it to ſilence by the awe of his Majeſty. When the Maſter is preſent, Scholars mind their Books, keep their Places, and run not over the Forms to play with one another; The Maſters Eye keeps an idle Servant to his Work, that otherwiſe would be gazing at every Straw, and prating to every Paſſenger. How ſoon would the remenbrance of this, daſh all extravagant fancies out of Countenance, juſt as the News of the approach of a Prince would make the Courtiers buſtle up themſelves, huddle up their vain ſports, and prepare themſelves for a Reverent Behaviour in his ſight. We ſhould not dare to give God a piece of our heart, when we apprehend him preſent with the whole; we ſhould not dare to mock one that we knew were more inwards with us than we are with our ſelves, and that beheld every motion of our mind, as well as action of our body.

2. *Let us endeavour for the more ſpecial and influential Preſence of God.* Let the Eſſential Preſence of God be the ground of our Awe, and his gracious influential Preſence the Object of our Deſire. The *Heathen* thought themſelves ſecure if they had their little petty Houſhold-Gods with them in their Journeys; ſuch ſeem to be the Images *Rachel* ſtole from her Father * to accompany her Travel with their Bleſſings; ſhe might not at that time have caſt off all reſpect to thoſe Idols, in the acknowledgment of which ſhe had been Educated from her Infancy; and they ſeem to be kept by her, till God called *Jacob* to *Bethel*, after the Rape of *Dinah**, when

*Pſal. 119. 168.

* Job 31. 4. * Gen. 17. 1.

* Gen. 28. 16, 17.

* Gen. 31. 19.

* Gen. 35. 4.

when *Jacob* called for the ſtrange Gods, and hid them under the Oak. The gracious Preſence of God we ſhould look after in our actions; as Travellers that have a Charge of Money or Jewels, deſire to keep themſelves in Company that may protect them from High-way men that would rifle them. Since we have the concerns of the Eternal Happineſs of our Souls upon our hands, we ſhould endeavour to have Gods Merciful and Powerful Preſence with us in all our ways *; *In all thy ways acknowledg him, and he ſhall direct thy Paths*; acknowledg him before any action, by imploring; acknowledg him after, by rendring him the Glory; acknowledg his Preſence before Worſhip, in Worſhip, after Worſhip: 'Tis this Preſence makes a kind of Heaven upon Earth, cauſeth affliction to put off the nature of miſery. How much will the Preſence of the Sun out-ſhine the Stars of leſſer Comforts, and fully anſwer the want of them! The Ark of God going before us, can only make all things ſucceſsful: It was this led the *Iſraelites* over *Jordan*, and ſetled them in *Canaan*. Without this we ſignifie nothing, tho' we live without this, we cannot be diſtinguiſht for ever from *Devils*; his Eſſential Preſence they have, and if we have no more we ſhall be no better. 'Tis the enlivening, fructifying preſence of the Sun, that revives the languiſhing Earth; and this only can repair our ruin'd Soul. Let it be therefore our deſire, That as he fills Heaven and Earth by his Eſſence, he may fill our Underſtandings and Wills by his Grace; that we may have another kind of Preſence with us, than Animals have in their brutiſh ſtate, or Devils in their Chains: His Eſſential Preſence maintains our Beings, but his gracious Preſence confers and continues a Happineſs.

* Pſal. 14. 5.

A DISCOURSE UPON God's Knowledg.

Psal. 147. 5.

Great is our Lord, and of great Power: his Understanding is Infinite.

THIS uncertain who was the *Author* of this *Psalm*, and when it was Penn'd; some think after the return from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity: 'Tis a Psalm of Praiſe, and is made up of matter of Praiſe from the beginning to the end; Gods benefits to the Church, his Providence over his Creatures; the Eſſential excellency of his Nature.

The Pſalmiſt doubles his Exhortation to Praiſe God, *v.* 1. *Praiſe ye the Lord, ſing Praiſe to our God*; to praiſe him from his Dominion as *Lord*; from his Grace and Mercy as *our God*; from the Excellency of the Duty it ſelf, *'tis good, 'tis comely*: ſome read it *comely*, ſome *lovely* or *deſirable*, from the various derivation of the Word.

Nothing doth ſo much delight a gracious Soul, as an opportunity of Celebrating the Perfections and Goodneſs of the Creator.

The higheſt Duties a Creature can render to the Creator are pleaſant and delightful in themſelves, *'tis comely.* Praiſe is a Duty that affects the whole Soul.

The Praiſe of God is a decent thing; the Excellency of Gods nature deſerves it, and the Benefits of Gods grace requires it.

'Tis comely when done as it ought to be, with the Heart as well as with the Voice: a Sinner Sings ill tho' his Voice be good; the Soul in it is to be elevated above Earthly things.

The *firſt* matter of Praiſe, is Gods erecting and preſerving his Church, v. 2. *The Lord doth build up* Jeruſalem, *he gathers together the out-caſts of* Iſrael: The Walls of demoliſh'd *Jeruſalem* are now re-edified; God hath brought back the Captivity of *Jacob*, and reduced his People from their *Babyloniſh* Exile, and thoſe that were diſperſt into ſtrange Regions, he hath reſtor'd to their Habitations. Or it may be Prophetick of the calling of the Gentiles, and the gathering the out-caſts of the Spiritual *Iſrael*, that were before as without God in the World, and ſtrangers to the Covenant of Promiſe. Let God be praiſed, but eſpecially for Building up his Church, and gathering the *Gentiles*, before counted as *out-caſts* *; he gathers them in this World to the Faith, and hereafter to Glory.

* Iſa. 11. 12.

Obſ. 1. From the *two firſt Verſes* obſerve.

1. *All People are under Gods Care: but he has a particular regard to his Church.* This is the Signet on his hand, as a Bracelet upon his arm; this is his Garden which he delights to dreſs; if he prunes it, it is to purge it; if he Digs about his Vine, and wounds the Branches, 'tis to make it more Beautiful with new Cluſters, and reſtore it to a fruitful Vigour.

2. *All great deliverances are to be aſcrib'd to God, as the principal Author, whoſoever*

ver are the Inſtruments. The Lord doth build up Jeruſalem, *he gathers together the out-caſts of* Iſrael. This great deliverance from *Babylon*, is not to be aſcrib'd to *Cyrus* or *Darius*, or the reſt of our favourers; 'tis the Lord that doth it; we had his Promiſe for it, we have now his Performance. Let us not aſcribe that which is the effect of his Truth, only to the good Will of men; 'tis Gods act, not by Might, nor by Power, nor by Weapons of War, or ſtrength of Horſes, but by the Spirit of the Lord. He ſent Prophets to Comfort us while we were exiles; and now he hath ſtretched out his own Arm to work our deliverance, according to his Word; blind man looks ſo much upon Inſtruments, that he hardly takes notice of God, either in Afflictions or Mercies, and this is the cauſe that robs God of ſo much Prayer and Praiſe in the World.

Verſe 3. *He heals the broken in heart, and binds up their Wounds.* He hath now reſtored thoſe who had no hope but in his Word; he hath dealt with them as a tender and skilful Chirurgeon; he hath applyed his curing Plaiſters, and dropped in his Soveraign Balſams; he hath now furniſht our fainting hearts with refreſhing Cordials, and comforted our Wounds with ſtrengthning Ligatures.

How gracious is God, that reſtores Liberty to the Captives, and *Righteouſneſs* to the Penitent? mans miſery is the fitteſt opportunity for God to make his Mercy illuſtrious in it ſelf, and moſt welcome to the Patient.

He proceeds *verſe* 4. Wonder not that God calls together the out-caſts, and ſingles them out from every corner, for a return; why can he not do this, as well as
Ver. 4. *tell the number of the Stars, and call them all by their Names**?

There are none of his People ſo deſpicable in the eye of man, but they are known and regarded by God; tho' they are clouded in the World, yet they are the Stars of the World; and ſhall God number the inanimate Stars in the Heavens, and make no account of his living Stars on the Earth? no, wherever they are diſperſed, he will not forget them, however they are afflicted, he will not deſpiſe them; the Stars are ſo numerous, that they are innumerable by man; ſome are viſible and known by men, others lie more hid and undiſcovered in a confuſed Light, as thoſe in the *Milky-way*, man cannot ſee one of them diſtinctly.

God knows all his People. As he can do what is above the power of man to perform, ſo he underſtands what is above the skill of man to diſcover; ſhall man meaſure God by his ſcantineſs? Proud man muſt not equal himſelf to God, nor cut God as ſhort as his own Line.

He tells the number of the Stars, and calls them all by their Names. He hath them all in his Liſt; as Generals the Names of their Soldiers in their Muſter-Roll, for they are his *Hoſt*, which be Marſhals in the Heavens, as *Iſa.* 40. 26. where you have the like Expreſſion; he knows them more diſtinctly than man can know any thing, and ſo diſtinctly as to call *them all by their Names:* He knows their *Names*, that is, their natural offices, influences, the different degrees of heat and light, their order and motion; and *all* of them, the leaſt glimmering Star as well as the moſt glaring Planet; this man cannot do; *Tell the Stars if thou be able to number them*, Gen. 15. 5. ſaith God to *Abraham* (whom *Joſephus* repreſents as a great *Aſtronomer*) yea they cannot be numbred, *Jer.* 33. 22. and the uncertainty of the Opinions of men, evidenceth their ignorance of their number; ſome reckoning 1022, others 1025, others 1098, others 7000, beſides thoſe that by reaſon of their mixture of Light with one another, cannot be diſtinctly diſcern'd, and others perhaps ſo high, as not to be reach'd by the eye of man. To impoſe Names on things, and Names according to their Natures, is both an Argument of Power and Dominion, and of Wiſdom and Underſtanding: from the impoſition of Names upon the Creatures by *Adam*, the Knowledg of *Adam* is generally concluded; and it was alſo a fruit of that Dominion God allowed him over the Creatures. Now he that Numbers and Names the Stars that ſeem to lie confus'd among one another, as well as thoſe that appear to us in an unclouded Night, may well be ſuppos'd accurately to know his People, tho' lurking in ſecret Caverns, and know thoſe that are fit to be Inſtruments of their deliverance; the one is as eaſie to him as the other; and the number of the one as diſtinctly known by him, as the Multitude of the other.

Ver. 5. *For great is our Lord, and of great Power, his Underſtanding is Infinite**. He wants not Knowledg to know the objects, nor Power to effect his Will concerning them

them. *Of great Power**. Much power, plenteous in Power; ſo the Word רב is rendred *Pſal.* 5. 15.*. A multitude of Power, as well as a multitude of Mercy; a Power that exceeds all Created Power and Underſtanding. רבכח רבחסד

His Underſtanding is infinite. You may not imagine how he can call all the Stars by Name; the multitude of viſible being ſo great, and the multitude of the inviſible being greater; but you muſt know, that as God is Almighty, ſo he is Omniſcient; and as there is no end of his Power, ſo no account can exactly be given of his underſtanding; *His Underſtandine is infinite.* No number or account of it; and ſo the ſame Words are rendred *Joel.* 1. 6. *A Nation ſtrong*, and *without number:* No end of his underſtanding; *Syriack*, no meaſure, no bounds*. His Eſſence is infinite, and ſo is his Power and underſtanding; and vaſt is his Knowledge, that we can no more comprehend it, than we can meaſure ſpaces that are without limits, or tell the minutes or hours of Eternity. Who then can fathom that whereof there is no number, but which exceeds all, ſo that there is no *ſearching of it out**? He knows univerſals, he knows Particulars: We muſt not take underſtanding here, as noting a faculty, but the uſe of the underſtanding in the knowledg of things, and the Judgment in the conſideration of them, and ſo it is often uſed. אוקסכר תבונה

In the *Verſe* there is a diſcription of God.

1. In his *Eſſence*, *great is our Lord.*

2. In his *Power*, *of great Power.*

3. In his *Knowledg*, *his Underſtanding is infinite*; his Underſtanding is his Eye, and his Power is his Arm. Of his *Infinite Underſtanding*, I am to Diſcourſe.

Doctrine. *God hath an Infinite Knowledg and Underſtanding.* All Knowledg. Omnipreſence which before we ſpake of, reſpects his Eſſence; Omniſcience, reſpects his Underſtanding, according to our manner of Conception.

This is clear in *Scripture*; hence God is is called a God of knowledg, 1 *Sam.* 2. 3. *The Lord is a God of Knowledg*, Heb. *Knowledges* in the Plural Number, of all kind of Knowledg; 'tis ſpoken there to quell mans Pride in his own reaſon and parts; what is the Knowledg of man but a ſpark to the whole Element of Fire, a grain of Duſt, and worſe than nothing, in compariſon of the Knowledg of God, as his Eſſence is in compariſon of the Eſſence of God? *All kind of Knowledg.* He knows what Angels know, what Man knows, and infinitely more; he knows himſelf, his own operations, all his Creatures, the Notions and thoughts of them; he is underſtanding above underſtanding, mind above mind, the mind of minds, the light of lights; this the *Greek* word Θεὸς ſignifies in the Etymology of it, of θεᾶσθαι to *ſee*, to contemplate; and Δαίμων of Δαὼ *ſcio.* The *Names* of God ſignifie a nature viewing and piercing all things; and the attribution of our ſenſes to God in Scripture, as Hearing and Seeing, which are the Senſes whereby knowledg enters into us, ſignifies Gods Knowledg.

1. *The Notion of Gods knowledg of all things lies above the ruines of Nature*; it was not obliterated by the Fall of Man. It was neceſſary offending man was to know that he had a Creator whom he had injured, that he had a Judg to Try and Puniſh him; ſince God thought fit to keep up the World, it had been kept up to no purpoſe, had not this notion been continued alive in the minds of men; there would not have been any practice of his Lavvs, no bar to the vvorſt of Crimes. If men had thought they had to deal vvith an Ignorant Deity, there could be no practice of Religion. Who vvould lift up his eyes, or ſpread his hand tovvards heaven, if he imagin'd his Devotion vvere directed to a God as blind as the Heathens imagin'd *Fortune*? To vvhat boot vvould it be for them to make Heaven and Earth reſound vvith their Cries, if they had not thought God had an Eye to ſee them, and an Ear to hear them? And indeed the very notion of a God at the firſt bluſh, ſpeaks him a being endued vvith Underſtanding; no man can imagine a Creator void of one of the nobleſt perfections belonging to thoſe Creatures that are the Flovver and Cream of his Works.

2. Therefore *all Nations acknowledg this*, as vvell as the Exiſtence and being of God. No Nation but had their Temples, particular Ceremonies of Worſhip, and preſented their Sacrifices, vvhich they could not have been ſo vain as to do, without an acknovvledgment of this Attribute. This notion of Gods knovvledg ovved not

its riſe to Tradition, but to natural implantation; it was born and grew up with every rational Creature. Though the ſeveral Nations and men of the World agreed not in one kind of Deity, or in their Sentiments of his Nature or other Perfections, ſome judging him Clothed with a fine and pure Body; others judging him an uncompounded Spirit; ſome fixing him to a ſeat in the Heavens; others owning his Univerſal Preſence in all parts of the World; yet they all agreed in the Univerſality of his knowledg; and their own Conſciences reflecting their Crimes, unknown to any but themſelves, would keep this notion in ſome vigor whether they would or no. Now this being implanted in the minds of all men by nature, cannot be falſe; for nature imprints not in the minds of all men an aſſent to a falſity. Nature would not pervert the reaſon and minds of men: Univerſal notions of God are from Original, not lapſed Nature, and preſerved in mankind in order to a reſtoration from a lapſed ſtate. The Heathens did acknowledg this: in all the ſolemn Covenants, ſolemniz'd with Oaths and the invocation of the Name of God, this Attribute was ſuppos'd. They confeſt knowledg to be peculiar to the Deity; *Scientia Deorum vita*, ſaith *Cicero*. Some called him Νοῦν, *Mens*, *Mind*, pure underſtanding, without any mote Ἐπίσκοπον, the inſpector of all. As they called him Life, becauſe he was the Author of life? ſo they called him *Intellectus*, becauſe he was the Author of all Knowledg and Underſtanding in his Creatures? And one being askt, Whether any man could be hid from God? No ſaith he, not ſo much as thinking: Some call him the Eye of the World* 5 and the *Egyptians* repreſented God by an Eye on the top of a Scepter, becauſe God is all Eye, and can be ignorant of nothing.

Agamemnon, *Homer Il.* 3. *v* 8. making a Covenant with *Priam* invocates the Sun Ἥλιός θ' ὃς πάντ' ἐφορᾷς καὶ πάντ' ἐπακούεις.

* *Gamach in* 1 *Pa. Aqui. L.* 14. *cap.* 1. *p.* 119. *Clem. Alexandrom. lib.* 6.

And the ſame Nation made Eyes and Ears of the moſt excellent Metals, Conſecrating them to God, and hanging them up in the midſt of their Temples, in ſignification of Gods ſeeing and hearing all things; hence *they* called God Light, as well as the Scripture, becauſe all things are viſible to him.

For the better underſtanding of this, we will inquire,

1. *What kind of Knowledge or Underſtanding there is in God.*
2. *What God knows.*
3. *How God knows things.*
4. *The proof, that God knows all things.*
5. *The Uſe of all* to our ſelves.

1. *What kind of Underſtanding or Knowledg there is in God?*

The Knowledge of God in *Scripture* hath various Names, according to the various relations or objects of it: In reſpect of *preſent* things, 'tis called Knowledg or Sight; in reſpect of things *paſt*, Remembrance; in reſpect of things *future*, or to come, 'tis called Fore-Knowledg or Preſcience. 1 *Pet.* 1. 2. In regard of the *Univerſality* of the Objects, it is called Omniſcience; in regard of the *ſimple Underſtanding* of things 'tis called Knowledg; in regard of *acting* and modelling the ways of acting, 'tis called Wiſdom and Prudence, *Eph.* 1. 8. He muſt have Knowledg, otherwiſe he could not be Wiſe; Wiſdom is the Flower of Knowledg, and Knowledg is the Root of Wiſdom.

As to what *this Knowledg* is; if we know what Knowledg is in man, we may apprehend what it is in God, removing all Imperfection from it, and aſcribing to him the moſt eminent way of underſtanding; becauſe we cannot comprehend God, but as he is pleaſed to condeſcend to us in his own ways of diſcovery; that is, under ſome way of ſimilitude to his perfecteſt Creatures; therefore we have a notion of God by his Underſtanding and Will; Underſtanding, whereby he conceives and apprehends things; Will, whereby he extends himſelf in acting according to his Wiſdom, and whereby he doth approve or diſapprove: Yet we muſt not meaſure his Underſtanding by our own, or think it to be of ſo groſs a Temper as a Created mind; that he hath *Eyes of fleſh*, or *ſees* or knows *as man ſees* *. We can no more meaſure his Knowledg by ours, than we can meaſure his Eſſence by our Eſſence: As he hath an incomprehenſible Eſſence, to which ours is but as a Drop of a Bucket; ſo he hath an incomprehenſible Knowledg, to which ours is but as a grain of Duſt, or meer Darkneſs: *His thoughts are above our thoughts, as the Heavens are above the Earth.*

* Job 10. 4.

The

The Knowledg of God is variouſly *divided* by the *Schools*, and acknowledg'd by all Divines.

1. A Knowledge *viſionis & ſimplicis intelligentiæ*; the one we may call a *Sight*, the other an *Underſtanding*; the one refers to ſenſe, the other to the mind.

1. *A Knowledge of Viſion or Sight*; Thus God knows himſelf and all things that really were, are, or ſhall be in time; all thoſe things which he hath Decreed to be, tho they are not yet actually ſprung up in the World, but lie couchant in their Cauſes.

2. *A Knowledg of Intelligence, or ſimple Underſtanding*; the object of this is not things that are in being, or that ſhall by any Decree of God ever be exiſtent in the World; but ſuch things as are poſſible to be wrought by the Power of God, tho they ſhall never in the leaſt peep up into Being, but lye for ever wrapt up in Darkneſs and nothing*. This alſo is a neceſſary knowledg to be allowed to God, becauſe the object of this Knowledg is neceſſary. The poſſibility of more Creatures than ever were or ſhall be, is a concluſion that hath a neceſſary Truth in it; as it is neceſſary that the power of God can produce more Creatures, tho it be not neceſſary that it ſhould produce more Creatures; ſo it is neceſſary that whatſoever the power of God *can* work, is poſſible to be. And as God knows this poſſibility ſo he knows all the objects that are thus poſſible; and herein doth much conſiſt the Infiniteneſs of his knowledg, as ſhall be ſhewn preſently.

* *Suarez* de Deo lib. 3. cap. 4. p. 230.

Theſe *two kinds* of Knowledg differ: That of *Viſion*, is of things which God hath Decreed to be, tho they are not yet. That of *Intelligence*, is of things which never ſhall be; yet they may be, or are poſſible to be, if God pleaſe to Will and Order their Being; one reſpects things that ſhall be; the other, things that may be, and are not repugnant to the nature of God to be: The Knowledg of *Viſion* follows the Act of Gods Will, and ſuppoſeth an act of Gods Will before, Decreeing things to be. (If we could ſuppoſe any *firſt* or *ſecond* in Gods Decree, we might ſay God knew them as *poſſible* before he decreed them; he knew them as *future* becauſe he Decreed them.) For without the Will of God Decreeing a thing to come to paſs, God cannot know that it will infallibly come to paſs. But the Knowledg of Intelligence ſtands without any Act of his will, in order to the being of thoſe things he knows; he knows poſſible things only in his Power; he knows other things both in his Power, as able to effect them; and in his Will, as determining the Being of them; ſuch knowledg we muſt grant to be in God, for there is ſuch a kind of knowledg in man; for man doth not only know and ſee what is before his eyes in this World, but he may have a conception of many more Worlds, and many more Creatures, which he knows are poſſible to the Power of God.

2. Secondly, There is a *ſpeculative and practical knowledge in God.*

1. A *ſpeculative knowledg* is, when the truth of a thing is known without a reſpect to any working or practical operation. The knowledg of things poſſible is in God only ſpeculative, * and ſome ſay Gods knowledge of himſelf, is only ſpeculative, becauſe there is nothing for God to work in himſelf: And tho he knows himſelf, yet this knowledg of himſelf doth not terminate there, but flowers into a love of himſelf, and delight in himſelf; yet this love of himſelf, and delight in himſelf, is not enough to make it a practical knowledg, becauſe it is natural, and naturally and neceſſarily flows from the knowledg of himſelf and his own Goodneſs: He cannot but love himſelf, and delight in himſelf, upon the knowledg of himſelf. But that which is properly practice, is where there is a dominion over the action, and it is wrought not naturally and neceſſarily, but in a way of freedom and counſel. As when we ſee a beautiful Flower or other thing, there ariſeth a delight in the mind; this no man will call Practice, becauſe it is a natural affection of the Will, ariſing from the vertue of the object, without any conſideration of the Underſtanding in a practical manner by counſelling, commanding, *&c.*

* *Suarez* de deo lib. 3. cap. 4. p. 138.

2. A *Practical knowledg*, which tends to operation and practice, and is the principle of working about things that are known; as the knowledg an Artificer hath in an Art or Myſtery. This knowledg is in God: The knowledg he hath of the things he hath decreed, is ſuch a kind of knowledg; for it terminates in the act of Creation, which is not a natural and neceſſary act, as the loving himſelf, and delightning in himſelf is, but wholly free: For it was at his liberty whether he would

create them or no; this is called *diſcretion*, Jer. 10. 12. *He hath ſtretched out the heavens by his diſcretion.* Such alſo is his knowledg of the things he hath created, and which are in being, for it terminates in the government of them for his own glorious ends. 'Tis by this knowledg *the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down their dew**. This is a knowledg whereby he knows the eſſence, qualities, and properties of what he creates and governs in order to his own glory, and the common good of the world over which he reſides; ſo that *ſpeculative* knowledg is Gods knowledg of himſelf and things poſſible, *practical* knowledg is his knowledg of his creatures and things governable; yet in ſome ſort this practical knowledg is not only of things that are made, but of things which are poſſible, which God might make, tho he will not: For as he knows that they can be created, ſo he knows how they are to be created, and how to be governed, tho he never will create them. This is a practical knowledg: For it is not requiſite to conſtitute a knowledge practically, actually to act, but that the knowledg in it ſelf be referrible to action*.

* Prov. 3. 20.

Suarez de Deo l. 3. c. 4. p. 140.

3. There is a *knowledge of approbation, as well as apprehenſion.* This the *Scripture* often mentions: Words of underſtanding are uſed to ſignifie the acts of affection. This knowledg adds to the ſimple act of the underſtanding, the complacency and pleaſure of the will; and is improperly knowledg, becauſe it belongs to the Will, and not to the Underſtanding; only it is radically in the underſtanding, becauſe affection implies knowledg; men cannot approve of that which they are ignorant of. Thus knowledg is taken, *Amos* 3. 2. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth.* And 2 Tim. 2. 19. *The Lord knows who are his*, that is, he loves them, he doth not only know them, but acknowledg them for his own: It notes not only an exact underſtanding, but a ſpecial care of them; and ſo is that to be underſtood, Gen. 1. *God ſaw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good*: That is, he *ſaw* it with an eye of approbation, as well as apprehenſion. This is grounded upon Gods knowledg of *Viſion*, his ſight of his Creatures; for God doth not love or delight in any thing but what is actually in being, or what he hath decreed to bring into being, On the contrary alſo, when God doth not approve, he is ſaid not to know, Mat. 25. 12. I *know you not*: And Mat. 7. 23. *I never knew you*: He doth not approve of their Works: 'tis not an ignorance of Underſtanding, but an ignorance of Will; for whiles he ſaith he never knew them, he teſtifies that he did know them, in rendring the reaſon of his diſapproving them, becauſe he knows all their works: So he knows them, and doth not know them, in a different manner: he knows them ſo as to *underſtand* them; but he doth not know them ſo as to *love* them.

We muſt then aſcribe an *univerſal* knowledg to God. If we deny him a ſpeculative knowledg, or knowledg of intelligence, we deſtroy his Deity, we make him ignorant of his own Power: If we deny him practical knowledg, we deny our ſelves to be his Creatures: For as his creatures, we are the fruits of this his diſcretion diſcovered in Creation: If we deny his knowledge of *Viſion*, we deny his governing Dominion. How can he exerciſe a Soveraign and uncontroulable Dominion, that is ignorant of the nature and qualities of the things he is to govern? If he had not knowledg he could make no Revelation; he that knows not, cannot dictate; we could then have no Scripture. To deny God knowledg, is to daſh out the Scripture, and demoliſh the Deity.

God is deſcrib'd in *Zech.* 3. 9. *With ſeven eyes*, to ſhew his perfect Knowledg of all things, all occurrences in the World; and the *Cherubims*, or whatſoever is meant by the *Wings*, are deſcribed to be *full of eyes*, both *before* and *behind**, round about them; much more is God all Eye, all Ear, all Underſtanding. The Sun is a natural Image of God, if the Sun had an Eye, it would ſee; if it had an Underſtanding, it would know all viſible things; it would ſee what it ſhines upon, and underſtand what it influenceth in the moſt obſcure Bowels of the Earth. Doth God excell his Creature the Sun in Excellency and Beauty, and not in Light and Underſtanding? Certainly more than the Sun excels an Atome or grain of Duſt.

* Ezek. 1. 18.

We may yet make ſome repreſentation of this Knowledg of God by a lower thing, a Picture, which ſeems to look upon every one, tho there be never ſo great a multitude in the Room where it hangs; no man can caſt his eye upon it, but it ſeems

ſeems to behold him in particular, and ſo exactly as if there were none but him, upon whom the eye of it were fixt; and every man finds the ſame caſt of it; ſhall Art frame a thing of that nature, and ſhall not the God of Art and all Knowledg be much more in reality than that is in imagination? Shall not God have a far greater capacity to behold every thing in the World, which is infinitely leſs to him than a wide Room to a Picture?

II. The ſecond thing, *what God knows*? How far his underſtanding reaches?

1. *God knows himſelf, and only knows himſelf.* This is the firſt and original knowledge, wherein he excells all Creatures: No man doth exactly know himſelf; much leſs doth he underſtand the full nature of a Spirit; much leſs ſtill the Nature and Perfections of God; for what proportion can there be between a finite faculty and an infinite object? Herein conſiſts the infiniteneſs of Gods Knowledg, that he knows his own Eſſence, that he knows that which is unknowable to any elſe. It doth not ſo much conſiſt in knowing the Creature which he hath made, as in knowing himſelf who was never made. 'Tis not ſo much infinite, becauſe he knows all things which are in the World, or that ſhall be; or things that he can make, becauſe the number of them is finite; but becauſe he hath a perfect and comprehenſive knowledge of his own infinite Perfections*. Tho it be ſaid that Angels *ſee his Face*, *Matth.* 18. 10. that ſight notes rather their immediate Attendance, than their exact Knowledge; they ſee ſome ſigns of his Preſence and Majeſty, more illuſtrious and expreſs than ever appear'd to man in this Life; but the Eſſence of God is inviſible to them, hid from them in the ſecret place of Eternity; none knows God but himſelf, 1 *Cor.* 2. 11. *what man knows the things of a man ſave the ſpirit of a man? So the things of God knows no man but the ſpirit of God*; *the ſpirit of God ſearches the deep things of God*; ſearcheth, that is, exactly knows, throughly underſtands, as thoſe who have their eyes in every Chink and Crevis, to ſee what lies hid there; the word *ſearch*, notes not an Enquiry, but an exact Knowledge, ſuch as men have of things upon a diligent ſcrutiny; as when God is ſaid to ſearch the Heart and the Reigns, it doth not ſignifie a precedent ignorance, but an exact Knowledge of the moſt intimate corners of the hearts of men. As the Conceptions of men are unknown to any but themſelves; ſo the depths of the Divine Eſſence, Perfections and Decrees, are unknown to any but to God himſelf; he only knows what he is, and what he knows, what he can do, and what he hath Decreed to do.

* *Moulin.*

1. For firſt, *If God did not know himſelf, he would not be perfect.* 'Tis the Perfection of a Creature to know it ſelf, much more a Perfection belonging to God. If God did not comprehend himſelf, he would want an Infinite Perfection, and ſo would ceaſe to be God, in being defective in that which intellectual Creatures in ſome meaſure poſſeſs. As God is the moſt perfect Being, ſo he muſt have the moſt perfect Underſtanding: If he did not underſtand himſelf, he would be under the greateſt Ignorance, becauſe he would be ignorant of the moſt excellent object. Ignorance is the Imperfection of the Underſtanding; and ignorance of ones ſelf is a greater Imperfection than ignorance of things without. If God ſhould know all things without himſelf, and not know himſelf, he would not have the moſt perfect Knowledg, becauſe he would not have the knowledg of the beſt of objects.

2. *Without the Knowledg of himſelf, he could not be bleſſed.* Nothing can have any complacency in it ſelf, without the Knowledg of it ſelf. Nothing can in a rational manner enjoy it ſelf, without underſtanding it ſelf. The Bleſſedneſs of God conſiſts not in the knowledg of any thing without him, but in the knowledg of himſelf and his own excellency, as the princip le of all things; If therefore he did not perfectly know himſelf and his own happineſs, he could not enjoy a happineſs; for to be, and not to know to be, is as if a thing were not. *He is God bleſſed for ever* Rom. 9. 5. And therefore for ever had a Knowledg of himſelf.

3. *Without the Knowledg of himſelf he could Create nothing.* For he would be ignorant of his own Power, and his own Ability; and he that doth not know how far his Power extends, could not act: If he did not know himſelf, he could know nothing; and he that knows nothing; can do nothing? he could not know an Effect to be poſſible to him, unleſs he knew his own Power as a cauſe.

4. *Without the Knowledg of himſelf, he could govern nothing.* He could not without

without the knowledg of his own Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, preſcribe Laws to men, nor without a knowledg of his own nature, order himſelf a manner of Worſhip ſutable to it.

All Worſhip muſt be congruous to the dignity and nature of the Object worſhipped; he muſt therefore know his own Authority whereby Worſhip was to be enacted, his own excellency to which Worſhip was to be ſuited, his own Glory to which Worſhip was to be directed. If he did not know himſelf, he did not know what to puniſh, becauſe he would not know what was contrary to himſelf: Not knowing himſelf; he would not know what was a contempt of him, and what an adoration of him; what was worthy of God, and what was unworthy of him. In fine, he could not know other things, unleſs he knew himſelf: Unleſs he knew his own Power, he could not know how he created things: Unleſs he knew his own Wiſdom, he could not know the beauty of his Works: Unleſs he knew his own Glory, he could not know the end of his Works: Unleſs he knew his own Holineſs, he could not know what was evil: And unleſs he knew his own Juſtice, he could not know how to puniſh the Crimes of his offending creatures. And therefore,

1. *God knows himſelf*, becauſe his Knowledg with his Will is the cauſe of all other things that can fall under his cognizance: He knows himſelf firſt, before he can know any other thing; that is, firſt according to our conceptions; for indeed God knows himſelf and all other things at once; He is the firſt Truth, and therefore is the firſt object of his own underſtanding. There is nothing more excellent than himſelf, and therefore nothing more known to him than himſelf. As he is all Knowledg, ſo he hath in himſelf the moſt excellent object of Knowledg. To underſtand is properly to know one's ſelf. No object is ſo intelligible to God as God is to himſelf; nor ſo intimately and immediately joined with his Underſtanding as himſelf: For his Underſtanding is his Eſſence, himſelf.

2. *He knows himſelf by his own Eſſence.* He knows not himſelf and his own Power, by the effect, becauſe he knows himſelf from Eternity, before there was a World, or any effect of his power extant. 'Tis not a knowledg by the Cauſe, for God hath no cauſe; nor a knowledge of himſelf by any ſpecies or any thing from without: If it were any thing from without himſelf, that muſt be created or uncreated; if uncreated, it would be God; and ſo we muſt either own many Gods, or own it to be his Eſſence, and ſo not diſtinct from himſelf: If created, then his knowledg of himſelf would depend upon a creature; he could not then know himſelf from Eternity, but in time, becauſe nothing can be created from eternity, but in time. God knows not himſelf by any faculty, for there is no compoſition in God, he is not made up of parts, but is a ſimple being; ſome therefore have called God, not *intellectus*, underſtanding, becauſe that ſavours of a faculty; but *intellectio*, intellection. God is all act in the knowledg of himſelf, and his knowledg of other things.

3. *God therefore knows himſelf perfectly, comprehenſively.* Nothing in his own nature is concealed from him, he reflects upon every thing that he is*. There is a poſitive comprehenſion, ſo God doth not comprehend himſelf; for what is comprehended, hath bounds; and what is is comprehended by it ſelf, is finite to it ſelf: And there is a negative comprehenſion, God ſo comprehends himſelf; nothing in his own nature is obſcure to him, unknown by him. For there is as great a perfection in the underſtanding of God to know, as there is in the Divine nature to be known. The underſtanding of God, and the Nature of God, are both infinite, and ſo equal to one another; his Underſtanding is equal to himſelf; he knows himſelf ſo well, that nothing can be known by him more perfectly, than himſelf is known to himſelf. He knows himſelf in the higheſt manner, becauſe nothing is ſo proportion'd to the Underſtanding of God as himſelf: He knows his own Eſſence, Goodneſs, Power, all his Perfections, Decrees, Intentions, Acts, the infinite capacity of his own Underſtanding, ſo that nothing of himſelf is in the dark to himſelf. And in this reſpect ſome uſe this expreſſion, that the Infiniteneſs of God is in a manner finite to himſelf, becauſe it is comprehended by himſelf.

* *Magalaneus.*

Thus

Thus God tranſcends all Creatures; thus his Underſtanding is truly Infinite, becauſe nothing but himſelf is an infinite Object for it: What Angels may underſtand of themſelves perfectly, I know not; but no Creature in the World underſtands himſelf: Man underſtands not fully the excellency and parts of his own nature; upon Gods knowledg of himſelf depends the Comfort of his People, and the Terror of the Wicked; this is alſo a clear Argument for his knowledg of all other things, without himſelf; he that knows himſelf, muſt needs know all other things leſs than himſelf, and which were made by himſelf: When the knowledg of his own Immenſity and Infiniteneſs is not an object too difficult for him; the knowledg of a finite and limited Creature in all his actions, thoughts, circumſtances, cannot be too hard for him. Since he knows himſelf who is Infinite, he cannot but know whatſoever is Finite; this is the Foundation of all his other Knowledg; the knowledg of every thing preſent, paſt, and to come, is far leſs than the knowledge of himſelf. He is more incomprehenſible in his own nature, than all things Created, or that can be Created, put together can be: If he then have a perfect comprehenſive knowledg of his own nature, any knowledg of all other things is leſs than the Knowledg of himſelf; this ought to be well conſidered by us, as the Fountain whence all his other knowledg flows.

2. Therefore *God knows all other things, whether they be poſſible, paſt, preſent, or future.*

Whether they be things that he can do, but will never do; or Whether they be things that he hath done, but are not now; things that are now in Being, or things that are not now exiſting, that lie in the Womb of their proper and immediate Cauſes*; If his underſtanding be Infinite, he then knows all things whatſoever that can be known, elſe his underſtanding would have bounds, and what hath limits is not infinite, but finite; if he be ignorant of any one thing that is knowable, that is a bound to him, it comes with an exception, a *but*, God knows all things *but* this, a bar is then ſet to his Knowledg. If there were any thing, any particular circumſtance in the whole Creation, or Non-Creation, and poſſible to be known by him, and yet were unknown to him, he could not be ſaid to be Omniſcient. As he would not be Almighty, if any one thing that implyed not a repugnancy to his Nature, did tranſcend his Power.

* *Petav. Theol. Dogm. lib. 9. 257.*

1. Firſt, *all things poſſible.* No Queſtion but God knows what he could create, as well as what he hath created: What he would not Create, as well as what he reſolved to Create; he knew what he would not do, before he willed to do it; this is the next thing which declares the Infiniteneſs of his underſtanding: For as his Power is infinite, and can create innumerable Worlds and Creatures; ſo is his Knowledg infinite, in knowing innumerable things poſſible to his Power. Poſſibles are infinite; that is, there is no end of what God can do, and therefore no end of what God doth know; otherwiſe his Power would be more Infinite than his knowledge: If he knew only what is created, there would be an end of his underſtanding, becauſe all Creatures may be numbered, but poſſible things cannot be reckoned up by any Creature: There is the ſame reaſon of this in Eternity; when never ſo many numbers of years are run out, there is ſtill more to come, there ſtill wants an end; and when Millions of Worlds are Created, there is no more an end of Gods Power, than of Eternity: Thus there is no end of his underſtanding; that is, his Knowledg is not terminated by any thing.

This the Scripture gives us ſome accompt of; God knovvs things that are not, *for he calls things that are not, as if they were*, Rom. 4. 17. He calls things that are not, as if they vvere in Being; vvhat he calls is not unknovvn to him: If he knovvs things that are not, he knovvs things that may never be; as he knovvs things that ſhall be, becauſe he Wills them; ſo he knovvs things that might be, becauſe he is able to effect them: He knevv that the Inhabitants of *Kelah* vvould betray *David* to *Saul*, if he remained in that place, 1 *Sam.* 23. 11. He knevv vvhat they vvould do upon that occaſion, tho it vvas never done; as he knevv vvhat vvas in their Povver and in their Wills, ſo he muſt needs knovv vvhat is vvithin the compaſs of his ovvn Povver: As he can permit more than he doth permit; ſo he knovvs vvhat he can permit, and vvhat upon that permiſſion vvould be done by his Creatures; ſo God knevv the poſſibility of the *Tyrians* Repentance, if they had the ſame means, heard the

ſame

ſame Truths, and beheld the ſame Miracles which were offer'd to the Ears, and preſented to the Eyes of the *Jews*, *Matth.* 11. 21.

This muſt needs be ſo, becauſe.

1. *Man knows things that are poſſible to him, tho he will never effect them.* A Carpenter knows a Houſe in the model he hath of it in his head, tho he never build a Houſe according to that model: A Watch-maker hath the frame of a Watch in his mind, which he will never work with his Inſtruments: Man knows what he could do, tho he never intends to do it* As the Underſtanding of man hath a vertue, that where it ſees one man, it may imagine Thouſands of men of the ſame ſhape, ſtature, form, parts; yea taller, more vigorous, ſpritely, intelligent than the man he ſees; becauſe it is poſſible ſuch a number may be. Shall not the underſtanding of God much more know what he is able to effect, ſince the underſtanding of man can know what he is never able to produce, yet may be produced by God, *viz.* That he who produced this man which I ſee, can produce a Thouſand exactly like him? If the Divine Underſtanding did not know infinite things, but were confin'd to a certain number; it may be demanded whether God can underſtand any thing farther than that number, or whether he cannot? If he can, then he doth actually underſtand all thoſe things which he hath a Power to underſtand: otherwiſe there would be an increaſe of Gods knowledg, if it were actually now, and not before, and ſo he would be more perfect than he was before; if he cannot underſtand them, then he cannot underſtand what a human mind can underſtand; for our underſtandings can multiply Numbers *in infinitum*; and there is no number ſo great, but a man can ſtill add to it; We muſt ſuppoſe the Divine Underſtanding more excellent in Knowledg. Gods knows all that a man can imagine, tho it never were, nor never ſhall be; he muſt needs know whatſoever is in the Power of man to imagine or think, becauſe God concurs to the ſupport of the faculty in that imagination, and tho it may be replied, an *Atheiſt* may imagine that there is no God; a man may imagine that God can Lie, or that he can be deſtroy'd; doth God know therefore that he is not? Or that he can Lie, or ceaſe to be? No, he knows he cannot; his Knowledg extends to things poſſible, not to things impoſſible to himſelf; he knows it as imaginable by man, not as poſſible in it ſelf; becauſe 'tis utterly impoſſible, and repugnant to the nature of God, ſince he eminently contains in himſelf all things poſſible, paſt, preſent and to come; he cannot know himſelf without knowing them.

* *Ficin* de immort lib. 2. cap. 10.

Gamach.

2. *God knowing his own power, knows whatſoever is in his power to effect.* If he knows not all things poſſible; he could not know the extent of his own power, and ſo would not know himſelf, as a cauſe ſufficient for more things than he hath Created: How can he comprehend himſelf, who comprehends not all effluxes of things poſſible that may come from him and be wrought by him? How can he know himſelf as a cauſe, if he know not the Objects and Works which he is able to produce*? Since the power of God extends to numberleſs things, his Knowledg alſo extends to numberleſs objects; as if a Unite could ſee the numbers it could produce, it would ſee Infinite numbers; for a Unite is, as it were, all number. God knowing the fruitfulneſs of his own Vertue, knows a numberleſs multitude of things which he can do, more than have been done, or ſhall be done by him; he therefore knows innumerable Worlds, innumerable Angels, with higher Perfections than any of them which he hath Created, have: So that if the World ſhould laſt many Millions of Years, God knows that he can every day Create another World more capacious than this; and having Created an unconceivable number, he knows he could ſtill Greate more: So that he beholds infinite Worlds, infinite numbers of Men and other Creatures in himſelf, infinite kinds of things, infinite ſpecies and individuals, under thoſe kinds, even as many as he can Create, if his Will did order and determine it*; for not being ignorant of his own Power, he cannot be ignorant of the effects wherein it may diſplay and diſcover it ſelf. A comprehenſive knowledg of his own Power doth neceſſarily include the objects of that power; ſo he knows whatſoever he could effect, and whatſoever the could permit, if he pleaſed to do it.

* *Ficin* de im. mort. lib. 2. cap. 10.

If God could not underſtand more than he hath created, he could not create more than he hath created: For it cannot be conceived how he can create any thing

thing that he is ignorant of; what he doth not know, he cannot do: he muſt know alſo the extent of his own goodneſs, and how far any thing is capable to partake of it: ſo much therefore as any detract from the Knowledg of God, they detract from his Power.

3. 'Tis further evident that God knows all poſſible things, *becauſe he knew thoſe things which he has created, before they were created*, when they were yet in a poſſibility. If God knew things before they were created, he knew them when they were in a poſſibility, and not in actual reality. 'Tis abſurd to imagine that his Underſtanding did lacquey after the creatures, and draw knowledg from them after they were created. 'Tis abſurd to think that God did create, before he knew what he could or would create. If he knew thoſe things he did create when they were poſſible, he muſt know all things which he can create, and therefore all things that are poſſible.

To conclude this, We muſt conſider that this Knowledg is of another kind than his knowledg of things that are or ſhall be. He ſees poſſible things as poſſible, not as things that ever are or ſhall be. If he ſaw them as exiſting or future, and they ſhall never be, this knowledg would be falſe, there would be a deceit in it, which cannot be. He knows thoſe things not in themſelves, becauſe they are not, nor in their cauſes becauſe they ſhall never be: he knows them in his own Power, not in his Will: He underſtands them as able to produce them, not as willing to effect them. Things poſſible he knows only in his Power, things future he knows both in his Power and his Will, as he is both able and determin'd in his own good pleaſure to give being to them. Thoſe that ſhall never come to paſs, he knows only in himſelf, as a ſufficient cauſe; thoſe things that ſhall come into being, he knows in himſelf as the efficient cauſe, and alſo in their immediate ſecond cauſes.

This ſhould teach us to ſpend our thoughts in the admirations of the excellency of God, and the divine Knowledg; his Underſtanding is infinite.

2. *God knows all things paſt.* This is an argument uſed by God himſelf to elevate his Excellency above all the commonly adored Idols, Iſa. 41. 22. *Let them ſhew the former things, what they be, that we may conſider them, and know the later end of them.* He knows them as if they were now preſent, and not paſt: for indeed in his Eternity there is nothing paſt or future to his knowledg. This is called remembrance in Scripture, as when God remembred *Rachels* prayer for a child, *Gen.* 30. 22. and he is ſaid to put *tears* into his *bottle*, and *write* them *in his Book* of Accompts, which ſignifies the exact and unerring knowledg in God of the minute circumſtances paſt in the World; and this knowledg is called a *book of remembrance* Mal. 3. 16. ſignifying the perpetual preſence of things paſt, before him. There are two elegant expreſſions ſignifying the certainty and perpetuity of Gods knowledg of ſins paſt, Job 14. 17. *My tranſgreſſion is ſealed up in a bag, and thou ſoweſt up my iniquity.* A Metaphor taken from men that put up in a bag the money they would charily keep, tye the bag, ſow up the holes, and bind it hard that nothing may fall out; or a veſſel wherein they reſerve liquors, and daub it with pitch and glutinous ſtuff, that nothing may leak out, but be ſafely kept till the time of uſe. Or elſe, as ſome think, from the bags *Attorneys* carry with them, full of Writings, when they are to manage a Cauſe againſt a perſon. Thus we find God often in Scripture calling to mens minds their paſt actions, upbraiding them with their ingratitude, wherein he teſtifies his remembrance of his own paſt benefits, and their Crimes. His knowledg in this regard hath ſomething of infinity in it, ſince tho' the ſins of all men that have been in the World are finite in regard of number, yet when the ſins of one man in thoughts, words, and deeds, are numberleſs in his own account, and perhaps in the account of any creature, the ſins of all the vaſt numbers of men that have been, or ſhall be, are much more numberleſs, it cannot be leſs than infinite knowledg that can make a collection of them, and take a ſurvey of them all at once.

If paſt things had not been known by God, how could *Moſes* have been acquainted with the Original of things? How could he have declared the former tranſactions, wherein all Hiſtories are ſilent but the Scripture? How could he know the cauſe of mans preſent miſery ſo many ages after, wherewith all *Philoſophy* was unacquainted? How could he have writ the order of the Creation, the

particulars of the ſin of *Adam*, the circumſtances of *Cains* murder, the private ſpeech of *Lamech* to his Wives, if God had not revealed them? And how could a Revelation be made, if things paſt were forgotten by him? Do we not remember many things done among men, as well as by our ſelves, and reſerve the forms of divers things in our minds, which riſe as occaſions are preſented to draw them forth? And ſhall not God much more, who hath no cloud of darkneſs upon his underſtanding? A man that makes a curious Picture, hath the form of it in his mind before he made it; and if the fire burn it; the form of it in his mind is not deſtroyed by the fire, but retained in it. Gods memory is no leſs perfect than his underſtanding: If he did not know things paſt, he could not be a righteous Governour, or exerciſe any judicial act in a righteous manner; he could not diſpenſe Rewards and Puniſhments according to his promiſes and threatnings, if things that were paſt could be forgotten by him; he could not *require* that which is *paſt* *, if he *did not remember that which is paſt.*

*Eccleſ. 3 15.

And tho' God be ſaid to *forget* in Scripture, and *not to know* his People, and his People pray to him to *remember them*, as if he bad *forgotten them* *: This is improperly aſcrib'd to God *. As God is ſaid to repent, when he changes things according to his Counſel beyond the expectation of men; ſo he is ſaid to forget, when he defers the making good his Promiſe to the Godly, or his Threatnings to the Wicked; this is not a defect of Memory belonging to his mind, but an act of his Will: When he is ſaid to remember his Covenant, 'tis to Will Grace according to his Covenant; when he is ſaid to forget his Covenant, 'tis to intercept the influences of it, whereby to puniſh the Sin of his People; and when he is ſaid not to know his People, 'tis not an abſolute forgetfulneſs of them, but withdrawing from them the Teſtimonies of his Kindneſs, and clouding the Signs of his favour; ſo God in Pardoning is ſaid to forget Sin, not that he ceaſeth to know it, but ceaſeth to puniſh it: 'Tis not to be meant of a ſimple forgetfulneſs, or a lapſe of his Memory, but of a Judicial Forgetfulneſs; ſo when his People in Scripture Pray, Lord *Remember thy Word* unto thy Servant; no more is to be underſtood, but Lord fulfil thy Word and Promiſe to thy Servant.

* Pſal. 119. 49.
* *Bradward.*

3. *He knows things Preſent.* Heb. 4. 13. *All things are naked and opened unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do*; This is grounded upon the Knowledg of himſelf; 'tis not ſo difficult to know all Creatures exactly, as to know himſelf, becauſe they are finite, but himſelf is infinite; he knows his own Power, and therefore every thing through which his Omnipotence is diffus'd, all the acts and objects of it; not the leaſt thing that is the Birth of his Power, can be conceal'd from him; he knows his own Goodneſs, and therefore every object upon which the warm beams of his Goodneſs ſtrike; he therefore knows diſtinctly the properties of every Creature, becauſe every Property in them is a Ray of his Goodneſs; he is not only the efficient, but the exemplary cauſe; therefore as he knows all that his Power hath wrought, as he is the efficient, ſo he knows them in himſelf as the pattern: As a Carpenter can give an account of every part and paſſage in a Houſe he hath built, by conſulting the Model in his own mind, whereby he built it. *He looked upon all things after he had made them, and pronounc'd them good*, Gen. 1. 3. full of a natural goodneſs he had endowed them with; he did not ignorantly pronounce them ſo, and call them good, whether he knew them or not; and therefore he knows them in particular, as he knew them all in their firſt Preſence. Is there any reaſon he ſhould be ignorant of every thing now preſent in the World, or that any thing that derives an exiſtence from him as a free cauſe, ſhould be concealed from him? If he did not know things preſent in their particularities, many things would be known by man, yea by Beaſts, which the infinite God were ignorant of; and if he did not know all things preſent, but only ſome; 'tis poſſible for the moſt Bleſſed God to be deceived and be miſerable: Ignorance is a Calamity to the Underſtanding: He could not preſcribe Laws to his Creatures, unleſs he knew their Natures, to wich thoſe Laws were to be ſuted; no, not natural Ordinances to the Sun, Moon, and Heavenly Bodies, and inanimate Creatures, unleſs he knew the vigour and vertue in them, to execute thoſe Ordinances; for to preſcribe Laws above the nature of things, is inconſiſtent with the VViſdom of Government; he muſt know how far they were able to obey; whether the Laws were ſuted to

their

their ability: And for his rational Creatures, Whether the Punishements annext to the Law, were proper, and suted to the Transgression of the Creature.

1. First, *He knows all Creatures from the highest to the lowest, the least as well as the greatest.* He knows the *Ravens* and their *young ones* *; *the Drops of Rain and Dew which he hath begotten* *, every Bird in the Air, as well as any man doth what he hath in a Cage at home, *Psal.* 50. 11. *I know all the Fowls in the Mountains, and the wild Beasts in the Field*; which some read *creeping things. The Clouds are numbred in his Wisdom*, Job 38. 37. every Worm in the Earth, every drop of Rain that falls upon the ground, the flakes of Snow, and the knots of Hail, the Sands upon the Sea-shore, the Hairs upon the Head; 'tis no more absurd to imagine that God knows them, than that God made them; they are all the effects of his Power, as well as the Stars, which he calls by their Names, as well as the most glorious Angel and blessed Spirit; he knows them as well, as if there were none but them in particular for him to know; the least things were framed by his Art as well as the greatest; the least things partake of his goodness as well as the greatest; he knows his own Arts, and his own Goodness, and therefore all the Stamps and Impressions of them upon all his Creatures; he knows the immediate causes of the least, and therefore the effects of those causes. Since his knowledg is infinite, it must extend to those things which are at the greatest distance from him, to those which approach nearest to not Being; since he did not want Power to Create, he cannot want Understanding to know every thing he hath Created, the dispositions, qualities, and vertues of the minutest Creature.

* Job 38. 41
* Job 38. 29.

Nor is the *Understanding of God* embas'd, and suffers a diminution by the *Knowledg* of the vilest and most inconsiderable things: Is it not an imperfection to be ignorant of the nature of any thing? and can God have such a defect in his most perfect Understanding? Is the Understanding of man of an impurer Alloy by knowing the nature of the rankest Poysons? by understanding a Fly? or a small Insect? or by considering the deformity of a Toad? Is it not generally counted a note of a Dignified mind, to be able to Discourse of the Nature of them? Was *Solomon*, who knew all from the *Cedar* to the *Hyssop*, debas'd by so Rich a Present of Wisdom from his Creator? Is any Glass defil'd by presenting a Deformed Image? Is there any thing more vile than the *imaginations, which are only evil, and continually?* doth not the mind of man descend to the mud of the Earth, play the Adulterer or Idolater with mean objects, suck in the most unclean things? yet God knows these in all their circumstances, in every appearence, inside and outside. Is there any thing viler than some thoughts of men? than some actions of men? their unclean Beds, and Gluttonous Vomiting, and *Luciferian* Pride? yet do not these fall under the Eye of God, in all their Nakedness? The *Second Person*'s taking Human Nature, tho' it obscur'd, yet it did not disparage the Deity; or bring any disgrace to it: Is Gold the worse for being formed into the Image of a Fly? doth it not still retain the nobleness of the Metal? When men are despis'd for descending to the knowledg of mean and vile things, 'tis because they neglect the knowledg of the greater; and Sin in their enquiries after lesser things, with a neglect of that which concerns more the Honour of God and the Happiness of themselves; to be ambitious of such a Knowledg, and careless of that of more concern, is criminal and contemptible. But God knows the greatest as well as the least: mean things are not known by him to exclude the knowledg of the greater; nor are vile things govern'd by him to exclude the order of the better. The Deformity of Objects known by God doth not deform him, nor defile him; he doth not view them without himself, but within himself, wherein all things in their *Ideas* are Beautiful and Comely: Our knowledg of a Deformed thing, is not a Deforming of our Understanding, but is beautiful in the Knowledg, tho' it be not in the object; nor is there any fear that the Understanding of God should become material by knowing material things, any more than our Understandings lose their Spirituality by knowing the nature of bodies; 'tis to be observed therefore that only those senses of men, as seeing, hearing, smelling, which have those qualities for their objects that come nearest the nature of spiritual things, as Light, Sounds, fragrant Odours, are ascrib'd to God in Scripture; not Touching or Tasting, which are senses that are not exer-

cis'd without a more immediate commerce with groſs matter; and the reaſon may be, becauſe we ſhould have no groſs thoughts of God, as if he were a body, and made of matter, like the things he knows.

2. As he knows all Creatures, ſo God knows *all the actions of Creatures.* He counts in particular all the ways of men. *Doth he not ſee all my ways, and count all my ſteps?* Job 31. 4. He *tells* their *wandrings*, as if one by one, *Pſal.* 56. 8. *His eyes are upon all the ways of man, and he ſees all his goings*, Job 34. 21. a Metaphor taken from men, when they look wiſtly, with fixed Eyes upon a thing, to view it in every circumſtance, whence it comes, whether it goes, to obſerve every little motion of it. Gods Eye is not a wandring, but a fixed Eye; and the ways of man are not only *before his eyes*, but he doth exactly *ponder them**; as one that will not be ignorant of the leaſt Mite in them, but weigh and examine them by the Standard of his Law; he may as well know the motions of our Members, as the Hairs of our Heads; the ſmalleſt actions before they be, whether Civil, Natural or Religious, fall under his Cognizance; what meaner than a man carrying a *Pitcher*, yet our Saviour foretels it? *Luke* 22. 10. God knows not only what men do, but what they would have done, had he not reſtrained them; what *Abimelech* would have done to *Sarah*, had not God put a Bar in his way, *Gen.* 20. 6. What a man, that is taken away in his Youth, would have done, had he lived to a riper Age; yea he knows the moſt ſecret words as well as actions; the words ſpoken by the *King of Iſrael* in his *Bed-Chamber*, were revealed to *Eliſha*, 2 Kings 6. 12. and indeed how can any action of man be conceal'd from God? Can we view the various actions of a heap of Ants or a Hive of Bees in a glaſs, without turning our Eyes; and ſhall not God behold the actions of all men in the World, which are leſs than Bees or Ants in his Sight, and more viſible to him than an Ant-Hill or Bee-Hive can be to the acuteſt eye of man?

* Prov. 5. 21.

3. As God knows all the actions of Creatures, ſo *he knows all the Thoughts of Creatures.* The thoughts are the moſt cloſeted acts of man, hid from men and Angels, unleſs diſclos'd by ſome outward Expreſſions; but God deſcends into the depths and abyſſes of the Soul, diſcerns the moſt inward contrivances; nothing is impenetrable to him; the Sun doth not ſo much enlighten the Earth, as God underſtands the Heart; all thoughts are as viſible to him, as Flies and motes enclos'd in a body of tranſparent Chryſtal; this man naturally allows to God. Men often ſpeak to God by the motions of their minds and ſecret Ejaculations; which they would not do, if it were not naturally implanted in them, that God knows all their inward motions; the Scripture is plain and poſitive in this, *He tries the Heart and the Reins*, Pſal. 7. 9. as men by the uſe of Fire diſcern the droſſie and purer parts of Metals: The ſecret intentions and aims, the moſt lurking affections ſeated in the Reins; he knows that which no man, no Angel is able to know; which a man himſelf knows not, nor makes any particular reflection upon; yea *he weighs the Spirit*, Prov. 16. 2. he exactly numbers all the devices and inclinations of men, as men do every piece of Coyn they tell out of a heap. *He diſcerns the Thoughts and intents of the heart*, Heb. 4. 12. all that is in the mind, all that is in the affections, every ſtirring and purpoſe; ſo that not one *thought* can be withheld *from him*, Job 42. 2. yea *Hell and Deſtruction are before him, much more then the Hearts of the Children of men?* Prov. 15. 11. he works all things in the Bowels of the Earth, and brings forth all things out of that Treaſure, ſay ſome: but more naturally, God knows the whole ſtate of the dead, all the receptacles and Graves of their bodies, all the bodies of men conſumed by the Earth, or devoured by living Creatures; things that ſeem to be out of all Being; he knows the Thoughts of the Devils and Damned Creatures, whom he hath caſt out of his care for ever, into the arms of his Juſtice, never more to caſt a delightful glance towards them; not a ſecret in any Soul in Hell, (which he hath no need to know, becauſe he ſhall not judg them by any of the Thoughts they now have, ſince they were condemned to punishment) is hid from him; much more is he acquainted with the thoughts of living men, the counſels of whoſe hearts are yet to be manifeſted, in order to their Tryal and Cenſure; yea, he knows them before they ſpring up into actual being, *Pſal.* 139. 2. *thou underſtandeſt my Thoughts afar off*; *my Thoughts*, that is, every Thought; tho' innumerable Thoughts paſs through me in a day, and that in the Sourſe and Fountain

when-

when it is yet in the Womb, before it is our Thought; if he knows them before their Exiſtence, before they can be properly called ours; much more doth he know them when they actually ſpring up in us; he knows the tendency of them, where the Bird will light when it is in flight; he knows them exactly, he is therefore called a *diſcerner* or criticizer *of the Heart*, Heb. 4. 12. As a Critick deſcerns every Letter, Point, and Stop; he is more intimate with us than our Souls with our Bodies, and hath more the Poſſeſſion of us than we have of our ſelves; he knows them by an inſpection into the heart, not by the Mediation of ſecond cauſes, by the looks or geſtures of men, as men may diſcern the Thoughts of one another.

1. *God diſcerns all good motions of the Mind and Will.* Theſe he puts into men, and needs muſt God know his own act; he knew the Son of *Jeroboam to have ſome good thing in him towards the Lord God of Iſrael*, 1 Kings 14. 13. and the integrity of *David* and *Hezekiah*; the freeſt motions of the Will and Affections to him. *Lord, thou knoweſt that I love thee*, ſaith *Peter*, *John* 21. 17. Love can be no more reſtrain'd, than the Will it ſelf can. A man may make another to grieve and deſire, but none can force another to Love.

2. *God diſcerns all the evil motions of the Mind and Will. Every imagination of the Heart*, Gen. 6. 5. the vanity of *mens thoughts*, Pſal. 94. 11. their inward darkneſs and deceitful diſguiſes: No wonder that God who faſhion'd the heart, ſhould underſtand the motions of it, *Pſal.* 33. 13, 15. *He looks from Heaven and beholds all the Children of men: he faſhioneth their hearts alike, and conſiders all their Works.* Doth any man make a Watch, and yet be ignorant of its motion? Did God fling away the Key to this ſecret Cabinet, when he framed it, and put off the power of unlocking it when he pleaſed? He did not ſurely frame it in ſuch a poſture as that any thing in it ſhould be hid from his Eye; he did not faſhion it to be Priviledged from his Government; which would follow, if he were ignorant of what was Minted and Coined in it.

He could not be a Judg to puniſh men, if the inward frames and principles of mens actions were concealed from him; an outward action may glitter to an outward eye, yet the ſecret ſpring be a deſire of applauſe, and not the Fear and Love of God. If the inward frames of the heart did lye covered from him in the ſecret receſſes of the heart; thoſe plauſible acts, which in regard of their Principles would merit a Puniſhment, would meet with a Reward; and God ſhould beſtow Happineſs where he had denounced Miſery. As without the knowledg of what is juſt, he could not be a Wiſe Law-giver; ſo without the knowledg of what is inwardly committed, he conld not be a Righteous Judg; acts that are rotten in the ſpring, might he judged good by the fair colour and appearance.

This is the glory of God at the laſt day, *to manifeſt the ſecrets of all hearts*, 1 Cor. 4. 5. and the Prophet *Jeremiah* links the power of Judging, and the Prerogative of trying the Hearts together, *Jer.* 11. 20. *but thou, O Lord of Hoſts, that Judgeſt Righteouſly, that trieſt the Reins and the Heart:* and Jer. 17. 10. *I the Lord ſearch the Heart, I try the Reins*; to what end? even to *give every man according to his way, and according to the fruit of his doings.* And indeed his binding up the whole Law with that command of not coveting, evidenceth that he will Judg men by the inward affections and frames of their hearts. Again, God ſuſtains the mind of man in every act of thinking; In him we have not only the Principle of Life, but every motion, the motion of our minds as well as of our members: *In him we live and move*, &c. Acts 17. 28. Since he ſupports the vigor of the faculty in every act, can he be ignorant of thoſe acts which ſpring from the faculty, to which he doth at that inſtant communicate power and ability?

Now this knowledg of the Thoughts of men is,

1. *An incommunicable Property, belonging only to the Divine Underſtanding.* Creatures indeed may know the thoughts of others by Divine Revelation, but not by themſelves; no Creature hath a Key immediately to open the minds of men, and ſee all that lodgeth there; no Creature can Fathom the heart by the Line of Created Knowledge *. *Devils* may have a conjectural Knowledg, and may gueſs at them, by the acquaintance they have with the Diſpoſition and Conſtitution of men, and the Images they behold in their Fancies; and by ſome marks which an inward

* *Daille* ſerm. Part. 1. p. 230.

inward imagination may ſtamp upon the Brain, Blood, Animal Spirits, Face, &c. But the knowing the Thoughts meerly as Thought, without any Impreſſion by it, is a Royalty God appropriates to himſelf, as the main ſecret of his Government, and a Perfection declarative of his Deity, as much as any elſe, *Jer.* 17. 9, 10. *the heart of man is deſperately wicked, who can know it* yes, there is one, and but one, *I the Lord ſearch the Heart, I try the Reins. Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks upon the Heart*, 1 Sam. 16. 7. where God is diſtinguiſht by this Perfection from all men whatſoever; others may know by Revelation, as *Eliſha* did, what was in *Gehazi's heart*, 2 Kings 5. 26. But God knows a man more than any man knows himſelf; What perſon upon earth underſtands the windings and turnings of his own heart, what reſerves it will have, what contrivances, what inclinations? all which God knows exactly.

2. *God acquires no new Knowledg of the thoughts and heart, by the Diſcovery of them in the actions.* He would then be but equal in this part of Knowledg to his Creature; no man or Angel but may thus arrive to the Knowledg of them; God were then excluded from an abſolute Dominion over the prime work of his lower Creation; he would have made a Creature ſuperior in this reſpect to himſelf, upon whoſe Will to diſcover, his knowledg of their inward intentions ſhould depend; and therefore when God is ſaid to ſearch the heart, we muſt not underſtand it as if God were ignorant before, and was fain to make an exact ſcrutiny and enquiry, before he attained what he deſired to know; but God condeſcends to our capacity in the expreſſion of his own Knowledg, ſignifying that his Knowledg is as compleat as any mans Knowledg can be, of the deſigns of others, after he hath ſifted them by a ſtrict and through examination, and wrung out a diſcovery of their intentions; that he knows them as perfectly as if he had put them upon the rack, and forced them to make a diſcovery of their ſecret Plottings. Nor muſt we underſtand that in *Gen.* 22. 12. where God ſaith, after *Abraham* had ſtretched out his hand to Sacrifice his Son, *Now I know that thou feareſt God*, as though God was ignorant of *Abrahams* gracious diſpoſition to him; did *Abrahams* drawing his Knife, furniſh God with a new Knowledg? no, God knew *Abrahams* pious inclinations before, *Gen.* 18. 19. *I know him that he will command his Children after him*, &c. *Knowledg* is ſometimes taken for approbation; then the ſenſe will be, now I approve this Fact as a Teſtimony of thy fear of me; ſince thy affection to thy *Iſaac* is extinguiſh'd by the more powerful flame of affection to my Will and Command; I now accept thee, and count thee a meet ſubject of my choiceſt Benefits; or *now I know*, that is, I have made known and manifeſted the Faith of *Abraham* to himſelf and to the World. Thus *Paul* uſes the word *know*, 1 Cor. 2. 2. *I have determined to know nothing*; that is to declare and teach nothing, to make known nothing but Chriſt Crucified; or elſe, *now I know*, that is, I have an evidence and experiment in this noble fact, that thou feareſt me. God often condeſcends to our capacity in ſpeaking of himſelf after the manner of men, as if he had (as men do) known the inward affections of others by their outward actions.

4. *God knows all the Evils and Sins of Creatures.*

1. *God knows all Sin.* This follows upon the other. If he knows all the actions and thoughts of Creatures, he knows alſo all the Sinfulneſs in thoſe acts and thoughts: This *Zophar* infers from Gods puniſhing men, *Job* 11. 11. *for he knows vain man, he ſees his wickedneſs alſo*; he knows every man, and ſees the wickedneſs of every man: *He looks down from Heaven*, and beholds not only the filthy perſons, but what is filthy in them *, all Nations in the World, and every man of every Nation, none of their iniquity is hid from his eyes; *He ſearches Jeruſalem with Candles*, Jer. 16. 17. God follows Sinners ſtep by ſtep, with his eye; and will not leave ſearching out till he hath taken them; a Metaphor taken from one that ſearches all Chinks with a Candle, that nothing can be hid from him. He knows it diſtinctly in all the parts of it, how an Adulterer riſes out of his Bed to commit Uncleanneſs, what contrivances he had, what ſteps he took, every circumſtance in the whole progreſs; not only evil in the bulk, but every one of the blacker ſpots upon it, which may moſt aggravate it. If he did not know *Evil*, how could he permit it, order it, puniſh it or pardon it? Doth he permit he knows not what? Order to his own holy ends what he is ignorant of? Puniſh or pardon that which he

* Pſal. 14. 2, 3.

he is uncertain whether it be a Crime or no? *Cleanſe me*, ſaith *David, from my ſecret faults*, Pſ. 19. 12. ſecret in regard of others, ſecret in regard of himſelf; how could God cleanſe him from that whereof he was ignorant? He knows Sins before they are committed, much more when they are in act; he foreknew the Idolatry and Apoſtacy of the *Jews*; what Gods they would ſerve, in what meaſure they would provoke him, and violate his Covenant *; he knew *Judas* his Sin long before *Judas* his actual exiſtence, foretelling it in the *Pſalms*; and Chriſt predicts it before he acted it. He ſees Sins future in his own permitting Will; he ſees Sins preſent in his own ſupporting act. As he knows things poſſible to himſelf, becauſe he knows his own power; ſo he knows thing practicable by the Creature, becauſe he knows the Power and Principles of the Creature *, This Sentiment of God is naturally writ in the fears of Sinners, upon Lightning, Thunder, or ſome Prodigious operation of God in the World; what is the Language of them, but that he ſees their Deeds, hears their words, knows the inward ſinfulneſs of their hearts; that he doth not only behold them as a meer Spectator, but conſiders them as as a juſt Judg. And the *Poets* ſay, that the Sins of men leapt into Heaven and were writ in Parchments of *Jupiter**, *ſcelus in terram geritur, in cœlo ſcribitur: Sin is acted on Earth, and recorded in Heaven.* God indeed doth not behold Evil with the approving eye; he knows it not with a practical knowledg to be the Author of it, but with a *ſpeculative* Knowledg, ſo as to underſtand the ſinfulneſs of it; or a knowledg *ſimplicis intelligentiæ*, of ſimple intelligence, as he permits them, not poſitively wills them; he knows them not with a knowledg of aſſent to them, but diſſent from them. Evil pertains to a diſſenting act of the mind, and an averſive act of the Will; and what tho' evil formally taken, hath no diſtinct Conception, becauſe it is a privation; a Defect hath no Being, and all knowledg is by the apprehenſion of ſome Being; would not this lye as ſtrongly againſt our own knowledg of Sin? Sin is a privation of the rectitude due to an act; and who doubts mans knowledg of Sin? by his knowing the act, he knows the deficiency of the act; the ſubject of evil hath a Being, and ſo hath a conception in the mind; that which hath no Being cannot be known by it ſelf, or in it ſelf, but will it follow that it cannot be known by its contrary? as we know darkneſs to be a privation of light, and folly to be a privation of wiſdom. God knows all good by himſelf, becauſe he is the Soveraign good; Is it ſtrange then, that he ſhould know all evil, ſince all evil is in ſome natural good?

* Deut. 31. 20, 21.

* *Fotherby* Atheoma p. 132.

* Ἐν Διὸς ἰατ *Croſſ.* Anthol. dec. 1. cap. 355. p. 101.

2. *The manner of Gods knowing Evil, is not ſo eaſily known.* And indeed, as we cannot comprehend the Eſſence of God, tho it is eaſily intelligible that there is ſuch a Being; ſo we can as little comprehend the manner of Gods Knowledg, tho' we cannot but conclude him to be an intelligent Being, a pure Underſtanding, knowing all things: As God hath a higher manner of Being than his Creatures, ſo he hath another and higher manner of knowing; and we can as little comprehend the manner of his knowing, as we can the manner of his Being. But as to the manner.

Doth not God know his own Law, and ſhall he not know how much any action comes ſhort of his Rule? he cannot know his own Rule without knowing all the deviations from it. He knows his own Holineſs, and ſhall he not ſee how any action is contrary to the Holineſs of his own nature? Doth not God know every thing that is true? and is it not true that this or that is evil? and ſhall God be ignorant of any Truth? How doth God know that he cannot lye, but by knowing his own Veracity? How doth God know that he cannot Dye, but by knowing his own Immutability? and by knowing thoſe, he knows what a Lye is, he knows what Death is; ſo if Sin never had been, if no Creature had ever been, God would have known what Sin was, becauſe he knows his own Holineſs; becauſe he knew what Law was fit to be appointed to his Creatures if he ſhould Create them, and that that Law might be tranſgreſt by them. God knows all good, all goodneſs in himſelf; he therefore hath a foundation in himſelf to know all that comes ſhort of that goodneſs, that is oppoſite to that Holineſs: As if Light were capable of Underſtanding, it would know Darkneſs only by knowing it ſelf; by knowing it ſelf, it would know what is contrary to it ſelf. God knows all Created goodneſs which he hath planted in the Creature; he knows

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then all defects from this goodneſs, what Perfection an act is deprived of; what is oppoſite to that goodneſs, and that is evil. As we know Sickneſs by Health, Diſcord by Harmony, Blindneſs by Sight, becauſe it is a privation of Sight; whoſoever knows one contrary knows the other; God knows unrighteouſneſs by the *Idea* which he hath of Righteouſneſs, and ſees an act deprived of that rectitude and goodneſs which ought to be in it; he knows evil becauſe he knows the cauſes whence evil proceeds *. A Painter knows a Picture of his own framing, and if any one daſhes any baſe colour upon it, ſhall not he alſo know that? God by his hand Painted all Creatures, impreſt upon man the fair ſtamp and colour of his own Image; the Devil defiles it, man daubs it; Doth not God, that knows his own Work, know how this Piece is become different from his Work? Doth not God, that knows his Creatures goodneſs, which himſelf was the Fountain of, know the change of this goodneſs? Yea, he knew before, that the Devil would ſow Tares where he had ſown Wheat; and therefore that Controverſie of ſome in the Schools, Whether God knew evil by its oppoſition to Created or Uncreated goodneſs, is needleſs. We may ſay God knows Sin as it is oppoſite to Created goodneſs, yet he knows it radically by his own goodneſs, becauſe he knows the goodneſs he hath communicated to the Creature by his own Eſſential goodneſs in himſelf. To conclude this head:

*Cuſan p. 245.

The knowledg of Sin doth not beſpot the Holineſs of Gods nature; for the bare knowledg of a Crime doth not infect the mind of man with the Filth and Pollution of that Crime; for then every man that knows an act of Murder committed by another, would by that bare knowledg be tainted with his Sin; yea and a Judg that condemns a Malefactor, may as well Condemn himſelf, if this were ſo: The Knowledg of Sins infects not the underſtanding that knows them, but only the Will that approves them. 'Tis no diſcredit to us to know evil, in order to paſs a right Judgment upon it; ſo neither can it be to God.

4. *God knows all future things, all things to come.* The differences of time cannot hinder a knowledg of all things by him, who is before time, above time, that is not meaſured by hours, or days, or years; If God did not know them, the hindrance muſt be in himſelf, or in the things themſelves, becauſe they are things to come: Not in himſelf; If it did, it muſt ariſe from ſome impotency in his own nature, and ſo we render him weak; or from an unwillingneſs to know, and ſo we render him lazy, and an Enemy to his own Perfection; for ſimply conſidered, the knowledg of more things is a greater Perfection than the knowledg of a few; and if the knowledg of a thing includes ſomething of Perfection, the ignorance of a thing includes ſomething of Imperfection: The knowledge of future things is a greater Perfection than not to know them, and is accounted amoung men a great part of Wiſdom, which they call fore-ſight; 'tis then ſurely a greater Perfection in God to know future things than to be ignorant of them. And would God rather have ſomething of imperfection than be poſſeſſor of all Perfection? Nor doth the hindrance lye in the things themſelves, becauſe their futurition depends upon his Will; for as nothing can actually be without his Will, giving it exiſtence; ſo nothing can future without his Will, deſigning the futurity of it. Certainly if God knows all things poſſible, which he will not do, he muſt know all things future, which he is not only able, but reſolved to do, or reſolved to permit. Gods perfect knowledg of himſelf, that is, of his own infinite Power and concluding Will, neceſſarily includes a *foreknowledg* of what he is able to do, and what he will do.

Again, if God doth not know future things, there was a time when God was ignorant of moſt things in the World; for before the Deluge he was more ignorant than after; the more things were done in the World, the more Knowledg did accrue to God, and ſo the more Perfection; then the Underſtanding of God was not perfect from Eternity, but in Time; nay, is not perfect yet, if he be ignorant of thoſe things which are ſtill to come to paſs; he muſt tarry for a Perfection, he wants till thoſe futurities come to be in act, till thoſe things which are to come, ceaſe to be future, and begin to be preſent. Either God knows them or deſires to know them; if he deſires to know them and doth not, there is ſomething wanting to him; all deſire ſpeaks an abſence of the object deſired, and a ſentiment of want in the perſon deſiring: If he doth not deſire to know them, nay,

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if he doth not actually know them, it destroys all Providence, all his Government of Affairs; for his Providence hath a concatenation of means with a prospect of something that is future: As in *Joseph*'s Case, who was put into the Pit, and sold to the *Egyptians* in order to his future advancement, and the preservation both of his Father and his envious Brethren. If God did not know all the future inclinations and actions of men, something might have been done by the will of *Potiphar*, or by the Free-will of *Pharaoh*, whereby *Joseph* might have been cut short of his advancement, and so God have been interrupted in the track and method of his designed Providences. He that hath decreed to govern man for that end he hath design'd him, knows all the means before, whereby he will govern him; and therefore hath a distinct and certain knowledg of all things; for a confused knowledg is an imperfection in Government; 'tis in this the Infiniteness of his Understandiug is more seen than in knowing things past or present; his eyes are as a *Flame of fire*, Revel. 1. 14. in regard of the penetrating vertue of them into things impenetrable by any else.

To make it further appear, *That God knows all things future*, Consider,

1. First, *Every thing which is the object of Gods Knowledg without himself, was once only future.* There was a moment when nothing was in Being but himself; he knew nothing actually past, because nothing was past; nothing actually present, because nothing had any existence but himself; therefore only what was future; and why not every thing that is future now, as well as only what was future and to come to pass just at the beginning of the Creation? God indeed knows every thing as present, but the things themselves known by him were not present but future; the whole Creation was once future, or else it was from Eternity; if it begun in time, it was once future in it self, else it could never have begun to be; Did not God know what would be created by him, before it was created by him *? Did he create he knew not what, and knew not before, what he should create? Was he ignorant before he acted, and in his acting, what his operation would tend to? Or did he not know the nature of things, and the ends of them, till he had produced them, and saw them in being? Creatures then did not arise from his Knowledg, but his Knowledg from them; he did not then Will that his Creatures should be, or he had then Willed what he knew not, and knew not what he Willed; they therefore must be known before they were made, and not known because they were made; he knew them to make them, and he did not make them to know them. By the same reason he knew what Creatures should be before they were, he knows still what Creatures shall be before they are*; for all things that are, were in God, not really in their own nature, but in him as a cause; so the Earth and Heavens were in him, as a Model is in the Mind of a Work-man, which is in his Mind and Soul, before it be brought forth into out-vvard act.

* *Petavius* changed.

Bradward. lib. 3. cap. 14.

2. *The Predictions of future things evidence this.* There is not a Prophecy of any thing to come, but is a spark of his fore-knovvledg, and bears Witness to the Truth of this assertion, in the punctual accomplishment of it; this is a thing challenged by God, as his ovvn peculiar, vvherein he surmounts all the *Idols* that mans Inventions have Goded in the World, Isa. 41. 21, 22. *Let them bring forth* (speaking of the Idols) *and shew us what shall happen, or declare us things to come: shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are Gods.* Such a fore-knovvledg of things to come, is here ascribed to God by God himself, as a distinction of him from all false Gods; such a Knovvledg, that if any could prove that they vvere possessers of, he vvould acknovvledg them Gods as vvell as himself; *that we may know that you are Gods*: He puts his Deity to stand or fall upon this account, and this should be the point, vvhich should decide the controversie, vvhether he or the Heathen Idols vvere the true God; the dispute is managed by this *medium*. He that knovvs things to come, is God; I knovv things to come, *ergo*, I am God; the *Idols* knovv not things to come, therefore they are not Gods; God submits the Being of his Deity to this Tryal. If God knovv things to come no more than the Heathen Idols, vvhich were either *Devils* or men, he vvould be in his ovvn account, no more a God than *Devils* or men; no more a God than the *Pagan Idols* he doth scoff at for this defect. If the Heathen Idols vvere to be stript of their Deity for vvant of

this foreknowledg of things to come, would not the true God alſo fall from the ſame excellency, if he were defective in Knowledg? He would in his own judgment no more deſerve the Title and Character of a God than they. How could he reproach them for that, if it were wanting in himſelf? It cannot be underſtood of future things in their cauſes, when the effects neceſſarily ariſe from ſuch cauſes, as Light from the Sun, and Heat from the Fire; many of theſe men know; more of them, Angels and Devils know; if God therefore had not a higher and farther Knowledg than this, he would not by this be proved to be God, any more than Angels and Devils, who know neceſſary effects in their cauſes. The Devils indeed did predict ſome things in the Heathen Oracles; but God is differenced from them here by the infiniteneſs of his Knowledg, in being able to predict things to come that they knew not, or things in their particularities, things that depended on the liberty of mans Will, which the Devils could lay no claim to a certain knowledg of. Were it only a conjectural knowledg that is here meant, the Devils might anſwer, they can conjecture, and ſo their Deity were as good as Gods; for tho God might know more things, and conjecture nearer to what would be, yet ſtill it would be but conjectural, and therefore not a higher kind of Knowledg than what the Devils might challenge. How much then is God beholden to the *Socinians* for denying the knowledg of all future things to him, upon which here he puts the trial of his Deity? God aſſerts his knowledg of things to come, as a manifeſt evidence of his Godhead; thoſe that deny therefore the Argument that proves it, deny the concluſion too; for this will neceſſarily follow, that if he be God becauſe he knows future things, then he that doth not know future things is not God; and if God knows not future things but only by conjecture, then there is no God; becauſe a certain knowledg, ſo as infallibly to predict things to come, is an inſeparable Perfection of the Deity: It was therefore well ſaid of *Auſtin*, that it was as high a madneſs to deny God to be, as to deny him the foreknowledg of things to come.

The whole *Prophetick* part of Scripture declares this Perfection of God; every *Prophets* Candle was lighted at this Torch, they could not have this foreknowledg of themſelves; Why might not many other men have the ſame inſight, if it were by nature? it muſt be from ſome ſuperior Agent; and all Nations owned Prophecy as a Beam from God, a fruit of Divine Illumination: Prophecy muſt be totally expunged if this be denyed; for the ſubjects of prophecy are things future; and no man is properly a Prophet, but in Prediction; now prediction is nothing but foretelling, and things fore-told are not yet come; and the foretelling of them, ſuppoſeth them not to be yet, but that they ſhall be in time; ſeveral ſuch Predictions we have in Scripture, the event whereof hath been certain. The years of Famine in *Egypt* foretold that he would order ſecond cauſes for bringing that Judgment upon them; the Captivity of his People in *Babylon*, the calling of the *Gentiles*, the rejection of the *Jews*. *Daniels* Revelation of *Nebuchadnezzars* Dream, that Prince refers to God as the revealer of Secrets, *Dan.* 2. 47. By the ſame reaſon that he knows one thing future by himſelf, and by the infiniteneſs of his Knowledg before any cauſes of them appear, he doth know all things future.

Pacuvius ſaid, *Siqui quæ eventura ſunt provident, æqui pari.*

3. *Some future things are known by men, and we muſt allow God a greater Knowledg than any Creature.* Future things in their *Cauſes* may be known by *Angels* and men, (as I ſaid before;) whoſoever knows neceſſary cauſes and the efficacy of them, may foretell the effects; and when he ſees the meeting and concurrence of ſeveral cauſes together, he may preſage what the conſequent effect will be of ſuch a concurrence: So Phyſitians foretel the Progreſs of a Diſeaſe, the increaſe or diminution of it by natural Signs; and *Aſtronomers* foretel Eclipſes by their obſervation of the motion of Heavenly Bodies, many years before they happen*, can they be hid from God, with whom are the reaſons of all things *? An expert *Gardener* by knowing the Root in the depth of Winter, can tell what Flowers and what Fruit it will bear, and the Month when they will peep out their heads; and ſhall not God much more, that knows the Principles of all his Creatures, and is exactly privy to all their natures and qualities, know what they will be, and what operations ſhall be from thoſe Principles? Now if God did know things only in their cauſes, his

* *Cuſanus.*

* *Fuller's Piſgab* l. 2. p. 281.

his Knowledg would not be more excellent than the knowledg of Angels and men, tho he might know more than they of the things that will come to paſs, from every cauſe ſingly, and from the concurrence of many. Now as God is more excellent in Being than his Creature; ſo he is more excellent in the objects of his Knowledg and the manner of his Knowledg; well then, ſhall a certain knowledg of ſomething future, and a conjectural knowledg of many things, be found among men; and ſhall a determinate and infallible knowledg of things to come, be found no where, in no Being? If the conjecture of future things ſavours of ignorance, and God knows them only by conjecture, there is then no ſuch thing in Being as a *perfect intelligent Being*, and ſo no God.

4. *God knows his own Decree and Will, and therefore muſt needs know all future things.* If any thing be future, or to come to paſs, it muſt be from it ſelf, or from God; not from it ſelf, then it would be independent and abſolute; if it hath its futurity from God, then God muſt know what he hath decreed to come to paſs; thoſe things that are future in neceſſary cauſes, God muſt know, becauſe he willed them to be cauſes of ſuch effects; he therefore knows them, becauſe he knows what he willed: The knowledg of God cannot ariſe from the things themſelves, for then the knowledg of God would have a cauſe without him; and Knowledg, which is an eminent perfection, would be conferred upon him by his Creatures. But as God ſees things poſſible in the glaſs of his own power, ſo he ſees things future in the Glaſs of his own Will; in his effecting Will, if he hath Decreed to produce them; in his permitting Will, as he hath Decreed to ſuffer them and diſpoſe of them: Nothing can paſs out of the rank of things meerly poſſible into the order of things future, before ſome Act of Gods Will hath paſſed for its futurition*.

* *Chequell.*

'Tis not from the infiniteneſs of his own Nature ſimply conſidered, that God knows things to be future; for as things are not future becauſe God is infinite (for then all poſſible things ſhould be future) ſo neither is any thing known to be future only becauſe God is infinite, but becauſe God hath Decreed it; his declaration of things to come, is founded upon his appointment of things to come*. In *Iſa.* 44.7. it is ſaid, *and who, as I, ſhall call and declare it, ſince I appointed the ancient people and the things that are coming*? Nothing is created or ordered in the World, but what God Decreed to be Created and ordered. God knows his own Decree, and therefore all things which he hath decreed to exiſt in time; not the minuteſt part of the World could have exiſted without his Will, not an action can be done without his Will; as Life the Principle, ſo Motion the fruit of that Life, is by and from God; as he decreed Life to this or that thing, ſo he decreed motion as the effect of Life, and Decreed to exert his Power in concurring with them, for producing effects natural from ſuch cauſes; for without ſuch a concourſe they could not have acted any thing, or produced any thing; and therefore as for natural things, which we call neceſſary cauſes, God fore-ſeeing them all particularly in his own Decree, foreſaw alſo all effects which muſt neceſſarily flow from them, becauſe ſuch cauſes cannot but act when they are furniſht with all things neceſſary for action: He knows his own Decrees, and therefore neceſſarily knows what he hath Decreed, or elſe we muſt ſay things come to paſs whether God will or no; or, that he Wills he knows not what; put this cannot be, for *known unto God are all his Works from the beginning of the World*, Acts 15.18. Now this neceſſarily flows from that Principle firſt laid down, That God knows himſelf, ſince nothing is future without Gods Will; if God did not know future things, he would not know his own Will; for as things poſſible could not be known by him, unleſs he knew the fulneſs of his own power; ſo things future could not be known by his Underſtanding, unleſs he knew the reſolves of his own Will.

* *Coccei* ſum. Theol. p. 50.

* *Coccei* ſum. Theol. p. 50.

* *Gamaul* in Aquin. Part 1. q. 24. cap. 3. p. 124.

Thus the Knowledg of God differs from the Knowledg of men; Gods knowledg of his Works precedes his Works, mans knowledg of Gods works follows his works; juſt as an Artificers knowledg of a Watch, Inſtrument or Engine, which he would make, is before his making of it; he knows the motions of it, and the reaſon of thoſe motions before it is made, becauſe he knows what he hath determin'd to Work; he knows not thoſe motions from the conſideration of them after they were made, as the Spectator doth, who by viewing the Inſtrument after it is made,

Maimonid. More Nevoch. Part 3. Cap. 21. p. 393, 394.

gains a knowledge from the ſight and conſideration of it, till he underſtands the reaſon of the whole; ſo we know things from the conſideration of them after we ſee them in being, and therefore we know not future things: But Gods Knowledg doth not ariſe from things becauſe they are, but becauſe he wills them to be, and therefore he knows every thing that ſhall be, becauſe it cannot be without his Will, as the Creator and Maintainer of all things; knowing his own ſubſtance he knows all his Works.

5. *If God did not know all future things, he would be mutable in his Knowledg.*

If he did not know all things that ever were or are to be, there would be upon the appearance of every new object, an addition of Light to his Underſtanding, and therefore ſuch a Change in him, as every new knowledg cauſes in the mind of a man, or as the Sun works in the VVorld upon its riſing every morning, ſcattering the darkneſs that was upon the face of the Earth; if he did not know them before they came, he would gain a knowledg by them when they came to paſs, which he had not before they were effected; his Knowledg would be new according to the newneſs of the objects, and multiplyed according to the multitude of the objects. If God did not know things to come as perfectly as he knew things preſent and paſt, but knew thoſe certainly, and the others doubtfully and conjecturally, he would ſuffer ſome Change, and acquire ſome perfection in his Knowledge, when thoſe future things ſhould ceaſe to be future, and become preſent; for he would know it more perfectly when it were preſent, than he did when it was future, and ſo there would be a Change from Imperfection to a Perfection; but God is every way immutable.

Beſides, that Perfection would not ariſe from the Nature of God, but from the Exiſtence and Preſence of the thing; but who will affirm that God acquires any Perfection of Knowledg from his Creatures, any more than he doth of Being? He would not then have had that Knowledg, and conſequently that Perfection from Eternity, as he had when he created the VVorld, and will not have a full Perfection of the Knowledg of his Creature till the end of the VVorld, nor of Immortal Souls, which will certainly act as well as live to Eternity; and ſo God never was, nor ever will be perfect in Knowledg; for when you have conceived millions of years, wherein Angels and Souls live and act, there is ſtill more coming than you can conceive, wherein they will act. And if God be alwayes changing to Eternity, from Ignorance to Knowledg, as thoſe acts come to be exerted by his Creatures, he vvill not be perfect in Knovvledg, no not to Eternity, but will always be changing from one degree of Knowledg to another; a very unworthy Conceit to entertain of the moſt Bleſſed, Perfect, and Infinite God!

Hence then it follows that,

1. *God foreknows all his Creatures.* All kinds which he determin'd to make, all particulars that ſhould ſpring out of every ſpecies, the time when they ſhould come forth of the VVomb, the manner how, *In thy Book all Members were written*, Pſal. 139. 16. *Members* is not in the *Hebr.* whence ſome refer *all*, to all living Creatures whatſoever, and all the parts of them which God did foreſee; he knew the numbers of Creatures vvith all their parts, they vvere vvritten in the Book of his fore-knovvledg; the duration of them, hovv long they ſhall remain in Being, and act upon the Stage; he knovvs their ſtrength, the links of one cauſe vvith another, and vvhat vvill follovv in all their Circumſtances, and the ſeries, and combination of effects vvith their cauſes.

The duration of every thing is fore-knovvn, becauſe determin'd, *Job* 14. 5. *Seeing his dayes are determin'd the number of his months are with thee, thou haſt appointed his bounds that that he cannot paſs*; bounds are fixed, beyond vvhich none ſhall reach; he ſpeaks of *dayes* and *months*, not of *years*, to give us notice of Gods particular fore-knovvledg of every thing, of every day, month, year, hour of a mans life.

2. *All the acts of his Creatures are foreknown by him.* All natural acts becauſe he knovvs their cauſes; voluntary acts I ſhall ſpeak of aftervvards.

3. *This foreknowledge was certain.* For it is an unvvorthy notion of God to aſcribe to him a conjectural Knovvledg; if there vvere only a conjectural Knovvledg, he could but conjecturally foretel any thing; and then it is poſſible the events of things

things might be contrary to his Predictions. It would appear then that God were deceived and mistaken, and then there could be no rule of trying things whether they were from God or no; for the Rule God sets down to discern his Words from the Words of false Prophets, is the event and certain accomplishment of what is Predicted. *Deut.* 18. 21. To that question, *How shall we know whether God hath spoken or no?* He answers, that *if the thing doth not come to pass, the Lord hath not spoken.* If his Knowledg of future things were not certain, there were no stability in this Rule, it would fall to the ground: We never yet find God deceiv'd in any Prediction, but the event did answer his fore-Revelation; his fore-knowledg therefore is certain and infallible. We cannot make God uncertain in his Kuowledg, but we must conceive him fluctuating and wavering in his Will; but if his Will be not *Yea* and *Nay*, but *Yea*, his Knowledg is certain, because he doth certainly Will and Resolve.

4. *This foreknowledg was from Eternity.* Seeing he knows things possible in his Power, and things future in his Will; if his Power and Resolves were from Eternity, his Knowledg must be so too; or else we must make him ignorant of his own Power, and ignorant of his own Will from Eternity; and consequently not from Eternity Blessed and Perfect. His knowledg of possible things must run Parallel with his Power, and his Knowledg of future things run Parallel with his Will. If he Willed from Eternity, he knew from Eternity what he Willed; but that he did Will from Eternity, we must grant, unless we would render him changeable, and conceive him to be made in time of not Willing, Willing. The Knowledg God hath in time, was alway one and the same, because his Understanding is his proper Essence, as perfect as his Essence, and of an immutable nature.

* And indeed the actual existence of a thing is not simply necessary to its being perfectly known; we may see a thing that is past out of Being, when it doth not actually exist; and a Carpenter may know the House he is to Build, before it be built, by the model of it in his own mind; much more we may conceive the same of God whose Decrees were before the Foundation of the World*; and to be before time was, and to be from Eternity, hath no difference. As God in his Being exceeds all beginning of time, so doth his Knowledg all motions of time.

* *Gamach* in Aquin. Part. 1. q. 14. c. 3. p. 124.

* Eph. 1. 5. and in other places.

5. *God foreknows all things as present with him from Eternity.* * As he knows mutable things with an immutable and firm Kuowledg, so he knows future things with a present Knowledg; not that the things which are produced in time, were actually and really present with him in their own Beings from Eternity; for then they could not be produced in time; had they a real existence, then they would not be Creatures, but God; and had they actual Being, then they could not be future, for future speaks a thing to come that is not yet: If things had been actually present with him, and yet future, they had been made before they were made, and had a being before they had a Being; but they were all present to his Knowledg as if they were in actual being, because the reason of all things that were to be made, was present with him.

* *Gerhard* Exeges ch. 8. de Deo sect. 13. p. 303.

* The reason of the Will of God that they shall be, was equally Eternal with him, wherein he saw what, and when, and how he would Create things, how he would govern them, to what ends he would direct them. Thus all things are present to Gods Knowledg, tho in their own nature they may be past or future, not in *esse reali*, but in *esse intelligibili*, objectively; not actually present *; for as the unchangableness and infiniteness of Gods knowledg of changeable and finite things, doth not make the things he knows immutable and infinite, so neither doth the Eternity of his Knowledg, make them actually present with him from Eternity; but all things are present to his Understanding, because he hath at once a view of all successions of times; and his knowledg of future things is as perfect as of present things, or what is past; 'tis not a certain knowledg of present things, and an uncertain knowledg of future; but his knowledg of one is as certain and unerring as his knowledg of the other; * as a man that beholds a Circle with several lines from the Center, beholds the lines as they are joyned in the Center, beholds them also as they are distant and sever'd from one another, beholds them in their extent and in their point all at once, tho they may have a great distance from one another

* *Bradward* l. 3. c. 14.

* *Hornbeck.*

* *Pugio Fidei* part I. ch. 19.

ther: He ſaw from the beginning of time to the laſt minute of it, all things coming out of their cauſes, marching in their order according to his own appointment; as a man may ſee a multitude of Ants, ſome creeping one way, ſome another, employ'd in ſeveral buſineſſes for their Winter proviſion. The Eye of God at once runs through the whole Circle of Time; as the eye of man upon a Tower ſees all the Paſſengers at once, tho ſome be paſt, ſome under the Tower, ſome coming at a farther diſtance: *God* ſaith *Job*, *looks to the end of the earth, and ſees, under the whole Heaven*, Job 28. 24. The Knowledg of God is expreſt by ſight in Scripture, and futurity to God is the ſame thing as diſtance to us; we can with a Perſpective-glaſs make things that are a far off, appear as if they were near; and the Sun, ſo many Thouſand miles diſtant from us, to appear as if it were at the end of the Glaſs; Why ſhould then future things be at ſo great a diſtance from Gods Knowledg, when things ſo far from us may be made to approach ſo near to us?

God conſiders all things in his own ſimple Knowledg, as if they were now acted; and therefore ſome have choſen to call the knowledg of things to come, not *preſcience* or foreknowledg, but *Knowledg*, becauſe God ſees all things in one inſtant, *ſcientiâ nunquam deficientis inſtantiæ**. Upon this account things that are to come, are ſet down in Scripture as preſent, and ſometimes as paſt, *Iſa.* 9. 6. *Unto us a Child is Born*, tho not yet Born; ſo of the Sufferings of Chriſt, *Iſa.* 53. 4. &c. *He hath born our griefs, he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was taken from Priſon*, &c. not ſhall be; and *Pſal.* 22. 18. *They part my Garments among them*, as if it were preſent; all to expreſs the certainty of Gods fore-knowledg, as if things were actually preſent before him.

* *Boet.* conſolat. lib. 5. prof. 6.

6. *This is proper to God, and incommunicable to any Creature.* Nothing but what is Eternal can know all things that are to come: Suppoſe a Creature might know things that are to come, after he is in being; he cannot know things ſimply as future, becauſe there were things future before he was in Being. The Devils know not mens hearts, therefore cannot foretel their actions with any certainty; they may indeed have a knowledg of ſome things to come, but it is only conjectural, and often miſtaken; as the *Devil* was in his Predictions among the *Heathen*, and in his preſage of *Job*'s *Curſing God to his face* upon his preſſing Calamities, *Job* 1. 11. Sometimes indeed they have a certain knowledg of ſomething future by the Revelation of God, when he uſes them as Inſtruments of his Vengeance, or for the Trial of his People, as in the Caſe of *Job*, when he gave him a Commiſſion to ſtrip him of his Goods; or as the Angels have, when he uſes them as Inſtruments of the deliverance of his People.

7. *Tho this be certain, that God foreknows all things and actions; yet the manner of his knowing all things before they come, is not ſo eaſily reſolved.* We muſt not therefore deny this Perfection in God, becauſe we underſtand not the manner how he hath the knowledg of all things: It were unworthy for us to own no more of God than we can perfectly conceive of him; we ſhould then own no more of him than that he doth exiſt. *Canſt thou*, ſaith *Job*, *by ſearching, find out God? Canſt thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?* Job 11. 7. Do we not ſee things unknown to inferior Creatures, to be known to our ſelves? Irrational Creatures do not apprehend the nature of a man, nor what we conceive of them when we look upon them; nor do we know what they fancy of us when they look wiſtly upon us; for ought as I know, we underſtand as little the manner of their imaginations, as they do of ours; and ſhall we aſcribe a darkneſs in God as to future things, becauſe we are ignorant of them, and of the manner how he ſhould know them*? Shall we doubt whether God doth certainly know thoſe things vvhich vve only conjecture? As our Povver is not the meaſure of the Povver of God, ſo neither is our Knovvledg the Judg of the Knovvledg of God, no better nor ſo vvell as an irrational nature can be the Judg of our Reaſon: Do vve prrfectly knovv the manner hovv vve knovv? Shall vve therefore deny that vve knovv any thing? vve knovv vve have ſuch a faculty vvhich vve call Underſtanding, but doth any man certainly knovv vvhat it is? And becauſe he doth not, ſhall he deny that vvhich is plain and evident to him? Becauſe vve cannot aſcertain our ſelves of the cauſes of the ebbing and flovving of the Sea, of the man-

* *Ficinus* in Procl. cap. 19.

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ner how Minerals are ingendred in the Earth, ſhall we therefore deny that which our eyes convince us of?

And this will be a preparation to the laſt thing.

5. *God knows all future contingencies*, that is, *God knows all things that ſhall accidentally happen*, or as we ſay, *by Chance*; *and he knows all the free motions of mens Wills that ſhall be to the end of the World.*

If *all things* be open to him, *Heb.* 4. 13. Then all contingencies are, for they are in the number of *things*; and as, according to Chriſts ſpeech, thoſe things that are impoſſible to man, are poſſible to God; ſo thoſe things which are unknown to man, are known to God; becauſe of the infinite fulneſs and perfection of the Divine Underſtanding.

Let us ſee *what a Contingent is.*

That is *contingent* which we commonly call accidental, as when a Tile falls ſuddenly upon a mans head as he is walking in the Street; or when one letting off a Musket at random, ſhoots another he did not intend to hit; ſuch was that Arrow whereby *Ahab* was killed, ſhot by a Soldier at a *venture* *, this ſome call a mixt contingent, made up partly of neceſſity, and partly of accident; 'tis neceſſary the Bullet, when ſent out of the Gun, or Arrow out of the Bovv, ſhould fly and light ſomevvhere, but it is an accident that it hits this or that man, that vvas never intended by the Archer. Other things, as voluntary actions, are purely contingents, and have nothing of neceſſity in them; all free actions that depend upon the Will of man, whether to do, or not to do, are of this nature, becauſe they depend not upon a neceſſary cauſe, as burning doth upon the Fire, moiſtning upon Water, or as deſcent or falling down is neceſſary to a heavy body; for thoſe cannot in their own nature do otherwiſe; but the other actions depend upon a free Agent, able to turn to this or that point, and determine himſelf as he pleaſes. 1 Kings 22. 39.

Now we muſt know, that what is accidental in regard of the Creature, is not ſo in regard of God, the manner of *Ahab*'s Death was accidental, in regard of the hand by which he was ſlain, but not in regard of God who foretold his Death, and foreknew the Shot, and directed the Arrow; God was not uncertain before of the manner of his fall, nor hovered over the Battel to watch for an opportunity to accompliſh his own Prediction; what may be or not be, in regard of us, is certain in regard of God; to imagine that what is accidental to us, is ſo to God, is to meaſure God by our ſhort line. How many events following upon the reſults of Princes in their Counſels, ſeem to perſons ignorant of thoſe Counſels to be a hap-hazard, yet were not contingencies to the Prince and his aſſiſtants, but foreſeen by him as certainly to iſſue ſo as they do, which they knew before would be the fruit of ſuch cauſes and inſtruments they would knit together? That may be neceſſary in regard of Gods foreknowledg, which is meerly accidental in regard of the natural diſpoſition of the immediate cauſes which do actually produce it; Contingent in its own nature, and in regard of us; but fixed in the Knowledg of God: * *One* illuſtrates it by this *ſimilitude*: A Maſter ſends two Servants to one and the ſame place, two ſeveral ways, unknown to one another, they meet at the place which their Maſter had appointed them; their meeting is accidental to them, one knows not of the other, but it was foreſeen by the Maſter that they ſhould ſo meet, and that in regard of them it would ſeem a meer accident, till they came to explain the buſineſs to one another: Both the neceſſity of their meeting in regard of their Maſters Order, and the accidentalneſs of it in regard of themſelves, were in both their circumſtances foreknown by the Maſter that employ'd them. * *Zanch.*

For the clearing of this, take it in this method.

1. *'Tis an unworthy conceit of God in any to exclude him from the knowledg of theſe things.*

1. *It will be a ſtrange contracting of him, to allow him no greater a Knowledg than we have our ſelves.*

Contingencies are known to us when they come into act, and paſs from futurity to reality; and when they are preſent to us, we can order our affairs accordingly; ſhall we allow God no greater a meaſure of knowledg than we have, and make him as blind as our ſelves, not to ſee things of that nature before they come

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to paſs? Shall God know them no more; Shall we imagin God knows no otherwiſe than we know? and that he doth, like us ſtand gazing with admiration at events? Man can conjecture many things; is it fit to aſcribe the ſame uncertainty to God; as tho he as well as we, could have no aſſurance till the iſſue appear in the view of all? If God doth not certainly foreknow them, he doth but conjecture them; but a conjectural knowledge is by no means to be faſtened on God; for that is not knowledg but gueſs, and deſtroys a Deity by making him ſubject to miſtake; for he that only gueſſeth, may gueſs wrong; ſo that this is to make God like our ſelves, and ſtrip him of an univerſally acknowledged Perfection of Omniſcience. A conjectural Knowledg, ſaith one *, is as unworthy of God, as the Creature is unworthy of Omniſcience? 'Tis certain Man hath a liberty to act many things this or that way as he pleaſes; to walk to this or that quarter, to ſpeak or not to ſpeak, to do this or that thing, or not to do it; which way a man will certainly determine himſelf, is ununknown before to any Creature, yea often at the preſent to himſelf, for he may be in ſuſpenſe; but ſhall we imagin this future determination of himſelf is conceal'd from God? Thoſe that deny Gods foreknowledg in ſuch caſes, muſt either ſay, that God hath an opinion that a Man will reſolve rather this way than that; but then if a man by his liberty determin himſelf contrary to the opinion of God, is not God then deceived? and what rational Creature can own him for a God that can be deceived in any thing? or elſe they muſt ſay that God is at uncertainty, and ſuſpends his Opinion without determining it any way; then he cannot know free acts till they are done; he would then depend upon the Creature for his information; his knowledg would be every inſtant increaſed, as things, he knew not before, came into act; and ſince there are every minute an innumerable multitude of various imaginations in the minds of men, there would be every minute an acceſſion of new Knovvledg to God, which he had not before; beſides this Knowledg would be mutable according to the Wavering and Weather-cock reſolutions of men, one while ſtanding to this point, another while to that, if he depended upon the Creatures determination for his knowledg.

* *Scrivener.*

2. *If the free acts of men were unknown before to God, no man can ſee how there can be any Government of the World by him.* Such contingencies may happen, and ſuch reſolves of mens Free-Wills unknown to God, as may perplex his affairs, and put him upon new Counſels and methods for attaining thoſe ends which he ſettled at the firſt Creation of things; if things happen, which God knows not of before, this muſt be the conſequence; where there is no Fore-ſight, there is no Providence; things may happen ſo ſudden, if God be ignorant of them, that they may give a check to his intentions and Scheme of Government, and put him upon changing the model of it. Hovv often doth a ſmall intervening circumſtance, unforeſeen by man, daſh in pieces a long meditated and vvell-formed Deſign? To govern neceſſary cauſes, as Sun and Stars, vvhoſe effects are natural and conſtant in themſelves, is eaſie to be imagin'd; but hovv to govern the World, that conſiſts of ſo many men of Free-vvill, able to determin themſelves to this or that, and vvhich have no conſtancy in themſelves, as the Sun and Stars have, cannot be imagin'd, unleſs vve vvill allovv in God as great a certainty of Fore-knovvledge of the deſigns and actions of men, as there is inconſtancy in their reſolves: God muſt be altering the methods of his Government every day, every hour, every minute, according to the determinations of men, vvhich are ſo various and changable in the vvhole compaſs of the vvorld in the ſpace of one minute; he muſt vvait to ſee vvhat the counſels of men vvill be, before he could ſettle his ovvn methods of Government; and ſo muſt govern the World according to their mutability, and not according to any certainty in himſelf. But his *counſel is ſtable* in the midſt of multitudes of free *devices* in the heart of man, *Prov.* 19. 21. and knovving them all before, orders them to be ſubſervient to his ovvn ſtable counſel. If he cannot knovv vvhat to morrovv vvill bring forth in the mind of a man, hovv can he certainly ſettle his ovvn determination of Governing him? his Decrees and Reſolves muſt be Temporal, and ariſe *pro re natâ*, and he muſt alvvay be in counſel vvhat he ſhould do upon every change of mens minds. This is an unvvorthy conceit of the Infinite Majeſty of Heaven to make his Government depend upon the reſolves of men, rather than their reſolves upon the deſign of God.

2 'Tis therefore certain, that God doth foreknow the free and voluntary acts of man. Hovv could he elſe order his People to aſk of him *things to come*, in order to their deliverance, ſuch things as depended upon the Will of man, if he foreknevv not the motions of their Will? *Iſa.* 45. 11,

1. *Actions good or indifferent depending upon the liberty of mans Will as much as any whatſoever.* Several of theſe he hath foretold; Not only a *Perſon* to build up *Jeruſalem* vvas Predicted by him, but the *Name* of that perſon, *Cyrus*, *Iſa.* 44. 28. What is more contingent, or is more the effect of the liberty of mans Will than the Names of their Children? Was not the Deſtruction of the *Babyloniſh* Empire foretold, vvhich *Cyrus* undertook, not by any compulſion, but by a free inclination and reſolve of his own Will? And vvas not the diſmiſſion of the *Jews* into their ovvn Country, a voluntary act in that Conqueror? if you conſider the liberty of mans Will, might not *Cyrus* as vvell have continued their Yoke, as have ſtruck off their Chains, and kept them Captive as vvell as diſmiſt them? Had it not been for his ovvn intereſt, rather to have ſtrengthned the Fetters of ſo turbulent a People, vvho being tenacious of their Religion and Lavvs, different from that profeſt by the vvhole World, vvere like to make diſturbances more vvhen they vvere linkt in a body in their ovvn Country, than vvhen they vvere tranſplanted and ſcatter'd into the ſeveral parts of his Empire? It vvas in the povver of *Cyrus*, (take him as a man) to chuſe one or the other; his intereſt invited him to continue their Captivity, rather than grant their Deliverance; yet God knevv that he vvould vvillingly do this rather than the other; he knevv this vvhich depended upon the Will of *Cyrus*; and vvhy may not an infinite God foreknovv the free acts of all men, as vvell as of one? If the liberty of *Cyrus*'s Will vvas no hinderance to Gods certain and infallible foreknovvledg of it, hovv can the contingency of any other thing be a hinderance to him? for there is the ſame reaſon of one and all; and his Government extends to every Village, every Family, every Perſon, as vvell as to Kingdoms and Nations.

So God foretold by his *Prophet*, not only the deſtruction of *Jeroboams Altar*, but the Name of the Perſon that ſhould be the Inſtrument of it, 1 *Kings* 13. 2. and this about 300. years before *Joſiah*'s Birth. 'Tis a vvonder that none of the Pious Kings of *Judah* in deteſtation of Idolatry, and hopes to recover again the Kingdom of *Iſrael*, had in all that ſpace Named one of their Sons by that Name of *Joſiah*, in hopes that that Prophecy ſhould be accompliſht by him: That *Manaſſeh* only ſhould do this, who vvas the greateſt imitator of *Jeroboams* Idolatry among all the *Jewiſh* Kings, and indeed vvent beyond them; and had no mind to deſtroy in another Kingdom vvhat he propagated in his ovvn. What is freer than the impoſition of a Name, yet this he foreknew, and this *Joſiah* was *Manaſſes*'s Son, 2 *Kings* 21. 26. Was there any thing more voluntary than for *Pharaoh* to Honour the *Butler* by reſtoring him to his place, and puniſh the *Baker* by hanging him on a Gibbet? yet this was foretold, *Gen.* 40. 8. And were not all the voluntary acts of men, which were the means of *Joſephs* advancement, foreknown by God, as well as his exaltation, which was the end he aimed at by thoſe means? Many of theſe may be reckon'd up.

Can all the free acts of man ſurmount the infinite capacity of the Divine Underſtanding? If God ſingles out one voluntary action in man as contingent as any, and lying among a vaſt number of other deſigns and reſolutions, both antecedent and ſubſequent; Why ſhould he not know the whole maſs of mens thoughts and actions, and pierce into all that the liberty of mans VVill can effect? VVhy ſhould he not know every grain, as well as one that lies in the midſt of many of the ſame kind?

And ſince the *Scripture* gives ſo large and account of contingents, predicted by God; no man can certainly prove that any thing is un-foreknown to him. 'Tis as reaſonable to think he knows every contingent; as that he knows ſome that lye as much hid from the eye of any Creature, ſince there is no more difficulty to an infinite underſtanding to know all, than to know ſome *. Indeed if we deny Gods

* *The Stoicks that thought their Souls to be ſome particle of God* Ἀποσπάσματα, *pieces pull'd off from him, did conclude from thence that he knew all the motions of their Souls as his own mover, as things coherent with him. Arrian Epictet. lib.* 1. *chap.* 14. *p.* 60.

foreknowledg of the voluntary actions of men, we muſt ſtrike our ſelves off from the belief of Scripture Predictions, that yet remain unaccompliſht, and will be brought about by the voluntary engagements of men, as the ruin of *Antichriſt*, &c. If God foreknows not the ſecret motions of mans Will, how can he foretel them? If we ſtrip him of this Perfection of Preſcience, why ſhould we believe a word of Scripture-Predictions? all the Credit of the Word of God is torn up by the Roots. If God were uncertain of ſuch events, how can we reconcile Gods declaration of them to his Truth; and his demanding our Belief of them, to his Goodneſs? Were it good and righteous in God to urge us to the Belief of that he were uncertain of himſelf? how could he be True in Predicting things he were not ſure of? or good in requiring credit to be given to that which might be falſe? This would neceſſarily follow, if God did not foreknow the motions of mens Wills, whereby many of his Predictions were fulfilled, and ſome remain yet to be accompliſht.

2. *God foreknows the voluntary ſinful motions of mens Wills.*

1. *God hath foretold ſeveral of them*, Were not all the minute ſinful circumſtances about the death of our Bleſſed Redeemer, as the piercing him, giving him gall to Drink, foretold, as well as the not breaking his Bones, and parting his Garments? What were thoſe but the free actions of men, which they did willingly without any conſtraint? And thoſe foretold by *David*, *Iſaiah*, and other *Prophets*, ſome above a *thouſand*, ſome *eight hundred*, and ſome more, ſome fewer years, before they came to paſs; and events punctually anſwered the Prophecies. Many ſinful acts of men, which depended upon their Free-Will, have been foretold: The *Egyptians* voluntary oppreſſing *Iſrael*, *Gen.* 15. 13. *Pharaoh's hardening his heart* againſt the Voice of *Moſes*, Exod 3. 19. That *Iſaiah's* Meſſage would be in vain to the People, *Iſa.* 6. 9. that the *Iſraelites* would be rebellious after *Moſes* his Death, and turn Idolaters, *Deut.* 31. 16. *Judas* his betraying of our *Saviour*, a voluntary action, *John* 6. *ult.* he was not forced to do what he did, for he had ſome kind of Repentance for it; and not violence, but voluntarineſs falls under repentance.

2. *His Truth hath depended upon this fore-ſight.* Let us conſider that in *Gen.* 5. 16. but *the fourth Generation they ſhall come hither again*; that is, the Poſterity of *Abraham* ſhall come into *Canaan*; *for the iniquity of the* Amorites *is not yet full* *. God makes a Promiſe to *Abraham*, of giving his Poſterity the Land of *Canaan*, not preſently, but in the fourth Generation; if the Truth of God be infallible in the performance of his Promiſe, his Underſtanding is as infallible in the foreſight of the *Amorites* ſin; the fulneſs of their iniquity was to precede the *Iſraelites* Poſſeſſion. Did the Truth of God depend upon an uncertainty? did he make the Promiſe hand over head (as we ſay)? How could he with any VViſdom and Truth aſſure *Iſrael* of the Poſſeſſion of the Land in the fourth *Generation*, if he had not been ſure that the *Amorites* would fill up the meaſure of their Iniquities by that time? If *Abraham* had been a *Socinian*, to deny Gods Knowledg of the free acts of men, had he not had a fine excuſe for unbelief? VVhat would his reply have been to God? Alas, Lord, this is not a Promiſe to be relied upon, the *Amorites* iniquity depends upon the acts of their Free-VVill, and ſuch thou canſt have no Knowledg of; thou canſt ſee no more than a likelihood of their iniquity being full, and therefore there is but a likelihood of thy performing thy Promiſe, and not a certainty: VVould not this be judged not only a ſawcy, but a Blaſphemous Anſwer? And upon theſe Principles the Truth of the moſt faithful God had been daſht to uncertainty and a peradventure.

Vid. *Rivet.* in loc. exerci. 86. p. 329.

3. *God provided a remedy for mans Sin, and therefore foreſaw the entrance if it into the World by the fall of* Adam. He had a Decree before the Foundation of the World, to manifeſt his Wiſdom in the Goſpel by *Jeſus Chriſt*, an *Eternal purpoſe in Jeſus Chriſt*, Eph. 3. 11. And a Decree of Election paſt before the foundation of the World; a ſeparation of ſome to redemption, and forgiveneſs of Sin in the Blood of Chriſt, in whom they were from Eternity *choſen*, as well as in time *accepted* in Chriſt, *Eph.* 1. 4, 6, 7. which is called a *purpoſe in himſelf*, v. 9. had not Sin entred, there had been no occaſion for the Death of the Son of God, it being every where in Scripture laid upon that ſcore; a Decree for the ſhedding of Blood, ſuppoſed a Decree for the Permiſſion

of

of Sin, and acertain foreknowledg of God, that it would be committed by man. An uncertainty of foreknowledg, and a fixedneſs of purpoſe, are not conſiſtent in a wiſe man, much leſs in the only Wiſe God. Gods purpoſe to manifeſt his Wiſdom to men and Angels in this way, might have been defeated, had God had only a conjectural foreknowledg of the fall of man; and all thoſe ſolemn purpoſes of diſplaying his Perfections in thoſe methods had been to no purpoſe*; the Proviſion of a remedy ſuppos'd a certainty of the Diſeaſe: If a *Sparrow* fall not to the ground without the Will of God, how much leſs could ſuch a Deplorable ruin fall upon mankind, without Gods Will permitting it, and his knowledg foreſeeing it?

* *Maref.* cont. Volkel. lib. 1. cap. 24. p. 343.

'Tis not hard to conceive how God might foreknow it; * he indeed decreed to Create man in an excellent State; the goodneſs of God could not but furniſh him with a Power to ſtand; yet in his Wiſdom he might foreſee, that the Devil would be envious to mans happineſs, and would out of Envy attempt his ſubverſion. As God knew of what temper the faculties were he had endued man with, and how far they were able to endure the aſſaults of a Temptation; ſo he alſo foreknew the grand ſubtility of *Satan*, how he would lay his Mine, and to what Point he would drive his Temptation; how he would propoſe and manage it, and direct his Battery againſt the ſenſitive appetite, and aſſault the weakeſt part of the Fort; might he not foreſee that the efficacy of the Temptation would exceed the meaſure of the reſiſtance? cannot God know how far the malice of *Satan* would extend, what *Shots* he would according to his nature uſe, how high he would charge his Temptation without his powerful reſtraint, as well as an Engineer judg how many ſhots of a Cannot will make a breach in a Town, and how many Caſks of Powder will blow up a Fortreſs, who never yet built the one nor founded the other? We may eaſily conclude God could not be deceived in the Judgment of the iſſue and event, ſince he knew how far he would let *Satan* looſe, how far he would permit man to act; and ſince he dives to the bottom of the nature of all things, he foreſaw that *Adam* was endued with an ability to ſtand; as he foreſaw that *Benhadad* might naturally recover of his Diſeaſe; but he foreſaw alſo that *Adam* would ſink under the allurements of the Temptation, as he foreſaw that *Hazael* would not let *Benhadad* live, 2 *Kings* 8. 10.

* *Amyrald.* de Prædeſtin. cap. 6.

Now ſince the whole race of mankind lies in Corruption, and is ſubject to the power of the *Devil*, 1 *John* 3. 18. may not God that knows that corruption in every mans nature, and the force of every mans ſpirit, and what every particular nature will encline him to upon ſuch objects propoſed to him, and what the reaſons of the Temptation will be, know alſo the iſſues? is there any difficulty in Gods foreknowing this, ſince man knowing the nature of one he is well acquainted with, can conclude what ſentiments he will have, and how he will behave himſelf upon preſenting this or that object to him.

If a man that underſtands the diſpoſition of his Child or Servant, knows before what he will do upon ſuch an occaſion; may not God much more, who knows the inclinations of all his Creatures, and from Eternity run with his eyes over all the works he intended? Our Wills are in the number of cauſes; and ſince God knows our Wills, as cauſes, better than we do our ſelves, why ſhould he be ignorant of the effects.

God determines to give Grace to ſuch a man; not to give it to another, but leave him to himſelf, and ſuffer ſuch temptations to aſſault him; now God knowing the corruption of man in the whole maſs, and in every part of it; is it not eaſie for him to foreknovv vvhat the future actions of the VVill vvill be, vvhen the Tinder and Fire meet together, and hovv ſuch a man vvill determine himſelf both as to the ſubſtance and manner of the action? Is it not eaſie for him to knovv, hovv a corrupted Temper and a Temptation vvill ſuit? God is exactly privy to all the gall in the hearts of men, and vvhat Principles they vvill have, before they have a Being. *He knows their thoughts afar off*, Pſal. 139. 2. as far off as Eternity, as ſome explain the vvords; and thoughts are as voluntary as any thing; he knovvs the povver and inclinations of men in the order of ſecond cauſes; he underſtands the corruption of men, as vvell as *the Poyſon of Dragons, and the Venom of Aſps*; this is *laid up in ſtore with him and ſealed among his Treaſures*, Deut. 32. 33, 34. Among the Treaſures of his foreknovvledg, ſay ſome.

What was the cruelty of *Hazael*, but a free act? yet God knew the frame of his heart, and what acts of murder and oppreſſion would ſpring from that bitter fountain, *before Hazael* had conceived them in himſelf, 2 *Kings* 8. 12. as a man that knows the Mineral through which Waters paſs, may know what relliſh they will have before they appear above the earth; ſo our *Saviour* knew how *Peter* would deny him; he knew what quantity of Powder would ſerve for ſuch a Battery; in what meaſure he would let looſe *Satan*, how far he would leave the Reins in *Peters* hands, and then the iſſue might eaſily be known; and ſo in every act of man, God knows in his own Will what meaſure of Grace he will give, to determine the Will to good, and what meaſure of Grace he will withdraw from ſuch a perſon, or not give to him, and conſequently, how far ſuch a perſon will fall or not. God knows the inclinations of the Creature; he knows his own Permiſſions, what degrees of Grace he will either allow him or, keep from him, according to which will be the degree of his Sin. This may in ſome meaſure help our conceptions in this, tho', as was ſaid before, the manner of Gods foreknowledg is not ſo eaſily explicable.

3. *Gods foreknowledg of mans voluntary actions doth not neceſſitate the Will of man.* The foreknowledg of God is not deceived, nor the liberty of mans Will diminiſht. I ſhall not trouble you with any *School diſtinctions*, but be as plain as I can, laying down ſeveral Propoſitions in this caſe.

Propoſition I. 'Tis certain *all neceſſity doth not take away liberty.* Indeed a compulſive neceſſity takes away liberty; but a neceſſity of immutability removes not liberty from God; why ſhould then a neceſſity of Infallibility in God remove liberty from the Creature? God did neceſſarily create the World, becauſe he Decreed it; yet freely, becauſe his Will from Eternity ſtood to it; he freely Decreed it, and freely created it; as the *Apoſtle* ſaith in regard of God Decrees, *who hath been his Counſellor?* Rom. 11. 34. ſo in regard of his actions I may ſay, who hath been his compeller? he freely decreed, and he freely created. *Jeſus Chriſt* neceſſarily took our fleſh, becauſe he had covenanted with God ſo to do, yet he acted freely and voluntary according to that Covenant, otherwiſe his Death had not been efficacious for us. A good man doth naturally, neceſſarily love his Children, yet voluntary: 'Tis part of the happineſs of the Bleſſed, to love God unchangeably, yet freely, for it would not be their happineſs if it were done by compulſion. What is done by force, cannot be called felicity, becauſe there is no delight or complacency in it; and tho' the Bleſſed love God freely, yet if there were a poſſibility of change, it would not be their Happineſs, their Bleſſedneſs would be dampt by their fear of falling from this Love, and conſequently from their nearneſs to God, in whom their happineſs conſiſts: God foreknows that they will Love him for ever; but are they therefore compell'd for ever to love him? If there were ſuch a kind of conſtraint, Heaven would be rendered burdenſome to them, and ſo no Heaven.

Again; Gods foreknowledg of what he will do, doth not neceſſitate him to do: he foreknew that he would create a World, yet he freely created a World. Gods foreknowledg doth not neceſſitate himſelf, why ſhould it neceſſitate us more than himſelf? We may inſtance in our ſelves: When we Will a thing, we neceſſary uſe our faculty of Will; and when we freely Will any thing, 'tis neceſſary that we freely Will; but this neceſſity doth not exclude but include liberty; or more plainly when a man writes or ſpeaks, whilſt he writes or ſpeaks, thoſe actions are neceſſary, becauſe to ſpeak and be ſilent, to write and not to write at the ſame time, are impoſſible; yet our writing or ſpeaking doth not take away the power, not to write or to be ſilent at that time if a man would be ſo; for he might have choſe whether he would have ſpoke or writ. So there is a neceſſity of ſuch actions of man which God foreſees; that is, a neceſſity of infallibility, becauſe God cannot be deceived; but not a coactive neceſſity, as if they were compelled by God to act thus or thus.

2. *No man can ſay in any of his voluntary actions that he ever found any force upon him.* When any of us have done any thing according to our Wills, can we ſay we could not have done the contrary to it? were we determin'd to it in our

our own intrinſick nature, or did we not determine our ſelves? Did we not act either according to our reaſon, or according to outward allurements; did we find any thing without us or within us, that did force our Wills to the embracing this or that? Whatever action you do, you do it becauſe you judg it fit to be done; or becauſe you will do it. What tho' God foreſaw that you would do ſo, and that you would do this or that, did you feel any force upon you? did you not act according to your nature? God foreſees that you will Eat or Walk at ſuch a time; do you find any thing that moves you to Eat, but your own appetite? or to Walk, but your own Reaſon and Will? If *Preſcience* had impos'd any neceſſity upon man, ſhould we not probably have found ſome kind of Plea from it in the mouth of *Adam*? he knew as much as any man ever ſince knew of the nature of God, as diſcoverable in Creation; he could not in Innocence fancy an ignorant God, a God that knew nothing of future things; he could not be ſo ignorant of his own action, but he muſt have perceived a force upon his Will, had there been any; had he thought that Gods Preſcience impos'd any neceſſity upon him, he would not have omitted the Plea, eſpecially when he was ſo daring as to charge the Providence of God in the *Gift of the Woman* to him, to be the cauſe of his Crime, *Gen.* 3. 12. How came his Poſterity to invent new charges againſt God, which their Father *Adam* never thought of, who had more knowledg than all of them? He could find no cauſe of his Sin but the liberty of his own Will; he charges it not upon any neceſſity from the Devil or any neceſſity from God; nor doth he alledg the gift of the Woman as a neceſſary cauſe of his Sin, but an occaſion of it, by giving the Fruit to him. *Judas* knew that our *Saviour* did foreknow his Treachery, for he had told him of it in the hearing of his Diſciples, *John* 13. 21, 26. yet he never charg'd the neceſſity of his Crime upon the foreknowledg of his Maſter; if *Judas* had not done it freely; he had had no reaſon to repent of it; his Repentance juſtifies Chriſt from impoſing any neceſſity upon him by that foreknowledg. No man acts any thing, but he can give an account of the motives of his action; he cannot father it upon a blind neceſſity; the Will cannot be compelled, for then it would ceaſe to be Will: God doth not root up the foundations of Nature, or change the order of it, and make men unable to act like men, that is, as free Agents. God foreknows the actions of irrational Creatures, this concludes no violence upon their nature; for we find their actions to be according to their nature, and ſpontaneous.

3. *Gods foreknowledg is not (ſimply conſidered) the cauſe of any thing.* It puts nothing into things, but only beholds them as preſent, and ariſing from their proper cauſes, The knowledg of God is not the Principle of things, or the cauſe of their exiſtence, but directive of the action; nothing is becauſe God knows it, but becauſe God Wills it, either poſitively or permiſſively; God knows all things poſſible, yet becauſe God knows them, they are not brought into actual exiſtence, but remain ſtill only as things poſſible; Knowledg only apprehends a thing, but acts nothing; 'tis the rule of acting, but not the cauſe of acting; the Will is the immediate Principle, and the Power the immediate cauſe; to know a thing, is not to do a thing, for then we may be ſaid to do every thing that we know; but every man knows thoſe things which he never did, nor never will do; Knowledg in it ſelf is an apprehenſion of a thing, and is not the cauſe of it. A Spectator of a thing is not the cauſe of that thing which he ſees, that is, he is not the cauſe of it as he beholds it: We ſee a man Write, we know before that he will Write at ſuch a time; but this foreknowledg is not the cauſe of his Writing. We ſee a man Walk, but our viſion of him brings no neceſſity of Walking upon him; he was free to Walk, or not to Walk *. We foreknow that Death will ſeize upon all men, we foreknow that the Seaſons of the Year will ſucceed one another; yet is not our foreknowledg the cauſe of this ſucceſſion of Spring after Winter, or of the Death of all men, or any man: We ſee one man fighting with another, our ſight is not the cauſe of that conteſt, but ſome Quarrel among themſelves exciting their own Paſſions. As the knowledg of preſent things impoſeth no neceſſity upon them while they are acting and preſent; ſo the know-

* *Rawley* of the World, lib. 1. cap. 1. ſect. 12.

Knovvledg of future things impoſeth no neceſſity upon them vvhile they are coming. VVe are certain there vvill be men in the VVorld to morrovv, and that the Sea vvill Ebb and Flovv; but is this knovvledg of ours the cauſe that thoſe things vvill be ſo? I knovv that the Sun vvill riſe to morrovv, 'tis true that it ſhall riſe; but 'tis not true, that my foreknovvledg makes it to riſe. If a Phyſician Prognoſticates upon ſeeing the Intemperances and Debaucheries of men, that they vvill fall into ſuch a diſtemper, is his Prognoſtication any cauſe of their Diſeaſe, or of the ſharpneſs of any Symptoms attending it? The Prophet foretold the cruelty of *Hazael*, before he committed it; but vvho vvill ſay, that the Prophet vvas the cauſe of his Commiſſion of that evil? And thus the foreknowledg of God takes not away the liberty of mans VVill, no more than a foreknowledg that we have of any mans actions, takes avvay his liberty: VVe may upon our knovvledg of the temper of a man, certainly foreknovv, that if he falls into ſuch Company, and get among his Cups, he will be Drunk; but is this foreknowledg the cauſe that he is Drunk? no, the cauſe is the liberty of his own Will, and not reſiſting the Temptation. God purpoſes to leave ſuch a man to himſelf and his own ways; and man being ſo left, God foreknows what will be done by him according to that corrupt nature which is in him; tho' the Decree of God of leaving a man to the liberty of his own VVill be certain, yet the liberty of mans VVill as thus left, is the cauſe of all the extravagancies he doth commit. Suppoſe *Adam* had ſtood, would not God certainly have foreſeen that he would have ſtood? yet it would have been concluded that *Adam* had ſtood, not by any neceſſity of Gods foreknowledg, but by the liberty of his own VVill: VVhy ſhould then the foreknowledg of God add more neceſſity to his falling than to his ſtanding? * And though it be ſaid ſometimes in Scripture, that ſuch a thing was done *that the Scripture might be fulfilled*, as John 12. 38. *that the ſaying of* Eſaias *might be fulfilled*, *Lord who hath believed our report?* the word *That*, doth not infer that the Prediction of the Prophet was the cauſe of the *Jews* unbelief, but infers this, that the Prediction was manifeſted to be true by their unbelief, and the event anſwered the Prediction; this Prediction was not the cauſe of their Sin, but their foreſeen Sin was the cauſe of this Prediction; and ſo the Particle *That*, is taken, *Pſal.* 51. 6. *againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned, that thou mighteſt be juſtified*, &c. the juſtifying God, was not the end and intent of the Sin, but the event of it upon his acknowledgment.

* *Rivet.* in Iſa. 53. 1. p. 16.

4. *God foreknows things, becauſe they will come to paſs; but things are not future, becauſe God knows them.* Foreknowledg preſuppoſeth the object which is foreknown; a thing that is to come to paſs, is the object of the Divine Knowledg, but not the cauſe of the act of Divine Knowledg; and though the foreknowledg of God doth in Eternity precede the actual preſence of a thing which is foreſeen as future; yet the future thing in regard of its futurity, is as Eternal as the foreknowledg of God: As the Voice is uttered before it be heard, and a thing is viſible before it be ſeen, and a thing knowable before it be known. But how comes it to be knowable to God? it muſt be anſwered, either in the Power of God as a thing poſſible, or in the VVill of God as a thing future, he firſt VVilled, and then knew what he VVilled; he knew what he VVilled to effect, and he knew what he VVilled to permit; as he VVilled the Death of Chriſt by a determinate Counſel, and VVilled the Permiſſion of the *Jews* Sin, and the ordering of the malice of their nature to that end, *Acts* 2. 22. God decrees to make a rational Creature, and to govern him by a Lavv; God Decrees not to hinder this rational Creature from tranſgreſſing his Law; and God foreſees that what he would not hinder, would come to paſs. (Man did not Sin becauſe God foreſaw him; but God foreſaw him to Sin, becauſe man would Sin.) If *Adam* and other men would have acted otherwiſe, God would have foreknown that they would have acted well; God foreſaw our actions becauſe they would ſo come to paſs by the motion of our Free-VVill, which he would permit, which he would concur with, vvhich he vvould order to his ovvn holy and glorious ends, for the ma-

manifeſtation of the Perfection of his nature. If I ſee a man lye in a Sink, no neceſſity is inferred upon him from my ſight to lye in that filthy place, but there is a neceſſity inferr'd by him that lies there, that I ſhould ſee him in that condition if I paſs by, and caſt my eye that way.

5. *God did not only foreknow our actions, but the manner of our actions.* That is, he did not only know that we would do ſuch actions, but that we would do them freely; he foreſaw that the Will would freely determine it ſelf to this or that; the Knowledg of God takes not away the nature of things; though God knows poſſible things, yet they remain in the nature of poſſibility; and tho' God knows contingent things, yet they remain in the nature of contingencies: and tho' God knovvs free Agents, yet they remain in the nature of liberty. God did not foreknow the actions of man, as neceſſary, but as free; ſo that liberty is rather eſtabliſhed by this foreknowledg, than removed: God did not foreknow that *Adam* had not a power to ſtand, or that any man hath not a power to omit ſuch a ſinful action, but that he would not omit it. Man hath a power to do otherwiſe than that which God foreknows he will do: *Adam* was not determin'd by any inward neceſſity to Fall, nor any man by any inward neceſſity to commit this or that particular Sin; but God foreſaw that he would Fall, and Fall freely; for he ſaw the whole Circle of means and cauſes whereby ſuch and ſuch actions ſhould be produced; and can be no more ignorant of the motions of our Wills, and the manner of them, than an Artificer can be ignorant of motions, of his Watch, and how far the Spring will let down the String in the ſpace of an hour; he ſees all cauſes leading to ſuch events in their whole order, and how the Free-Will of man will comply with this, or refuſe that; he changes not the manner of the Creatures operation, whatſoever it be.

6. *But what if the foreknowledg of God, and the liberty of the Will, cannot be fully reconciled by man? ſhall we therefore deny a Perfection in God to ſupport a liberty in our ſelves?* Shall we rather faſten ignorance upon God, and accuſe him of blindneſs, to maintain our liberty? That God doth foreknow every thing, and yet that there is liberty in the rational Creature, are both certain; but how fully to reconcile them, may ſurmount the Underſtanding of man. Some Truths the Diſciples were not capable of bearing in the days of Chriſt; and ſeveral Truths our underſtandings cannot reach as long as the World doth laſt; yet in the mean time we muſt on the one hand take heed of conceiving God ignorant, and on the other hand of imagining the Creature neceſſitated; the one will render God imperfect, and the other will ſeem to render him unjuſt, in puniſhing man for that Sin which he could not avoid, but was brought into by a fatal neceſſity. God is ſufficient to render a reaſon of his own Proceedings, and clear up all at the day of Judgment; 'tis a part of mans curioſity, ſince the Fall, to be prying into Gods Secrets, things too high for him; whereby he ſinges his own Wings, and confounds his own Underſtanding. 'Tis a curſed affectation that runs in the Blood of *Adams* Poſterity, *to know as God*, tho' our firſt Father ſmarted and ruin'd his Poſterity in that attempt; the ways and knowledg of God are as much *above our thoughts* and conceptions, as the *heavens are above the earth*, Iſa. 55. 9. * and ſo ſublime, that we cannot comprehend them in their true and juſt greatneſs; his deſigns are ſo myſterious, and the ways of his conduct ſo profound, that it is not poſſible to dive into them: The force of our underſtandings is below his infinite Wiſdom, and therefore we ſhould adore him with an humble aſtoniſhment, and cry out with the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 11. 33. *Oh the depth of the Riches of the Wiſdom and Knowledg of God! how unſearchable are his Judgments! and his ways paſt finding out!* When ever we meet with depths that we connot fathom, let us remember that he is God, and we his Creatures; and not be guilty of ſo great extravagance, as to think that a Subject can pierce into all the ſecrets of a Prince, or a Work underſtand all the operations of the Artificer. Let us only reſolve not to faſten any thing on God that is unworthy of the Perfection of his nature, and diſhonourable to the Glory of his Majeſty; nor imagine that we can ever ſtep out of the rank of Creatures to the glory of the Deity, to underſtand fully every thing in his nature.

* *Daillé* Melang. part. 1. p. 712. 725.

So much for the *ſecond general*, What God knows.

III. The *third* is, *How God knows all things?* As it is neceſſary we ſhould conceive

ceive God to be an Underſtanding Being, elſe he could not be God; ſo we muſt conceive his underſtanding to be infinitely more pure and perfect than ours in the act of it, elſe we liken him to our ſelves, and debaſe him as low as his Foot-ſtool.

Maxim. Tyrius Diſſert. 1. p. 9, 10.

* As among Creatures there are degrees of Being and Perfection; Plants above Earth and Sand, becauſe they have a Power of growth; Beaſts above Plants, becauſe to their Power of growth, there is an addition of excellency of ſence; rational Creatures above Beaſts, becauſe to Senſe there is added the Dignity of Reaſon: The Underſtanding of man is more noble than all the vegitative power of Plants, or the ſenſitive Power of Beaſts: God therefore muſt be infinitely more excellent in his Underſtanding, and therefore in the manner of it. As man differs from a Beaſt in regard of his knowledg; ſo doth God alſo from man, in regard of his Knowledg. As God therefore is in Being and Perfection, infinitely more above a man than a man is above a Beaſt, the manner of his Knowledg muſt be infinitely more above a mans knowledg, than the knowledg of a man is above that of a Beaſt; our underſtandings can claſp an object in a moment, that is at a great diſtance from our ſenſe; our eye by one elevated motion can view the Heavens; the manner of Gods Underſtanding muſt be unconceivably above our glimmerings; as the manner of his Being is infinitely more perfect than all Beings, ſo muſt the manner of his Underſtanding be infinitely more perfect than all Created underſtandings. * Indeed the manner of Gods Knowledg can no more be known by us, than his Eſſence can be known by us; and the ſame incapacity in man, which renders him unable to comprehend the Being of God, renders him as unable to comprehend the manner of Gods Underſtanding: As there is a vaſt diſtance between the Eſſence of God, and our Beings, ſo there is between the Thoughts of God and our Thoughts; the Heavens are not ſo much higher than the Earth, as the Thoughts of God are *above the thoughts of men*, yea, and of the higheſt Angel, *Iſa.* 55. 8, 9. yet tho' we know not the manner of Gods Knowledg, we know that he knows; as tho' we know not the infiniteneſs of God, yet we know that he is infinite. 'Tis Gods ſole Prerogative to know himſelf, what he is; and it is equally his Prerogative to know how he knows; the manner of Gods knovvledg therefore muſt be conſidered by us, as free from thoſe Imperfections our knovvledg is encumbred vvith.

* *Maimonides More Nevochin.* part. 3. c. 20. p. 391, 392, 393.

In *general*, God doth neceſſarily knovv all things; he is neceſſarily Omnipreſent, becauſe of the immenſity of his Eſſence; ſo he is neceſſarily Omniſcient, becauſe of the infiniteneſs of his Underſtanding. 'Tis no more at the liberty of his Will, whether he will know all things, than whether he will be able to create all things; 'tis no more at the liberty of his Will, whether he will be Omniſcient, than whether he will be Holy; he can as little be ignorant, as he can be impure; he knows not all things, becauſe he will know them, but becauſe it is Eſſential to his nature to know them.

In *particular*.

Propoſition I. *God knows by his own Eſſence*; that is, He ſees the nature of things in the Ideas of his own mind, and the events of things in the Decrees of his own Will; he knows them not by viewing the things, but by viewing himſelf; his own Eſſence is the Mirrour and Book, wherein he beholds all things that he doth ordain, diſpoſe and execute; and ſo he knows all things in the firſt and original cauſe; which is no other than his own Eſſence Willing, and his own Eſſence executing what he Wills; he knows them in his Power, as the Phyſical Principle; in his Will, as the moral Principle of things, as ſome ſpeak.

He borrows not the knowledg of Creatures from the Creatures, nor depends upon them for means of Underſtanding, as we poor Worms do, who are beholden to the objects abroad to aſſiſt us with Images of things, and to our ſenſes to convey them into our minds; God would then acquire a Perfection from thoſe things which are below himſelf, and an excellency from thoſe things that are vile; his Knowledg would not precede the Being of the Creatures, but the Creatures would be before the act of his Knowledg. If he underſtood by Images drawn from the Creatures, as we do, there would be ſomething in God which is not God, *viz.* the Images of things drawn from outward objects: God would then depend upon Creatures for that which is more noble than a bare Being; for to be Underſtanding, is more

more excellent than barely to be. Besides, if Gods knowledg of his Creatures were derived from the Creatures by the impression of any thing upon him, as there is upon us, he could not know from Eternity, because from Eternity there was no actual existence of any thing but himself; and therefore there could not be any Images shot out from any thing, because there was not any thing in being but God; as there is no principle of being to any thing but by his Essence; so there is no Principle of the Knowledg of any thing by himself but his Essence: If the knowledg of God were distinct from his Essence, his Knowledg were not Eternal, because there is nothing Eternal but his Essence.

His understanding is not a faculty in him as it is in us, but the same with his Essence, because of the simplicity of his nature; God is not made up of various parts, one distinct from another as we are, and therefore doth not understand by a part of himself, but by himself; so that to be, and to understand is the same with God; his Essence is not one thing, and the power whereby he understands, another; he would then be compounded, and not be the most simple Being. This also is necessary for the Perfection of God; for the more perfect and noble the way and manner of knowing is, the more perfect and noble is the knowledg. The perfection of knowledg depends upon the excellency of the medium whereby we know. As a knowledg by reason, is a more noble way of knowing than knowledg by sense; so 'tis more excellent for God to know by his Essence, than by any thing without him, any thing mixt with him; the first would render him dependant, and the other would demolish his simplicity.

Again, the natures of all things are contained in God; not formally; for then the nature of the Creatures would be God: But eminently; *he that planted the ear, shall he not hear, he that formed the eye, shall he not see?* Psal. 94. 9. He hath in himself eminently the Beauty, Perfection, Life and Vigor of all Creatures; he created nothing contrary to himself, but every thing with some foot-steps of himself in them; he could not have pronounced them good, as he did, had there been any thing in them contrary to his own goodness; and therefore as his Essence primarily represents it self, so it represents the Creatures, and makes them known to him. As the Essence of God is eminently all things, so by understanding his Essence, he eminently understands all things. And therefore he hath not one knowledg of himself, and another knowledg of the Creatures; but by knowing himself, as the original and exemplary cause of all things, he cannot be ignorant of any Creature which he is the cause of; so that he knows all things, not by an understanding of them, but by an understanding of himself; by understanding his own Power as the efficient of them, his own VVill as the order of them, his own Goodness as the adorner and beautifier of them, his own wisdom as the disposer of them, and his own Holiness, to which many of their actions are contrary. * *Dionys.*

* As he sees all things possible in his own Power, because he is able to produce them; so he sees all things future in his own VVill; decreeing to effect them, if they be good; or Decreeing to permit them, if they be evil. In this Glass he sees what he will give Being to, and what he will suffer to fall into a deficiency, without looking out of himself, or borrowing Knowledg from his Creatures; he knows all things in himself. And thus his Knowledg is more noble, and of a higher elevation than ours, or the knowledg of any Creature can be; he knows all things by one comprehension of the causes in himself. * *Kendal against Goodwin of Foreknowledg.*

Proposition, II. *God knows all things by one act of intuition.* This the Schools call an intuitive knowledg. This follows upon the other; for if he know by his own Essence, he knows all things by one act, there would be otherwise a division in his Essence, a first and a last, a nearness and a distance. As what he made, he made by one word; so what he sees, he pierceth into by one glance from Eternity to Eternity: As he wills all things by one act of his Will, so he knows all things by one act of his understanding: He knows not some things *discursively* from other things, nor knows one thing *successively* after another. As by one act he imparts Essence to things; so by one act he knows the nature of things.

1. *He doth not know by Discourse, as we do.* That is, By deducing one thing from another, and from common notions drawing out other rational conclusions and arguing

guing one thing from another, and ſpringing up various conſequences from ſome Principle aſſented to; but God ſtands in no need of reaſonings; the making inferences and abſtracting things, would be ſtains in the infinite Perfection of God; here would be a mixture of knowledg and ignorance; while he knew the Principle, he would not know the conſequence and concluſion, till he had actually deduc'd it; one thing would be known after another, and ſo he would have an ignorance, and then a knowledg; and there would be different conceptions in God, and knowledg would be multiplyed according to the multitude of objects; as it is in humane underſtandings. But God knows all things before they did exiſt, and never was ignorant of them, *Acts* 15. 18. *Known unto God are all his Works from the beginning of the World.* He therefore knows them all at once; the knowledg of one thing was not before another, nor depended upon another, as it doth in the way of humane reaſoning. * Tho indeed ſome make a vertual Diſcourſe in God; that is, tho God hath a ſimple knowledg, yet it doth vertually contain a Diſcourſe by the flowing of one knowledg from another; as from the knowledg of his own power, he knows what things are poſſible to be made by him; and from the knowledg of himſelf, he paſſes to the knowledg of the Creatures; but this is only according to our conception, and becauſe of our weakneſs they are apprehended as two diſtinct acts in God, one of which is the reaſon of another: As we ſay that one Attribute is the reaſon of another; as his Mercy, may be ſaid to be the reaſon of his patience; and his Omnipreſence, to be the reaſon of the Knowledg of preſent things done in the World. God indeed by one ſimple act, knows himſelf and the Creatures; but when that Act whereby he knows himſelf, is conceived by us to paſs to the knowledg of the Creatures, we muſt not underſtand it to be a new Act, diſtinct from the other; but the ſame act upon different terms or objects; ſuch an order is in our underſtandings and conceptions, not in God's.

* *Suarez.* vol. 1. de Deo, lib. 3. cap. 2. p. 133, 134.

2. *Nor doth he know ſucceſſively, as we do.* That is, not by drops, one thing after another. This follows from the former; a knowledg of all things without Diſcourſe, is a knowledg without Succeſſion. * The knowledg of one thing is not in God before another, one act of Knowledg doth not forget another; in regard of the objects, one thing is before another, one year before another, one Generation of men before another, one is the cauſe, the other is the effect: In the Creatures there is ſuch a Succeſſion, and God knows there will be ſuch a Succeſſion; but there is no ſuch order in Gods knowledg; for he knows all thoſe Succeſſions by one glance, without any Succeſſion of knowledg in himſelf.

* *Gamach* in Aquin. q. 14. cap. 1. p. 119.

Man in his view of things, muſt turn ſometimes his body, ſometimes only his Eyes; he cannot ſee all the Contents of a Letter at once, and tho he beholds all the lines in the page of a Book at once, and a whole Country in a Map, yet to know what is contain'd in them, he muſt turn his eye from word to word, and line to line, and ſo ſpin out one thing after another by ſeveral acts and motions. We behold a great part of the Sea at once *, but not all the dimenſions of it; for to know the length of the Sea we move our eyes one way; to ſee the breadth of it, we turn our eyes another way; to behold the depth of it, we have another motion of them. And when we caſt our eyes up to heaven, we ſeem to receive in at an inſtant the whole extent of the Hemiſphere; yet there is but one object the eye can attentively pitch upon, and we cannot diſtinctly view what we ſee in a lump, without various motions of our eyes, which is not done without ſucceſſion of Time *. And certainly the Underſtanding of Angels is bounded, according to the meaſure of their beings; ſo that it cannot extend it ſelf at one time, to a quantity of objects, to make a diſtinct application of them, but the objects muſt preſent themſelves one by one: But God is all Eye, all underſtanding; as there is no ſucceſſion in his Eſſence, ſo there is none in his knowledg; *his underſtanding* in the nature, and in the act, *is infinite*, as it is in the Text. He therefore ſees Eternally and univerſally, all things, by one act, without any motion, much leſs various motions; the various changes of things, in their ſubſtance, qualities, places and relations, withdraw not any thing from his Eye, nor bring any new thing to his knowledg; he doth not upon conſideration of preſent things turn his mind from paſt; or when he beholds future things, turn his mind from preſent; but he ſees them not one after another, but all at once and all together; the whole Circle of his own Counſels, and all the various lines drawn forth

* ſaith *Epiphanius.*

* *Amyrant* morale chreſti. Tom. 3. p. 137.

forth from the Center of his Will, to the circumference of his Creatures; Juſt as if a man were able in one moment to read a whole Library; or, as if you ſhould imagine a tranſparent Chryſtal Globe, hung up in the midſt of a Room, and ſo framed as to take in the images of all things in the Room, the Fret-Work in the Cieling, the in-laid parts of the Floor, and the particular parts of the Tapeſtry about it, the eye of a man would behold all the Beauty of the Room at once in it. As the Sun by one light and heat frames ſenſible things; ſo God by one ſimple act knows all things: As he knows mutable things by an immutable knowledg, bodily things by a ſpiritual knowledg; ſo he knows many things by one knowledg, Heb. 4. 13. *All things are open and naked to him*, more than any thing can be to us; and therefore he views all things at once, as well as we can behold and contemplate one thing alone. As he is the *Father of Lights*, a God of infinite Underſtanding, there is *no variableneſs in his mind, nor any ſhadow of turning* of his eye, as there is of ours, to behold various things *James* 1. 17. His knowledg being Eternal, includes all times; there is nothing paſt or future with him, our [illegible] therefore he beholds all things by one and the ſame manner of knowledg and comprehends all knowable things by one act, and in one moment.

This muſt needs be ſo,

1. *Becauſe of the eminency of God.* God is above all, and therefore cannot but ſee the motions of all. He that ſits in a Theater, or at the top of a place, ſees all things, all perſons, by one aſpect he comprehends the whole Circle of the place; whereas he that ſits below, when he looks before, he cannot ſee things behind; God being above all, about all, in all, ſees at once the motions of all. The whole World in the eye of God, is leſs than a Point that divides one Sentence from another in a Book; as a Cypher, a *grain of Duſt*, *Iſa.* 40. 15. So little a thing can be ſeen by man at once; and all things being as little in the eye of God, are ſeen at once by him. As all time is but a moment to his Eternity; ſo all things are but as a point to the immenſity of his Knowledg, which he can behold with more eaſe than we can move or turn our eye.

2. *Becauſe all the Perfections of Knowing, are united in God.* * As particular ſenſes are divided in man, by one he Sees, by another he hears, by another he Smells, yet all thoſe are united in one common ſenſe, and this common ſenſe apprehends all; ſo the various and diſtinct ways of knowledg in the Creatures, are all eminently united in God. A man when he ſees a grain of Wheat, underſtands at once all things that can in time proceed from that Seed; ſo God by beholding his own vertue and power, beholds all things which ſhall in time be unfolded by him. We have a ſhadow of this way of knowledg in our own Underſtanding; the ſenſe only perceives a thing preſent, and one object only proper and ſutable to it; as the *eye* ſees *colour*, the *ear* hears *ſounds*; we ſee this and that man, one time this, another minute that; but the underſtanding abſtracts a notion of the common nature of man, and frames a conception of that nature wherein all men agree; and ſo in a manner beholds and underſtands all men at once, by underſtanding the common nature of man, which is a degree of knowledg above the ſenſe and fancy; we may then conceive an infinite vaſter Perfection in the Underſtanding of God. As to know, is ſimply better than not to know at all; ſo to know by one act comprehenſive, is a greater Perfection than to know by divided acts, by ſucceſſion to receive information, and to have an increaſe or decreaſe of knowledg, to be like a Bucket, alway deſcending into the Well, and fetching Water from thence. 'Tis a mans weakneſs that he is fixed on one object only at a time; 'Tis Gods Perfection that he can behold all at once, and is fixed upon one no more than upon another.

* *Cuſan. p.* 646

Propoſition, III. *God knows all things independently.* This is Eſſential to an infinite Underſtanding. He receives not his knowledg from any thing without him, he hath no Tutor to inſtruct him, or Book to inform him; *who hath been his Counſellor?* ſaith the Prophet, *Iſa.* 40. 13. He hath no need of the Counſels of others, nor of the inſtructions of others. This follows upon the *firſt and ſecond Propoſitions*; if he knows things by his Eſſence, then as his Eſſence is independent from the Creatures, ſo is his knowledg; he borrows not any images from the Creature, hath no ſpecies or pictures of things in his underſtanding, as we have; no Beams from the

Creature ſtrike upon him, to enlighten him, but beams from him upon the World; the Earth ſends not light to the Sun, but the Sun to the Earth.

Our knowledg indeed depends upon the object; but all created objects depend upon Gods knowledg and Will: We could not know Creatures, unleſs they were; but Creatures could not be, unleſs God knew them. As nothing that he Wills is the cauſe of his Will; ſo nothing that he knows is the cauſe of his Knowledg; he did not make things to know them, but he knows them to make them; Who will imagine that the mark of the foot in the Duſt, is the cauſe that the foot ſtands in this or that particular place?

If his knowledg did depend upon the things, then the exiſtence of things did precede Gods knowledg of them; to ſay that they are the cauſe of Gods Knowledg, is to ſay, that God was not the cauſe of their Being; and if he did Create them, it was effected by a knowledg and ignorant power, he created he knew not what, till he had produced it: he be beholden for his Knowledg to the Creatures he hath made, he had the perfect knowledg of them before he made them. If his knowledg were dependant upon them, it could not be Eternal, but muſt have a beginning when the Creatures had a beginning, and be of no longer a date than ſince the nature of things was in actual exiſtence; for whatſoever is a cauſe of knowledg, doth precede the knowledg it cauſes, either in order of time, or order of nature; Temporal things therefore cannot be the cauſe of that knowledg which is Eternal. His *Works* could not be *foreknown* to him, if his Knowledg commenc'd with the exiſtence of his works, if he knew them before he made them, he could not derive a Knowledg from them after they were made. He made all things *in Wiſdom*, Pſal. 104. 24. How can this be imagin'd, if the things known were the cauſe of his Knowledg, and ſo before his knowledg, and therefore before his action *? God would not then be the firſt in the order of knowing Agents, becauſe he would not act by Knowledg, but act before he knew, and know after he had acted, and ſo the Creature which he made, would be before the act of his Underſtanding, whereby he knew what he made.

Acts 15. 18.

**Bradward* lib. 1. cap. 15.

Again, ſince Knowledg is a *Perfection*, if Gods knowledg of the Creatures depended upon the Creatures, he would derive an excellency from them, they would derive no excellency from any *Idea* in the Divine mind; he would not be infinitely perfect in himſelf; if his Perfection in knowledg were gained from any thing without himſelf and below himſelf, he would not be ſufficient of himſelf, but be under an indigence, which wanted a ſupply from the things he had made; and could not be eternally perfect till he had created, and ſeen the effects of his own Power, Goodneſs, and Wiſdom, to render him more wiſe and knowing in Time than he was from Eternity; Who can fancy ſuch a God as this, without deſtroying the Deity he pretends to adore? For if his Underſtanding be perfected by ſomething without him, why may not his Eſſence be perfected by ſomething without him; that as he was made knowing by ſomething without him, he might be made God by ſomething without him?

How could his Underſtanding be infinite, if it depended upon a finite object, as upon a cauſe? Is the Majeſty of God to be debas'd to a Mendicant condition, to ſeek for a ſupply from things inferior to himſelf? Is it to be imagin'd that a Fool, a Toad, a Fly ſhould be aſſiſtant to the Knowledg of God? that the moſt noble Being ſhould be perfected by things ſo vile, that the ſupream cauſe of all things ſhould receive any addition of Knowledg, and be determin'd in his Underſtanding by the notion of things ſo mean? To conclude this particular, all things depend upon his knowledg, his knowledg depends upon nothing, but is as independent as himſelf, and his own Eſſence.

Propoſition, IV. *God knows all things diſtinctly.* His underſtanding is infinite in regard of clearneſs; *God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all*, John 1. 5. He ſees not through a Miſt or Cloud; there's no blemiſh in his underſtanding, no mote or beam in his eye, to render any thing obſcure to him. Man diſcerns the ſurface and outſide of things, little or nothing of the Eſſence of things; we ſee the nobleſt things, but *as in a glaſs darkly*, 1 Cor. 13. 12. The too great nearneſs, as well as the too great diſtance of a thing, hinders our ſight; the ſmallneſs of a mote eſcapes our eye.

and

and ſo our knowledg; alſo the weakneſs of our underſtanding is troubled with the multitude of things, and cannot know many things but confuſedly. But God knows the forms and eſſence of things, every circumſtance; nothing is ſo deep, but he ſees to the bottom; he ſees the maſs, and ſees the motes of Beings; his Underſtanding being infinite, is not offended with a multitude of things, or diſtracted with the variety of them; he diſcerns every thing infinitely more clearly and perfectly than *Adam* or *Solomon* could any one thing in the Circle of their knowledg: What knowledg they had, was from him; he hath therefore infinitely a more perfect knowledg than they were capable in their natures to receive a communication of. All things are *open to him*, *Heb.* 4. 13. The leaſt fibre in its nakedneſs and diſtinct frame, is transparent to him; as by the help of Glaſſes, the mouth, feet, hands of a ſmall Inſect, are viſible to a man, which ſeem to the eye, without that aſſiſtance, one intire piece, not diverſified into parts. All the cauſes, qualities, natures, properties of things are open to him, *he brings out the Hoſt of Heaven by number, and calleth them by Names*, Iſa. 40. 26. He numbers the Hairs of our heads; what more diſtinct than number? Thus God beholds things in every unity, which makes up the heap: He knows, and none elſe can, every thing in its true and intimate cauſes, in its original and intermediate cauſes; in himſelf, as the cauſe of every particular of their being, every Property in their Being.

Knowledg by the cauſes is the moſt noble and perfect Knowledg, and moſt ſuited to the infinite excellency of the Divine being; he created all things, and ordered them to a univerſal and particular end; he therefore knows the eſſential Properties of every thing, every activity of their nature, all their fitneſs for thoſe diſtinct ends, to which he orders them, and for which he governs and diſpoſeth them; and underſtands their darkeſt and moſt hidden qualities, infinitely clearer than any eye can behold the clear Beams of the Sun. He knows all things as he made them; he made them diſtinctly, and therefore knows them diſtinctly, and that every individual; therefore God is ſaid, Gen. 1. 31. To *ſee every thing that he hath made*; he took a review of every particular Creature he had made, and upon his view pronounced it good: To pronounce that good, which was not exactly known in every Creek, in every Mite of its nature, had not conſiſted with his veracity; for every one that ſpeaks truth ignorantly, that knows not that he ſpeaks Truth, is a Liar in ſpeaking that which is true. God knows every act of his own Will, whether it be poſitive or permiſſive, and therefore every effect of his Will. We muſt needs aſcribe to God a perfect Knowledg; but a confus'd Knowledg cannot challenge that Title. To know things only in a heap, is unworthy of the Divine Perfection; for if God knows his own ends in the Creation of things, he knows diſtinctly the means whereby he will bring them to thoſe ends for which he hath appointed them: No Wiſe man intends an end, without a knowledg of the means conducing to that end; an ignorance then of any thing in the World, which falls under the nature of a means to a Divine end (and there is nothing in the world but doth.) would be inconſiſtent with the Perfection of God; it would aſcribe to him a blind Providence in the World. As there can be nothing imperfect in his Being and Eſſence, ſo there can be nothing imperfect in his Underſtanding and Knowledg; and therefore not a confus'd Knowledg, which is an Imperfection. *Darkneſs and Light are both alike to him*, Pſal. 139. 12. He ſees diſtinctly into the one, as well as the other; what is Darkneſs to us, is not ſo to him.

Propoſition, V. *God knows all things infallibly.* His Underſtanding is infinite, in regard of certainty; every Title of what he knows, is as far from failing, as what he ſpeaks; our *Saviour* affirms the *one*, Matth. 5. 18. And there is the ſame reaſon of the certainty of *one* as well as the *other*; his eſſence is the meaſure of his Knowledg; whence it is as impoſſible that God ſhould be miſtaken in the knowledg of the leaſt thing in the World, as it is that he ſhould be miſtaken in his own Eſſence; for knowing himſelf comprehenſively, he muſt know all other things infallibly, Since he is eſſentially Omniſcient, he is no more capable of error in his Underſtanding, than of imperfection in his Eſſence; his Counſels are as unerring as his Eſſence is perfect, and his knowledg as infallible as his Eſſence is free from defect.

Again, ſince God knows all things with a *knowledg of Viſion*, becauſe he Wills them;

them; his Knowledg muſt be as infallible as his purpoſe; now his purpoſe will certainly be effected; *what he hath thought ſhall come to paſs, and what he hath purpoſed ſhall ſtand*, Iſa. 14. 24. *His Counſel ſhall ſtand, and he will do all his pleaſure*, Iſa. 46. 10. There may be interruptions of nature, the foundations of it may be out of courſe, but there can be no bar upon the Author of nature; he hath an infinite power to carry on and perfect the reſolves of his own Will; he can effect what he pleaſes by a Word. Speech is one of the leaſt motions; yet when God ſaid, *let there be Light*, *there was Light*, ariſing from Darkneſs. No reaſon can be given why God knows a thing to be, but becauſe he infallibly Wills it to be.

* *Suarez.* Vol. 2. p. 228.

Again, * The *Schools* make this difference between the knowledg of the good and bad Angels, that the good are never deceived; for that is repugnant to their Bleſſed State; for deceit is an evil and an imperfection, inconſiſtent with that perfect Bleſſedneſs the good Angels are poſſeſſed of; and would it not much more be a ſtain upon the Bleſſedneſs of that God that is bleſſed for ever, to be ſubject to deceit? His knowledg therefore is not an Opinion, for an Opinion is uncertain; a man knows not what to think, but leans to one part of the Queſtion propos'd, rather than to the other. If things did not come to paſs therefore as God knows them, his knowledg would be imperfect; and ſince he knows by his Eſſence, his Eſſence alſo would be imperfect, if God were expos'd to any Deceit in his knowledg; he knows by himſelf, who is the higheſt Truth; and therefore it is impoſſible he ſhould err in his underſtanding.

* *Tileni Syntagma* Part 1. Diſp. 13. Theſ. 13.

Propoſition, VI. *God knows immutably.* His Underſtanding elſe could not be infinite; every thing and every act that is mutable, is *finite*, it hath its bounds; for there is a term from which it changeth, and a term to which it changes. * There is a change in the Underſtanding when we gain the knowledg of a thing, which was unknown to us before; or when we actually conſider a thing which we did not know before, tho we had the Principles of the Knowledg of it; or, when we know that diſtinctly, which we before knew confuſedly. None of theſe can be aſcribed to God, without a manifeſt diſparagement of his infiniteneſs: Our knowledg indeed is alway arriving to us or flowing from us; we paſs from one degree to another, from worſe to beter, or from better to worſe; but God loſes nothing by the Ages that are run, nor will gain any thing by the Ages that are to come. If there were a variation in the knowledg of God, by the daily and hourly Changes in the World, he would grow wiſer than he was, he was not then perfectly wiſe before. A Change in the objects known, infers not any change in the underſtanding exerciſed about them; the Wheel moves round, the Spokes that are loweſt, are preſently higheſt, and preſently return to be low again; but the eye that beholds them, changes not with the motion of the Wheels. Gods knowledg admits no more of increaſe or decreaſe, than his Eſſence doth; Since God knows by his Eſſence, and the Eſſence of God is God himſelf, his knowledg muſt be void of any Change. The knowledg of poſſible things ariſing from the knowledg of his own power cannot be changed, unleſs his power be chang'd, and God become weak and impotent; the knowledg of future things cannot be chang'd, becauſe that knowledg ariſeth from his Will, which is irreverſible, *the Counſel of the Lord that ſhall ſtand*, Prov. 19. 21. So that if God can never decay into weakneſs, and never turn to inconſtancy, there can be no variation of his Knowledg. He knows what he can do, and he knows what he will do, and both theſe being immutable, his Knowledg muſt conſequently be ſo too. It was not neceſſary that this or that Creature ſhould be, and therefore it was not neceſſary that God ſhould know this or that Creature with a knowledg of Viſion; but after the Will of God had determin'd the exiſtence of this or that Creature, his knowledg being then determin'd to this or that object, did neceſſarily continue unchangeable. God therefore knows no more now; than he did before; and at the end of the World he ſhall know no more than he doth now; and from Eternity he knows no leſs than he doth now, and ſhall do to Eternity. Tho things paſs into being and out of Being, the knowledg of God doth not vary with them, for he knows them as well before they were, as when they are; and knows them as well when they are paſt, as when they are preſent.

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Propoſition, VII. *God knows all things perpetually*, i. e. *in act*. Since he knows by his Eſſence, he always knows, becauſe his Eſſence never ceaſeth, but is a pure act; ſo that he doth not know only in habit, but in act. Men that have the knowledg of ſome Art or Science, have it always in habit, tho when they are a ſleep they have it not in act: A Muſitian hath the habit of Muſick, but doth not ſo much as think of it when his Senſes are bound up. But God is *an unſleepy eye* *, he never ſlumbers nor ſleeps; he never ſlumbers, in regard of his providence, and therefore never ſlumbers in regard of his knowledg. He knows not himſelf, nor any other Creature more perfectly at one time than at another; he is perpetually in the act of knowing, as the *Sun* is in the act of ſhining; the Sun never ceas'd to ſhine in one or other part of the World, ſince it was firſt fixed in the Heavens; nor God to be in the act of knowledg, ſince he was God; and therefore ſince he always was, and always will be God, he always was, and always will be in the act of knowledg; always knowing his own Eſſence, he muſt alway actually know what hath been gone and ceaſ'd from Being, and what ſhall come and ariſe into Being. As a Watch-maker knows what Watch he intends to make; and after he hath made it, tho it be broken to pieces or conſumed by the Fire, he ſtill knows it, becauſe he knows the Copy of it in his own mind. Some therefore in regard of this perpetual act of the Divine Knowledg, have called God not *Intellectus*, but the *intellection of intellections*; we have no proper *Engliſh* Word to expreſs the act of the *Underſtanding*; as his power is co-eternal with him, ſo his knowledg; all times paſt, preſent and to come, are embrac'd in the boſom of his Underſtanding; he fixed all things in their Seaſons, that nothing new comes to him, nothing old paſſes from him *. What is done in a Thouſand years, is as actually preſent with his Knowledg, as what is done in one day, or in one Watch in the night, is with ours; Since a *Thouſand years are no more to God than a day*, or a *Watch in the Night is to us*, Pſal. 90. 4. God is in the higheſt degree of Being, and therefore in the higheſt degree of Underſtanding. Knowledg is one of the moſt perfect acts in any Creature. God therefore hath all Actual, as well as Eſſential and Habitual knowledg, *his Underſtanding is infinite*.

Plato, ἀκοίμητος Θεοῦ ὀφθαλμός

* Damianus.

IV. The *fourth general*, is *Reaſons* to prove this.

Reaſ. 1. *God muſt know what any Creature knows, and more than any Creature knows*. There is nothing done in the World, but is known by ſome Creature or other; every action is at leaſt known by the perſon that acts, and therefore known by the Creator, who cannot be exceeded by any of the Creatures, or all of them together; and every Creature is known by him, ſince every Creature is made by him. * And as God works all things by an infinite Power, ſo he knows all things by an Infinite Underſtanding.

* Gerhard.

1. *The Perfection of God requires this.* * All Perfections that include no Eſſential Defect, are formally in God; but knowledg includes no Eſſential Defect in it ſelf, therefore it is in God. Knowledg in it ſelf, is deſirable, and an excellency; ignorance is a defect; 'tis impoſſible that the leaſt grain of defect can be found in the moſt perfect Being. Since God is Wiſe, he muſt be Knowing; for Wiſdom muſt have knowledg for the *Baſis* of it, A Creature can no more be wiſe without knowledg, than he can be active without Strength. Now God is *only Wiſe*, Rom. 16. 27. And therefore only knowing in the higheſt degree of knowledg, incomprehenſibly beyond all degrees of Knowledg, becauſe infinite.

* *Gamach* in 1. part. Aquin. q. 14. cap. 1. p. 118, 119.

Again, the more Spiritual any thing is, the more Underſtanding it is. The dull Body underſtands nothing; Senſe perceives, but the Underſtanding faculty is ſeated in the Soul, which is of a ſpiritual nature, which knows things that are preſent, remembers things that are paſt, foreſees many things to come. What is the property of a ſpiritual nature, muſt be in a moſt eminent manner, in the ſupream Spirit of the World, that is, in the higheſt degree of Spirituality, and moſt remote from any matter.

Again, nothing can enjoy other things, but by ſome kind of underſtanding them; God hath the higheſt enjoyment of himſelf, of all things he hath created, of all the Glory that accrues to him by them; nothing of perfection and Bleſſedneſs can be wanting to him. Felicity doth not conſiſt with ignorance, and all imperfect knowledg is a degree of ignorance: God therefore doth perfectly know himſelf, and all things from whence he deſigns any glory to himſelf. The moſt noble manner of acting

acting muſt be aſcribed to God, as being the moſt noble and excellent Being; to act by Knowledg, is the moſt excellent manner of acting; God hath therefore, not only Knowledg, but the moſt excellent manner of Knowledg; for as it is better to know than to be ignorant, ſo it is better to know in the moſt excellent manner, than to have a mean and low kind of Knowledg; His Knowledg therefore muh be every way as perfect as his Eſſence, infinite as well as that. An infinite nature muſt have an infinite knowledg: A God ignorant of any thing, cannot be counted infinite, for he is not infinite to whom any degree of Perfection is wanting.

2. *All the knowledg in any Creature is from God.* And you muſt allow God a greater and more perfect knowledg than any Creature hath, yea, than all creatures have. All the drops of knowledg any Creature hath, come from God; and all the knowledg in every Creature, that ever was, is, or ſhall be in the whole Maſs, was derived from him. If all thoſe ſeveral Drops in particular Creatures, were collected into one Spirit; into one Creature, it would be an unconceivable knowledg, yet ſtill lower than what the Author of all that knowledg hath; for God cannot give more knowledg than he hath himſelf; nor is the Creature capable of receiving ſo much knowledg as God hath. As the Creature is uncapable of receiving ſo much power as God hath, for then it would be Almighty; ſo it is uncapable of receiving ſo much knowledg as God hath, for then it would be God. Nothing can be made by God equal to him in any thing; if any thing could be made as knowing as God, it would be eternal as God, it would be the cauſe of all things as God. The Knowledg that we poor Worms have, is an Argument God uſes for the aſſerting the greatneſs of his own knowledg, *Pſal.* 94. 10. *He that teaches man knowledg, ſhall not he know?* Man hath here Knowledg aſcribed to him, the Author of this knowledg is God, he furniſht him with it, and therefore doth in a higher manner poſſeſs it; and much more than can fall under the comprehenſion of any Creature; as the Sun enlightens all things, but hath more Light in it ſelf than it darts upon the Earth or the Heavens; and ſhall not God eminently contain all that knowledg he imparts to the Creatures, and infinitely more exact and comprehenſive?

3. *The accuſations of Conſcience, evidence Gods knowledg of all actions of all his Creatures.* Doth not Conſcience check for the moſt ſecret Sins, to which none are privy but a mans ſelf; the whole World beſide being ignorant of his Crime? Do not the fears of another Judg gall the heart? If a Judgment above him be fear'd, an Underſtanding above him diſcerning their Secrets is confeſt by thoſe fears; whence can thoſe horrors ariſe, if there be not a Superior that underſtands and records the Crime? What perfection of the Divine Being can this relate unto, but Omniſcience? What other Attribute is to be feared, if God were defective in this?

The condemnation of us by our own Hearts, when none in the World can condemn us, renders it legible, that there is *one greater than our hearts*, in reſpect of Knowledg, who *knows all things.* 1 John 3. 20 Conſcience would be a vain Principle, and ſtingleſs without this; it would be an eaſie matter to ſilence all its accuſations, and mockingly laugh in the face of its ſevereſt frowns. What need any trouble themſelves, if none knows their Crimes but themſelves? Conceal'd Sins, knawing the Conſcience, are Arguments of Gods Omniſcience of all preſent and paſt actions.

4. *God is the firſt cauſe of every thing, every Creature is his Production.* Since all Creatures, from the higheſt Angel to the loweſt Worm, exiſt by the power of God; if God underſtands his own Power and Excellency, nothing can be hid from him, that was brought forth by that power, as well as nothing can be unknown to him, that that power is able to produce. * If God knows nothing beſides himſelf, he may then believe there is nothing beſides himſelf; we ſhall then fancy a God miſerably miſtaken: if he knows nothing beſides himſelf, then things were not Created by him, or not underſtandingly and voluntarily Created, but drop'd from him before he was aware. To think that the firſt cauſe of all ſhould be ignorant of thoſe things he is the cauſe of, is to make him not a voluntary, but natural Agent, and therefore neceſſary; and then that the Creature came from him as Light from the Sun, and moiſture from the Water; this would be an abſurd opinion of the Worlds

* *Bradwardin.* p. 6.

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Creation; if God be a voluntary Agent, as he is, he muſt be an intelligent Agent. The Faculty of Will is not in any Creature, without that of Underſtanding alſo: If God be an intelligent Agent, his knowledg muſt extend as far as his operation, and every object of his operation, unleſs we imagine God hath loſt his Memory, in that long Tract of time ſince the firſt Creation of them. An *Artificer* cannot be ignorant of his own Work; If God knows himſelf, he knows himſelf to be a Cauſe; how can he know himſelf to be a Cauſe, unleſs he know the Effects he is the Cauſe of? One relation implies another; a man cannot know himſelf to be a Father, unleſs he hath a Child, becauſe it is a name of relation, and in the notion of it refers to another. The name of cauſe is a name of relation, and implies an effect; If God therefore know himſelf in all his Perfections, as the Cauſe of things, he muſt know all his acts, what his Wiſdom contrived, what his Counſel determin'd, and what his Power effected. The knowledg of God is to be ſuppos'd in a free determination of himſelf; and that knowledg muſt be perfect, both of the object, act, and all the circumſtances of it. How can his Will freely produce any thing that was not firſt known in his Underſtanding? From this the *Prophet* argues the underſtanding of God, and the unſearchableneſs of it, becauſe he is the *Creator of the ends of the earth*, Iſa. 40. 28. and the ſame reaſon *David* gives of Gods Knowledg of him, and of every thing he did, and that *afar off*, becauſe he was *formed by him*, Pſal. 139. 2, 15, 16. As the perfect making of things only belongs to God; ſo doth the perfect knowledg of things; 'tis abſurd to think, that God ſhould be ignorant of what he hath given Being to; that he ſhould not know all the Creatures and their qualities, the Plants and their vertues; as that a man ſhould not know the Letters that are formed by him in Writing. Every thing bears in it ſelf the mark of Gods Perfections; and ſhall not God know the repreſentation of his own vertue?

5. *Without this Knowledg, God could no more be the Governour, than he could be the Creator of the World.* Knowledg is the *Baſis* of Providence; to Know things, is before the Government of things; a *practical* knowledg cannot be without a *theoretical* knowledg. Nothing could be directed to its proper end, without the knowledg of the nature of it, and its ſuitableneſs to anſwer that end for which it is intended. As every thing, even the minuteſt, falls under the conduct of God, ſo every thing falls under the knowledg of God. A blind Coach-man is not able to hold the Reins of his Horſes, and direct them in right Paths: Since the Providence of God is about particulars, his Knowledg muſt be about particulars; he could not elſe govern them in particular; nor could all things be ſaid to depend upon him in their Being and Operations. Providence depends upon the knowledg of God, and the exerciſe of it upon the Goodneſs of God; it cannot be Without Underſtanding and Will; Underſtanding to know what is convenient, and Will to perform it. When our *Saviour* therefore ſpeaks of Providence, he intimates theſe two, in a ſpecial manner, *Your Heavenly Father knows that you have need of theſe things*, Mat. 6. 32. *and goodneſs*, in *Luke*. 11. 13. The reaſon of Providence is ſo joyned with Omniſcience, that they cannot be ſeparated: What a kind of God would he be that were ignorant of thoſe things that were governed by him? The aſcribing this Perfection to him, aſſerts his Providence; for it is as eaſie for one that knows all things, to look over the whole World, if writ with Monoſyllables, in every little particular of it; as it is with a man to take a view of one Letter in an Alphabet.

* Again if God were not Omniſcient, how could he reward the Good, and puniſh the Evil? the works of men are either rewardable or puniſhable; not only according to their outward circumſtances, but inward Principles and Ends, and the degrees of Venom lurking in the heart. The exact diſcerning of theſe, without a poſſibility to be deceived, is neceſſary to paſs a right and infallible Judgment upon them, and proportion the cenſure and puniſhment to the Crime: Without ſuch a Knowledg and diſcerning, men would not have their due; nay, a Judgment juſt for the matter, would be unjuſt in the manner, becauſe unjuſtly paſt, without an underſtanding of the merit of the Cauſe. 'Tis neceſſary therefore that the Supream Judg of the World ſhould not be thought to be blindfold, when he diſtributes his Rewards and Puniſhments, and muffle his face when he paſſes his Sentence. 'Tis neceſſary to aſcribe to him the knowledg of mens thoughts and intentions; the

Sabund Tit. 84. much changed.

ſecret wills and aims; the hidden works of darkneſs in every mans Conſcience, becauſe every mans work is to be meaſured by the Will and inward frame. 'Tis neceſſary that he ſhould perpetually retain all thoſe things in the indelible and plain records of his Memory, that there may not be any work without a juſt proportion of what is due to it. This is the glory of God to diſcover the ſecrets of all hearts at laſt, as 1 *Cor.* 4. 5. *the Lord ſhall bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the Counſels of all hearts, and then ſhall every man have praiſe of God.* This knowledg fits him to be a Judg; the reaſon why the *ungodly ſhall not ſtand in Judgment*, is becauſe God *knows* their ways, which is implyed in his *knowing the way of the righteous.** * Pſal. 1. 5, 6.

I now proceed to the *Uſe*.

USE the firſt, is of *information or inſtruction.* If God hath all knowledg; then

I. *Jeſus Chriſt is not a meer Creature.* The two Titles of *Wonderful Counſellor* and *Mighty God*, are given him in conjunction, *Iſa.* 9. 6. not only the *Angel of the Covenant*, as he is called, *Malach.* 3. 1. or the Executor of his Counſels, but a Counſellor, in conjunction with him in Counſel as well as Power: This Title is ſuperior to any Title given to any of the Prophets in regard of their Predictions; and therefore I ſhould take it rather as the note of his perfect underſtanding, than of his perfect teaching and diſcovering; as *Calvin* doth: He is not only the Revealer of what he knows, ſo were the *Prophets* according to their meaſures; but the Counſellor of what he revealed, having a perfect underſtanding of all the Counſels of God, as being intereſted in them, as the Mighty God. He calls himſelf by the peculiar Title of God, and declares that he will manifeſt himſelf by this Prerogative to all the Churches, *Rev.* 2. 23. *And all the Churches ſhall know that I am he, which ſearches the Reins and Hearts*, the moſt hidden operations of the minds of men that lye locked up from the view of all the World beſides. And this was no new thing to him, after his Aſcenſion; for the ſame Perfection he had in the time of his earthly fleſh, *Luke* 6. 8. *he knew their Thoughts*; his eyes are therefore compar'd, *Cant.* 5. 12. to *Doves eyes*, which are clear and quick; and to a *flame of fire*, *Rev.* 1. 14. not only heat to conſume his Enemies, but Light to diſcern their contrivances againſt the Church; he pierceth, by his knowledg, into all parts, as fire pierceth into the cloſeſt particle of Iron, and ſeparates between the moſt united parts of Metals; and ſome tell us, he is called a *Roe*, from the perſpicacity of his Sight, as well as from the ſwiftneſs of his motion.

1. *He hath a perfect Knowledg of the Father*; he knows the Father, and none elſe knows the Father; *Angels* know God, *men* know God, but *Chriſt* in a peculiar manner knows the Father; *no man knows the Son but the Father; neither knows any man the Father, ſave the Son*, Mat. 11. 27. he knows ſo, as that he learns not from any other; he doth perfectly comprehend him, which is beyond the reach of any Creature, with the addition of all the Divine Vertue; not becauſe of any incapacity in God to reveal, but the incapacity of the Creature to receive; finite is uncapable of being made infinite, and therefore incapable of comprehending infinite; ſo that Chriſt cannot be *Deus factus*, made of a Creature a God, to comprehend God; for then of *finite* he would become *infinite*, which is a contradiction. As the Spirit is God, becauſe *he ſearches the deep things of God*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 10. that is, comprehends them *, as the Spirit of a man doth the things of a man (now the Spirit of man underſtands what it Thinks, and what it Wills) ſo the Spirit of God underſtands what is in the Underſtanding of God, and what is in the Will of God. He hath an abſolute knowledg aſcrib'd to him, and ſuch as could not be aſcrib'd to any thing but a Divinity: Now if the Spirit knows the deep things of God, and takes from *Chriſt* what he ſhews to us of *him*, *John* 16. 15. he cannot be ignorant of thoſe things himſelf; he muſt know the depths of God that affords us that Spirit, that is not ignorant of any of the Counſels of the Fathers Will; ſince he comprehends the Father, and the Father him, he is in himſelf infinite; for God whoſe Eſſence is infinite, is infinitely knowable; but no Created underſtanding can infinitely know God. The infiniteneſs of the object hinders it from being underſtood by any thing that is not infinite. Though a Creature ſhould underſtand all the works of God, yet it cannot be therefore ſaid to underſtand God him- * *Petav.* Theo. dogmat. Tom. 1. p. 467. &c.

himself: As tho' I may understand all the volitions and motions of my Soul, yet it doth not follow that therefore I understand the whole nature and substance of my Soul; or if a man understood all the effects of the Sun, that therefore he understands fully the nature of the Sun. But Christ knows the Father, he lay in the *Bosom of the Father*, was in the greatest intimacy with him, *John* 1. 18. and from this intimacy with him, he saw him and knew him; so he knows God as much as he is knowable; and therefore knows him perfectly as the Father knows himself by a *comprehensive Vision*; this is the knowledg of God wherein properly the infiniteness of his understanding appears: And our *Saviour* uses such expressions which manifest his Knowledg to be above all Created Knowledg, and such a manner of knowledg of the Father, as the Father hath of him.

2. *Christ knows all Creatures.* That knowledg which comprehends God, comprehends all Created things as they are in God; 'tis a knowledg that sinks to the depths of his Will, and therefore extenbs to all the acts of his Will in Creation and Providence; by knowing the Father he knows all things that are contained in the Vertue, Power and Will of God; *whatsoever the Father doth, that the Son doth*, John 5. 19. As the Father therefore knows all things he is the cause of, so doth the Son know all things he is the worker of; as the perfect making of all things belongs to both, so doth the perfect knowledg of all things belong to both; where the action is the same, the knowledge is the same. Now the Father did not Create one thing, and Christ another; *but all things were Created by him, and for him: all things both in Heaven and Earth*, Col. 1. 16. As he knows himself the cause of all things, and the end of all things, he cannot be ignorant of all things that were effected by him, and are referred to him; he knows all Creatures in God, as he knows the Essence of God, and knows all Creatures in themselves, as he Knows his own acts and the fruits of his Power; those things must be in his Knowledg that were in his Power, *all the Treasures of the Wisdom and Knowledg* of God are *hid in him*, *Col.* 2. 3. Now it is not the Wisdom of God to know in part, and be in part ignorant. He cannot be ignorant of any thing, since there is *nothing but what was made by him*, John 1. 3. and since it is less to know than Create; for we know many things which we cannot make. If he be the Creator, he cannot but be the discerner of what he made; this is a part of Wisdom belonging to an Artificer to know the nature and quality of what he makes. Since he cannot be ignorant of what he furnisht with Being, and with various endowments, he must know them not only universally, but particularly.

Petav. Theolo: Dogmat. Tom. 1. P. 467.

3. *Christ knows the hearts and affections of men.* *Peter* scruples not to ascribe to him this knowledg, among the knowledg of all other things, *John* 21. 17. *Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.* From Christs knowledg of all things, he concludes his knowledg of the inward frames and dispositions of men. To search the heart, is the sole Prerogative of God, 1 *Kings* 8. 39. *For thou, even thou only knowest the hearts of all the Children of men*: Shall we take (*only*) here with a limitation, as some that are no Friends to the Deity of Christ would, and say, God only knows the hearts of men from himself, and by his own infinite vertue? Why may we not take (*only*) in other places with a limitation, and make nonsence of it, as Psal. 86. 10. *Thou art God alone*. Is it to be understood, that God is God alone from himself, but other Gods may be made by him, and so there may be numberless infinites? As God is God alone, so that none can be God but himself; so he alone knows all the hearts of all the Children of men, and none but he can know them; this knowledg is from his nature. * The reason why God knows the hearts of men, is rendred in the Scripture double, because he *created them*, and because he is *present every where*, Psal. 33. 13, 15. these *two* are by the Confession of *Christians* and *Pagans* universally received as the proper Characters of Divinity, whereby the *Deity* is distinguish'd from all Creatures. Now when Christ ascribes this to himself, and that with such an *Emphasis*, that nothing greater than that could be urg'd, *as he doth*, *Rev.* 2. 23. we must conclude that he is of the same Essence with God, one with him in his Nature, as well as one with him in his Attributes. God only knows the hearts of the Children of men; there is the *unity* of God: Christ searches the Hearts and Reins; there is a *distinction of persons* in an *oneness* of *Essence*; he knows the hearts of all men, not only of those that were with him in

* *Placeus* de deitate Christi.

the time of the Fleſh, that have been and ſhall be, ſince his Aſcenſion; but of thoſe that lived and died before his coming, becauſe he is to be the Judg of all that lived before his humiliation on earth, as well as after his exaltation in Heaven. It pertains to him as a Judg, to know diſtinctly the merits of the Cauſe of which he is to judg; and this excellency of ſearching the hearts is mention'd by himſelf with relation to his judicial Proceeding, *I will give to every one of you according to your Works.* And tho' a Creature may know what is in a mans heart, if it be revealed to him, yet ſuch a knowledg is a knowledg only by report, not by inſpection; yet this latter is aſcrib'd to *Chriſt*, John 2. 24, 25. *he knew all men, and needed not that any ſhould teſtify of man, for he knew what was in man*; he looked into their hearts. The *Evangeliſt* to allay the amazement of men at his relation of our *Saviours* knowledg of the inward falſity of thoſe that made a ſplendid Profeſſion of him; doth not ſay, the Father revealed it to him; but intimates it to be an unſeparable Property of his nature. No covering was ſo thick as to bound his eye; no pretence ſo glittering as to impoſe upon his underſtanding. Thoſe that made a Profeſſion of him, and could not be diſcerned by the eye of man from his faithfulleſt Attendants, were in their inſide known to him plainer than their outſide was to others; and therefore he committed not himſelf to them, tho' they ſeemed to be perſwaded to a real belief in his name, becauſe of the Power of his Miracles; and were touched with an admiration of him, as ſome great *Prophet*, and perhaps declared him to be the *Meſſiah*, ver. 23.

4. *He had a foreknowledg of the particular inclinations of men, before thoſe diſtinct inclinations were in actual Being in them.* This is plainly aſſerted, *John* 6. 64. *but there are ſome of you that believe not, for Jeſus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who ſhould betray him.* When Chriſt aſſured them from the knowledg of the hearts of his followers, that ſome of them were void of that Faith they profeſt; The Evangeliſt to ſtop their amazement, that Chriſt ſhould have ſuch a power and vertue; adds, that he *knew from the beginning*, that he had not only a preſent knowledg, but a foreknowledg of every ones inclination; he knew not only now and then what was in the Hearts of his Diſciples, but from the beginning of any ones giving up their Names to him; he knew whether it were a pretence or ſincere, he knew who *ſhould* betray him, and there was no mans inward affection but was foreſeen by him. * *From the beginning*, whether we underſtand it from the beginning of the World, as when *Chriſt* ſaith concerning Divorces, *from the beginning it was not ſo*, that is, from the beginning of the World, from the beginning of the Law of Nature; or from the beginning of their attending him; as it is taken, *Luke* 1. 2. he had a certain preſcience of the inward diſpoſitions of mens hearts, and their ſucceeding ſentiments; he foreknew the treacherous heart of *Judas* in the midſt of his ſplendid Profeſſion; and diſcern'd his reſolution in the root, and his thought in the confus'd Chaos of his natural corruption; he knew how it would ſpring up, before it did ſpring up, before *Judas* had any diſtinct and formal conception of it himſelf, or before there was any actual preparation to a reſolve. *Peters* denyal was not unknown to him, when *Peter* had a preſent *reſolution*, and no queſtion ſpake it in the preſent ſincerity of his Soul, *never to forſake him*; he foreknew what would be the reſult of that Poyſon which lurkt in *Peters* nature, before *Peter* himſelf imagin'd any thing of it; he diſcern'd *Peters* Apoſtatizing heart, when *Peter* reſolved the contrary; our *Saviours* Prediction was accompliſht, and *Peters* valiant reſolution languiſht into Cowardice.

'Ἐξ ἀρχῆς.

Shall we then conclude our Bleſſed Saviour a Creature, who perfectly and only knew the Father, who knew all Creatures, who had all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledg, who knew the inward motions of mens hearts by his own Vertue, and had not only a preſent Knowledg, but a Preſcience of them.

Inform. II. The *ſecond Inſtruction* from this poſition, That God hath an infinite Knowledg and Underſtanding. *Then there is a Providence exercis'd by God in the World, and that about every thing.* As Providence infers Omniſcience as the guide of it; ſo Omniſcience infers Providence as the end of it. What Exerciſe would there be of this Attribute, but in the Government of the World? To this infinite Perfection refers, *Jer.* 17. 10. *I the Lord ſearch the heart, I try the Reins, to*

give

give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. He ſearches the heart to reward, he rewards every man according to the rewardableneſs of his actions; his Government therefore extends to every man in the World; there is no heart but he ſearches, therefore no heart but he governs; to what purpoſe elſe would be this Knowledg of all his Creatures? for a meer Contemplation of them? no, What pleaſure can that be to God, who knows himſelf, who is infinitely more excellent than all his Creatures? Doth he know them, to neglect all care of them? this muſt be either out of Sloth; but how incompatible is lazineſs to a pure and infinite activity? or out of Majeſty, but 'tis no leſs for the glory of his Majeſty to conduct them, than it was for the glory of his Power to erect them into Being; he that counts nothing unworthy of his Arms to make, nothing unworthy of his Underſtanding to know; why ſhould he count any thing unworthy of his Wiſdom to govern? If he knows them, to neglect them, it muſt be becauſe he hath no Will to it, or no Goodneſs for it; either of theſe would be a ſtain upon God; to want Goodneſs is to be Evil, and to want Will is to be negligent and ſcornful, which are inconſiſtent with an Infinite, Active Goodneſs. Doth a Father neglect providing for the wants of the Family which he knows? or a Phyſician the cure of that Diſeaſe he underſtands? God is Omniſcient, he therefore ſees all things; he is good, he doth not therefore neglect any thing, but conducts it to the end he appointed it. There is nothing ſo little that can eſcape his Knowledg, and therefore nothing ſo little but falls under his Providence; nothing ſo ſublime, as to be above his Underſtanding; and therefore nothing can be without the compaſs of his Conduct; nothing can eſcape his Eye, and therefore nothing can eſcape his Care; nothing is known by him in vain, as nothing was made by him in vain; there muſt be acknowledg'd therefore ſome end of this knowledg of all his Creatures.

Inſtruct. III. *Hence them will follow the certainty of a day of Judgment.* To what purpoſe can we imagine this attribute of Omniſcience ſo often declared and urg'd in Scripture to our conſideration, but in order to a government of our practice, and a future Tryal? Every Perfection of the Divine Nature hath ſent out brighter Rays in the World, than this of his Infinite Knowledg; his Power hath been ſeen in the Being of the World, and his Wiſdom in the Order and Harmony of the Creatures; his Grace and Mercy hath been plentifully poured out in the miſſion of a Redeemer; and his Juſtice hath been elevated by the Dying-Groans of the Son of God upon the Croſs. But hath his *Omniſcience* yet met with a Glory proportionable to that of his other Perfections? all the Attributes of God that have appeared in ſome beautiful glimmerings in the World, wait for a more full manifeſtation in Glory as the Creatures do for the *manifeſtation of the Sons of God*, Rom. 8. 19. But eſpecially this, ſince it hath been leſs evidenced than others, and as much or more abuſed than any; it expects therefore a publick righting in the eye of the World. There have been indeed ſome few ſparks of this Perfection ſenſibly ſtruck out now and then in the World, in ſome horrors of Conſcience, which have made men become their own Accuſers of unknown Crimes, in bringing out hidden Wickedneſs to a publick view, by various Providences. This hath alſo been the deſign of ſprinklings of Judgments upon ſeveral Generations, as *Pſal.* 90. 8. *We are conſumed by thy Anger, and by thy Wrath we are troubled, thou haſt ſet our Iniquities before thee, and our ſecret Sins in the light of thy Countenance.* The word עלומנו ſignifies *Youth*, as well as *ſecret*, *i. e.* Sins committed long ago, and that with ſecrecy. By this he hath manifeſted, that ſecret Sins are not hid from his eye: Tho' inward Terrors and outward Judgments have been let looſe to worry men into a belief of this, yet the corruptions of men would ſtill keep a contrary notion in their minds, that *God hath forgotten, that he hides his face from Tranſgreſſion, and will not regard their Impiety*, *Pſal.* 10. 11. There muſt therefore be a time of Tryal for the publick demonſtration of this Excellency, that it may receive its due Honour by a full Teſtimony, that no ſecrecy can be a ſhelter from it. As his Juſtice, which conſiſts in giving every one his due, could not be Glorified, unleſs men were called to an account for their actions; ſo neither would his Omniſcience appear in its illuſtrious colours, without ſuch a manifeſtation of the ſecret motions of mens hearts, and of Villanies done under Lock and Key, when none were conſcious

ſcious to them, but the committers of them. Now the laſt Judgment is the time appointed for the *opening of the Books*, Dan. 7. 10. The Book of Gods Records, and Conſcience the counter-part, were never fully opened and read before, only now and then ſome pages turn'd to, in particular Judgments; and out of thoſe *Books ſhall men be judged according to their Works*, Rev. 20. 12. Then ſhall the defaced Sins be brought with all their circumſtances to every mans memory; the Counſels of mens hearts fled far from their preſent remembrance; all the habitual knowledg they had of their own actions, ſhall by Gods knowledg of them be excited to an actual review; and their works not only made manifeſt to themſelves, but notorious to the World: All the Words, Thoughts, Deeds of men ſhall be brought forth into the light of their own minds, by the infinite Light of Gods underſtanding reflecting on them. His Knowledg renders him an unerring Witneſs, as well as his Juſtice a *ſwift Witneſs*, Mal. 3. 5. a ſwift Witneſs, becauſe he ſhall without any circuit, or length of Speech, convince their Conſciences by an inward illumination of them, to take notice of the blackneſs and deformity of their hearts and works. In all Judgments God is ſomewhat known to be the ſearcher of hearts; the time of Judgment is the time of his remembrance, *Hoſ.* 8. 13. *Now will he remember their iniquity, and viſit their ſins*; but the great inſtant, or *now*, of the full glorifying it, is the grand day of account. This Attribute muſt have a time for its full Diſcovery; and no time can be fit for it, but a time of a general reckoning. Juſtice cannot be exercis'd without *Omniſcience*; for as Juſtice is a giving to every one his due, ſo there muſt be knowledg to diſcern what is due to every man; the *ſearching* the heart is in order to the *rewarding the works*.

4. *This Perfection in God, gives us ground to believe a Reſurrection.* Who can think this too hard for his Power, ſince not the leaſt Atome of the Duſt of our Bodies can eſcape his Knowledg? An infinite Underſtanding comprehends every mite of a departed Carkaſs; this will not appear impoſſible nor irrational to any upon a ſerious conſideration of this excellency in God: The body is periſhed, the matter of it hath been ſince clothed with different forms and figures; part of it hath been made the body of a Worm, part of it returned to the Duſt that hath been blown away by the Wind, part of it hath been concocted in the Bodies of *Cannibals*, Fiſh, ravenous Beaſts; the Spirits have evaporated into Air, part of the Blood melted into Water; what then, is the matter of the body annihilated? is that wholly periſhed? no, the foundation remains, tho' it hath put on variety of forms; the Body of *Abel*, the firſt man that died, nor the body of *Adam*, are not to this day reduc'd to nothing; Indeed the quantity and the quality of thoſe bodies, have been loſt by various changes they have paſt though ſince their diſſolution; but the matter or ſubſtance of them remains intire, and is not capable to be deſtroy'd by all thoſe transforming alterations, in ſo long a revolution of Time.

The body of a man in his infancy and his old Age, if it were *Methuſelah's*, is the ſame in the foundation in thoſe multitude of years; tho' the quantity of it be alter'd; the quality different, tho' the colour and other things be changed in it; the matter of this body remains the ſame among all the alterations after Death. And can it be ſo mixed with other Natures and Creatures, as that it is paſt finding out by an *Infinite Underſtanding*? Can any particle of this matter eſcape the eye of him that makes and beholds all thoſe various alterations, and where every mite of the ſubſtance of thoſe bodies is particulary lodged; ſo as that he cannot compact it together again for a habitation of that Soul, that many a year before fled from it? * Since the Knowledg of God is infinite, and his Providence extenſive over the leaſt as well as the greateſt parts of the World; he muſt needs know the leaſt as well as the greateſt of his Creatures in their Beginning, Progreſs and Diſſolution; all the forms through which the Bodies of all Creatures roul, the particular inſtants of time, and the particular place when and where thoſe changes are made, they are all preſent with him; and therefore when the Revolution of time allotted by him for the reunion of Souls and Deceaſed Bodies is come, it cannot be doubted but out of the Treaſures of his Knowledg he can call forth every part of the matter of the Bodies of men, from the firſt to the laſt man that expired, and ſtrip it of all

* *Daillé* Serm. 15. p. 21, 22, 23, 24.

all those forms and figures, which it shall then have, to compact it to be a lodging for that Soul which before it entertain'd; and tho' the Bodies of men have been devour'd by Wild Beasts in the Earth, and Fish in the Sea, and been lodg'd in the Stomachs of Barbarous Men-eaters, the matter is not lost. There is but little of the Food we take, that is turned into the substance of our own bodies; that which is not proper for nourishment, which is the greatest part, is separated, and concocted, and rejected; whatsoever objections are made, are answered by this Attribute. Nothing hinders a God of Infinite Knowledg from discerning every particle of the matter, wheresoever it is dispos'd; and since he hath an eye to discern, and a hand to recollect and unite, what difficulty is there in believing this Article of the Christian Faith? he that questions this reveal'd Truth of the Resurrection of the Body, must question Gods Omniscience as well as his Omnipotence and Power.

5. *What semblance of reason is there to expect a justification in the sight of God by any thing in our selves.* Is there any action done by any of us, but upon a scrutiny we may find flaws and deficiency in it? What then? shall not this Perfection of God discern them? the motes that escape our eyes cannot escape his, 1 John 3. 20. *God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things*; so that it is in vain for any man to flatter himself with the rectitude of any work; or enter into any debate with him who can bring a Thousand Articles against us, out of his own Infinite Records unknown to us, and unanswerable by us. If Conscience, a Representative or Counterpart of Gods Omniscience in our own Bosoms, find nothing done by us, but in a Copy short of the Original, and beholds, if not blurs, yet Imperfections in the best actions, God must much more discern them; we never knew a Copy equally exact with the Original; If our own Conscience be as a Thousand Witnesses, the Knowledg of God is as Millions of Witnesses against us: If our Corruption be so great, and our Holiness so low in our own eyes, how much greater must the one, and how much meaner must the other appear in the eyes of God? God hath an unerring Eye to see, as well as an unspotted Holiness to hate, and an unbribable Justice to punish; he wants no more Understanding to know the shortness of our actions, than he doth Holiness to enact, and Power to execute his Laws: Nay, suppose we could recollect many actions, wherein there were no spot visible to us; the consideration of this Attribute should scare us from resting upon any or all of them; since it is the Lord that by a piercing eye sees and judges according to the heart, and not according to appearance. The least crookedness of a Stick, not sensible to an acute eye, yet will appear when laid to the Line; and the impurity of a Counterfeit Metal be manifest when applyed to the Touchstone; so will the best action of any meer man in the World, when it comes to be measur'd in Gods Knowledg by the strait Line of his Law.

Let every man therefore, as *Paul*, though *he should know nothing by himself, think not himself therefore justified*; Since it is the Lord, who is of an infinite Understanding, that Judgeth, 1 Cor. 4. 4. A man may be justified in his own sight, *but not any living man can be justified in the sight of God*, Psal. 143. 2. in his Sight, whose eye pierceth into our unknown secrets and frames: It was therefore well answered of a good man upon his Death-bed, being ask't *What he was afraid of? I have laboured* (saith he) *with all my strength to observe the commands of God; but since I am a man, I am ignorant whether my works are acceptable to God, since God Judges in one manner, and I in another manner.* Let the consideration therefore of this Attribute, make us joyn with *Job* in his Resolution, Job 9. 21. *tho' we were perfect*, yet would we *not know* our *own Souls*. I would not stand up to Plead any of my vertues before God. Let us therefore look after another Righteousness, wherein the exact eye of the Divine Omniscience, we are sure, can discern no stain or crookedness.

6. *What honourable and adoring Thoughts ought we to have of God for this Perfection?* Do we not honour a man that is able to Predict; Do we not think it a great part of Wisdom? Have not all Nations regarded such a faculty, as a character and a mark of Divinity? There is something more ravishing in the know-

knowledg of future things, both to the perſon that knows them, and the perſon that hears them, than there is in any other kind of knowledg; whence the greateſt Prophets have been accounted in the greateſt veneration, and men have thought it a way to glory to Divine and Predict: Hence it was that the *Devils* and *Pagan* Oracles gained ſo much Credit; upon this Foundation were they eſtabliſhed, and the Enemies of Mankind owned for a true God; I ſay, from the Prediction of future things, tho their Oracles were often ambiguous, many times falſe; yet thoſe poor Heathens framed many ingenious excuſes, to free their Adored Gods from the charge of falſity and impoſture: And ſhall we not adore the true God, the God of *Iſrael*, the God bleſſed for ever, for this incommunicable Property, whereby he flies above the Wings of the Wind, the underſtandings of men and Cherubims?

Sabund Theol. natural. Tit. 84. ſomewhat changed.

* Conſider how great it is to know the Thoughts, and Intentions, and Works of one man, from the beginning to the end of his life; to foreknow all theſe before the Being of this man, when he was lodged afar off in the Loyns of his Anceſtors, yea of *Adam*; how much greate is it to foreknow and know the Thoughts and Works of three or four men, of a whole *Village* or Neighbourhood? 'Tis greater ſtill to know the imaginations and actions of ſuch a *multitude* of men as are contained in *London*, *Paris*, or *Conſtantinople*; how much greater ſtill to know the intentions and practices, the clandeſtine contrivances of ſo *many Millions*, that have, do, or ſhall ſwarm in all quarters of the World, every perſon of them having Millions of Thoughts, Deſires, Deſigns, Affections and Actions!

Let this Attribute then make the bleſſed God honourable in our eyes, and adorable in all our affections; ſpecially ſince it is an Excellency which hath ſo lately diſcovered it ſelf, in bringing to Light the hidden things of darkneſs, in opening, and in part confounding the wicked Devices of Bloody men. Eſpecially let us adore God for it, and admire it in God, ſince it is ſo neceſſary a Perfection, that without it the goodneſs of God had been impotent, and could not have relieved us; for what help can a diſtreſſed perſon expect from a man of the ſweeteſt diſpoſition, and the ſtrongeſt arm, if the eyes which ſhould diſcover the danger, and direct the defence and reſcue, were cloſed up by blindneſs and darkneſs? Adore God for this wonderful Perfection.

7. *In the conſideration of this excellent Attribute, what low thoughts ſhould we have of our own knowledg, and how humble ought we to be before God?* There's nothing man is more apt to be proud of then his Knowledg; 'tis a Perfection he glories in; but if our own Knowledg of the little outſide and barks of things, puffs us up, the conſideration of the infiniteneſs of Gods Knowledg ſhould abate the Tumour: As our Beings are nothing in regard to the infiniteneſs of his Eſſence, ſo our Knowledg is nothing in regard of the vaſtneſs of his underſtanding: We have a ſpark of Being, but nothing to the heat of the Sun: We have a drop of Knowledg: but nothing to the Divine Ocean. What a vain thing is it for a ſhallow Brook to boaſt of its Streams before a Sea, whoſe depths are unfathomable? As it is a vanity to brag of our Strength when we remenber the Power of God; and of our Prudence, when we glance upon the Wiſdom of God; ſo 'tis no leſs a vanity to boaſt of our Knowledg, when we think of the Underſtanding and Knowledg of God.

Paſcall p. 170.

How hard is it for us to know *any thing**? too much noiſe deafs us, and too much light dazels us, too much diſtance alienates the object from us, and too much nearneſs bars up our ſight from beholding it: When we think our ſelves to be near the knowledg of a thing, as a Ship to the Haven, a puff of Wind blows us away, and the object which we deſired to know, eternally flies from us; we burn with a deſire of knowledg, and yet are oppreſt with the darkneſs of ignorance; we ſpend our days more in dark *Egypt*, than in enlightened *Goſhen*. In what narrow bounds is all the knowledg of the moſt intelligent perſons included? * How few underſtand the exact Harmony of their own bodies, the nature of the life they have in common with other Animals? who underſtands the nature of his own faculties, how he Knows, and how he Wills, how the Underſtanding Propoſeth, and how the Will embraceth, how his ſpiritual Soul is united to his material Body, what the nature is of the operation of our Spirits? nay, who underſtands the nature of his own bo-

* *Amyrant.* de Prædeſt. p. 116, 117. ſomewhat changed.

dy,

dy, the offices of his ſenſes, the motion of his Members, how they come to obey the command of the Will, and a Thouſand other things? What a vain, weak, and ignorant thing is man, when compar'd with God? Yet there is not a greater pride to be found among Devils, than among ignorant men with a little, very little flaſhy knowledg, ignorant man is as proud, as if he knew as God!

As the conſideration of Gods *Omniſcience* ſhould render him *honourable* in our eyes, ſo it ſhould render us *vile* in our own. God, becauſe of his knowledg, is ſo far from diſdaining his Creatures, that his Omniſcience is a Miniſter to his Goodneſs: No knowledg that we are poſſeſs'd of, ſhould make us ſwell with too high a conceit of our ſelves, and a diſdain of others. We have infinitely more of ignorance than knowledg. Let us therefore remember in all our thoughts of God, that he is God, and we are men; and therefore ought to be humble, as becomes men, and ignorant and fooliſh men to be; as weak Creatures ſhould lie low before an Almighty God, and impure Creatures before a Holy God, falſe Creatures before a Faithful God, finite Creatures before an infinite God; ſo ſhould ignorant Creatures before an All-Knowing God. All Gods Attributes teach admiring thoughts of God, and low thoughts of our ſelves.

8. It may inform us, *how much this Attribute is injured in the World.* The firſt error after *Adams* eating the forbidden Fruit, was the denyal of this, as well as the Omnipreſence of God, *Gen.* 3. 10. *I heard thy voice in the Garden, and I hid my ſelf*; as if the thickneſs of the Trees could ſcreen him from the eye of his Creator. And after *Cains* Murder; this is the firſt Perfection he affronts, *Gen.* 4. 9. *Where is* Abel *thy Brother*, ſaith God? how roundly doth he anſwer, *I know not*? As if God were as weak as man, to be put off with a Lye: Man doth as naturally hate this Perfection, as much as he cannot naturally but acknowledg it; he wiſhes God ſtript of this eminency, that he might be incapable to be an inſpector of his Crimes, and a ſearcher of the Cloſets of his heart: In wiſhing him deprived of this, there is a hatred of God himſelf; for it is a loathing an Eſſential Property of God, without which he would be a pitiful governour of the World. What a kind of God ſhould that be, of a Sinners wiſhing, that had wanted Eyes to ſee a Crime, and Righteouſneſs to puniſh it? The want of the conſideration of this Attribute, is the cauſe of all Sin in the World, *Hoſ.* 7. 2. *They conſider not in their hearts that I remember all their Wickedneſs*? they ſpeak not to their hearts, nor make any reflection upon the infiniteneſs of my Knowledg; 'tis a high contempt of God, as if he were an *Idol*, a ſenſeleſs Stock or Stone; in all evil practices this is denied: We know God ſees all things, yet we live and walk as if he knew nothing: We call him Omniſcient, and live as if he were ignorant; we ſay he is all eye, yet act as if he were wholly blind.

In *particular*, this Attribute is injured, *By invading the peculiar rights of it, by preſuming on it, and by a practical denyal of it.*

1. *By invading the peculiar rights of it.*

1. *By invocation of Creatures.* Praying to Saints, by the *Romaniſts*, is a diſparagement to this Divine Excellency; he that knows all things, is only fit to have the Petitions of men preſented to him; Prayer ſuppoſeth an Omniſcient Being, as the object of it; no other Being but God ought to have that honour acknowledged to it; no Underſtanding but his, is infinite; no other Preſence but his, is every where; to implore any deceaſed Creature for a ſupply of our wants, is to own in them a Property of the Deity; and make them Deities that were but men; and increaſe their glory by a diminution of Gods Honour, in aſcribing that Perfection to Creatures which belongs only to God. Alas! they are ſo far from underſtanding the deſires of our Souls, that they know not the words of our Lips: 'Tis againſt reaſon to addreſs our ſupplications to them that neither underſtand us, nor diſcern us, Iſa. 63. 16. *Abraham is ignorant of us, and* Iſrael *acknowledges us not.* The *Jews* never called upon *Abraham*, tho the Covenant was made with him for the whole Seed; not one departed Saint for the whole *Four Thouſand years* between the *Creation* of the World, and the coming of *Chriſt*, was ever prayed to by the *Iſraelites*; or ever imagin'd to have a ſhare in Gods Omniſcience; ſo that to pray to St. *Peter*, St. *Paul*, much leſs to St. *Roch*, St. *Swithin*, St. *Martin*, St. *Francis*, &c. is ſuch a Superſtition that hath no footing in the Scripture.

*Daille Melang. part 2. p. 560. 561.

* To deſire the Prayers of the Living, with whom we have a Communion, who can underſtand and grant our deſires, is founded upon a mutual Charity; but to implore perſons that are abſent, at a great diſtance from us, with whom we have not, nor know how to have any Commerce, ſuppoſeth them in their departure to have put off Humanity, and commenc'd Gods, and endued with ſome part of the Divinity to underſtand our Petitions; we are indeed to cheriſh their Memories, conſider their Examples, imitate their Graces, and obſerve their Doctrines; we are to follow them as Saints, but not elevate them as Gods, in aſcribing to them ſuch a knowledg which is only the neceſſary right of their and our common Creator: As the invocation of Saints mingles them with Chriſt in the exerciſe of his Office, ſo it ſets them equal with God in the Throne of his *Omniſcience*. As if they had as much credit with God, as Chriſt, in a way of Mediation; and as much knowledg of mens affairs, as God himſelf. Omniſcience is peculiar to God, and incommunicable to any Creature; 'tis the foundation of all Religion, and therefore one of the choiceſt acts of it, viz. *Prayer and Invocation*. To direct our Vows and Petitions to any elſe, is to invade the peculiarity of this Perfection in God, and to rank ſome Creatures in a Partnerſhip with him in it.

2. *This Attribute is injured by curioſity of Knowledg.* Eſpecially of future things which God hath not diſcovered in natural cauſes, or ſupernatural Revelation. 'Tis a common error of mens Spirits to aſpire to know what God would have hidden, and to pry into Divine Secrets; and many men are more willing to remain without the knowledg of thoſe things which may with a little induſtry be attained, than be diveſted of the curioſity of enquiring into thoſe things which are above their reach; 'tis hence that ſome have laid aſide the Study of the common remedies of Nature, to find out the *Philoſophers Stone*; which ſcarce any ever yet attempted, but ſunk in the Enterpriſe. * From this inclination to know the moſt abſtruce and difficult things it is, that the horrors of *Magick*, and the vanities of *Aſtrology* have ſprung, whereby men have thought to find in a commerce with Devils and the Juriſdiction of the Stars, the events of their Lives, and the diſpoſal of States and Kingdoms. Hence alſo aroſe thoſe Multitudes of ways of Divination invented among the Heathen, and practiſed too commonly in theſe Ages of the World. This is an invaſion of Gods Prerogative, to whom ſecret things belong, *Deut.* 29. 29. *Secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but revealed things belong to us and our Children.* 'Tis an intollerable boldneſs to attempt to fathom thoſe, the Knowledg whereof God hath reſerved to himſelf; and to ſearch that which God will have to ſurpaſs our Underſtandings; whereby we more truly envy God a knowledg ſuperior to our own, than we in *Adam* imagin'd that he envyed us. Ambition is the greateſt cauſe of this, Ambition to be accounted ſome great thing among men, By reaſon of a Knowledg eſtrang'd from the common maſs of mankind; but more eſpecially that ſoaring Pride to be equal with God, which lurks in our nature ever ſince the Fall of our firſt Parents: This is not yet laid aſide by man, though it was the *firſt* thing that embroyl'd the World with the Wrath of God. Some think a curioſity of Knowledg was the Cauſe of the fall of the Devils; I am ſure it was the foyl of *Adam*, and is yet the Crime of his Poſterity; had he been contented to know what God had furniſht him with, neither he nor his Poſterity had ſmarted under the Venom of the Serpents Breath.

* *Amyraut. Moral.* Tom. 3. p. 75. *&c.*

All curions and bold enquiries into things not revealed, are an attempt upod the Throne of God; and are both ſinful and pernicious, like to glaring upon the Sun; where inſtead of a greater acuteneſs, we meet with blindneſs, and too dearly by our ignorance in attempting a ſuperfluous knowledg. As Gods Knowledg is deſtin'd to the government of the World, ſo ſhould ours be to the advantage of the World, and not degenerate into vain ſpeculations.

3. This Attribute is injur'd *by ſwearing by Creatures:* To ſwear by the *Name of God* in a Righteous Cauſe, * when we are lawfully call'd to it by a Superior Power,

*Cajetan. Sum. p. 190.

Power, or for the neceſſary deciſion of ſome Controverſie, for the ends, of Charity and Juſtice, is an act of Religion, *and a part of Worſhip*, founded upon, and directed to the honour of this Attribute; by it we acknowledg the glory of his infallible Knowledg of all things; but to Swear by falſe Gods, or by any Creature, is Blaſphemous; it ſets the Creature in the place of God, and inveſts it in that which is the peculiar honour of the Divinity; for when any ſwear truly, they intend the invocation of an infallible VVitneſs, and the bringing an undoubted Teſtimony for what they do aſſert; VVhile any therefore ſwear by a Creature, or a falſe God, they profeſs that that Creature, or that which they eſteem to be a God, is an infallible VVitneſs, which to be, is only the right of God; they Attribute to the Creature that which is the Property of God alone, to know the Heart, and to be a VVitneſs whether they ſpeak true or no; and this was accounted by all Nations the true Deſign of an Oath. As to Swear falſely, is a plain denial of the All-Knowledg of God; ſo to ſwear by any Creature, is to ſet the Creature upon the Throne of God, in aſcribing that Perfection to the Creature, which Soveraignly belongs to the Creator; for it is not in the Power of any to VVitneſs to the truth of the heart, but of him that is the ſearcher of hearts.

4. VVe Sin againſt this Attribute *by cenſuring the hearts of others.* An open Crime indeed falls under our Cognizance, and therefore under our Judgment; for whatſoever falls under the Authority of man to be puniſhed, falls under the Judgment of man to be cenſured, as an act contrary to the Law of God; yet when a cenſure is built upon the evil of the act which is obvious to the view, if we take a ſtep farther to judg the heart and ſtate, we leave the revealed rule of the Law, and ambitiouſly erect a Tribunal equal with Gods; and uſurp a Judicial Power, pertaining only to the Supream Governour of the VVorld; and conſequently pretend to be poſſeſt of this Perfection of *Omniſcience*, which is neceſſary to render him capable of the exerciſe of that Soveraign Authority. For it is in reſpect of his Dominion, that God hath the ſupream right to Judg; and in reſpect of his Knowledg that he hath an incommunicable capacity to judg.

In an action that is doubtful, the good or evil whereof depends only upon Gods determination, and wherein much of the Judgment depends upon the diſcerning the intention of the Agent, we cannot Judge any man without a manifeſt invaſion of Gods peculiar right; ſuch actions are to be Tryed by Gods Knowledg, not by our ſurmiſes; God only is the Maſter in ſuch caſes, *to whom* a perſon *ſtands* or *falls*, Rom. 14. 4. Till the true Principle and ends of an action be known by the confeſſion of the party acting it, a true Judgment of it is not in our Power. Principles and Ends lie deep and hid from us; and it is intollerable Pride to pretend to have a joynt Key with God to open that Cabinet which he hath reſerved to himſelf.

Beſides the violation of the Rule of Charity in miſconſtruing actions which may be great and generous in their root and principle, we invade Gods Right, as if our ungrounded imaginations and conjectures were in joynt Commiſſion with this Soveraign Perfection; and thereby we become Uſurping *Judges of evil thoughts*, *James* 2.4. 'Tis therefore a boldneſs worthy to be puniſhed by the Judg, to aſſume to our ſelves the Capacity and Authority of him, who is the only Judg. For as the Execution of the Divine Law, for the inward violation of it, belongs only to God, ſo is the right of Judging a Perogative belonging only to his *Omniſcience*; his Right is therefore invaded, if we pretend to a knowledg of it. This Humour of Men the *Apoſtle* checks, when he ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 4. 5. *He that judgeth me is the Lord, therefore judg nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will manifeſt the Counſels of all hearts.* 'Tis not the time yet for God to erect the Tribunal for the tryal of mens hearts, and the Principles of their Actions; He hath reſerv'd the glorious diſcovery of this Attribute for another ſeaſon; We muſt not therefore preſume to Judge of the Counſels of mens hearts, till God hath reveal'd them by opening the Treaſuries of his own Knowledg.

much leſs are we to judg any Mans final Condition. *Manaſſeh* may Sacrifice to Devils, and unconverted *Paul* tear the Church in pieces; but God had Mercy on them and called them. The Action may be Cenſur'd, not the State, for we know not whom God may call. In Cenſuring Men, we may *doubly* imitate the Devil, in a *falſe accuſation* of the Brethren, as well as in an ambitious *uſurpation* of the Rights of God.

2. This Perfection is injured, *by preſuming upon it, or making an ill uſe of it.* As in the neglect of Prayer for the ſupply of Men's wants, becauſe God knows them already, ſo that that which is an encouragement to Prayer; they make the reaſon of reſtraining it before God. Prayer is not to adminiſter Knowledg to God, but to acknowledg this admirable Perfection of the Divine Nature. If God did not know, there were indeed no uſe of Prayer, it would be as vain a thing to ſend up our Prayers to Heaven, as to implore the ſenſeleſs Statue or Picture of a Prince for a Protection. We Pray becauſe God knows, for though he know our wants with a *knowledg of Viſion*, yet he will not know them with a knowledg of ſupply, till he *be ſought unto.* All the Excellencies of God are ground of Adoration; and this Excellency is the ground of that part of Worſhip we call Prayer. If God be to be Worſhipped, he is to be called upon; *Invocations of his name* in our neceſſities is a chief act of Worſhip; whence the *Temple*, the place of ſolemn Worſhip, was not called the Houſe of Sacrifice, but the *Houſe of Prayer.*

* Mat. 6. 32, 33. * Matth. 7. 11.

Prayer was not appointed for Gods information, as if he were ignorant, but for the expreſſion of our deſires; not to furniſh him with a knowledg of what we want, but to manifeſt to him by ſome Rational Sign convenient to our Nature, our ſenſe of that want, which he knows by himſelf. So that Prayer is not deſign'd to acquaint God with our wants, but to expreſs the deſire of a Remedy of our wants. God knows our wants, but hath not made promiſes barely to our wants, but to our asking: That his Omniſcience in hearing as well as his ſufficiency in ſupplying, may have a ſenſible honour in our acknowledgments and receipts. 'Tis therefore an ill uſe of this Excellency of God to neglect Prayer to him as needleſs, becauſe he knows already.

4. This Perfection of God is wrong'd, *by a practical denial of it.* 'Tis the language of every Sin, and ſo God takes it when he comes to reckon with Men for their Impieties. Upon this he charges the greatneſs of the iniquity of *Iſrael*, the overflowing of Blood in the Land, and the perverſneſs of the City; *They ſay the Lord hath forſaken the Earth, and the Lord ſees not* *: They deny his Eyes to ſee, and his Reſolution to puniſh.

* Ezek. 9. 9.

1. It will appear, *in forbearing Sin from a ſenſe of Mans knowledg, not of Gods.* Open Impieties are refrain'd becauſe of the Eye of Man; but ſecret Sins are not checked becauſe of the Eye of God. Wickedneſs is committed in darkneſs, that is reſtrained in Light; as if *darkneſs* were as great a clog to Gods Eyes as it is to ours; as though his Eyes were muſled with the Curtains of the Night *. This it is likely was at the root of *Jonah*'s flight, he might have ſome ſecret thought, that his Maſters Eye could not follow him, as though the cloſe Hatches of a Ship could ſecure him from the Knowledg of God, as well as the ſides of the Ship could from the daſhing of the waves. What lies moſt upon the Conſcience when it is graciouſly wounded, is leaſt regarded, or contemned when it is baſely inclin'd. *David*'s heart ſmote him not only for his Sin in the groſs, but as particularly circumſtantiated by the commiſſion of it in the ſight of God; *Pſal.* 51. 4. *Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight.* None knew the reaſon of *Uriah*'s Death but my ſelf, and becauſe others knew it not, I neglected any regard to this Divine Eye. When *Jacob*'s Sons uſed their Brother *Joſeph* ſo barba-

* Job 22. 14.

rouſly

rouſly, they took care to hide it from their *Father*; but caſt away all thoughts of God, from whom it could not be conceal'd.

Doth not the preſence of a Child bridle a Man, from the act of a long'd for Sin, when the Eye of God is of no force to reſtrain him? As if Gods Knowledg were of leſs value than the ſight of a little Boy or Girle, as if a Child only could ſee, and God were blind. He that will forbear an unworthy action for fear of an Informer, will not forbear it for God; as if Gods *Omniſcience*, were not as full an Intelligencer to him, as Man can be an Informer to a Magiſtrate. As we acknowledg the power of Men ſeeing us, when we are aſhamed to commit a filthy action in their view; ſo we diſcover the power of God ſeeing us, when we regard not what we do before the light of his Eyes. Secret Sins are more againſt God than open: Open Sins are againſt the Law, ſecret Sins are againſt the Law, and this prime Perfection of his Nature. The Majeſty of God is not only violated, but the Omniſcience of God diſown'd, who is the only Witneſs; We muſt in all of them, either imagine him to be without Eyes to behold us, or without an Arm of Juſtice to puniſh us. And often it is, I believe, in ſuch caſes, that if any thoughts of Gods knowledg ſtrike upon Men, they quickly damp them, leſt they ſhould begin to know what they fear, and fear that they might not eat their pleaſant ſinful Morſels.

2. It appears, *in partial Confeſſions of Sin before God.* As by a free, full, and ingenuous Confeſſion, we offer a due Glory to this Attribute, ſo by a feigned and curtail'd Confeſſion we deny him the honour of it: For though by any Confeſſion we in part own him to be a Soveraign and Judg, yet by a half and pared acknowledgment, we own him to be no more than a Humane and ignorant one. *Achans* full Confeſſion gave God the glory of his Omniſcience, manifeſted in the diſcovery of his ſecret Crime. And *Joſhuah ſaid to* Achan, *My Son give glory to the Lord God of* Iſrael, *and make Confeſſion unto him.* And ſo, *Pſal.* 50. 23. *Who ſo offereth praiſe glorifieth me*, or *confeſſion*, as the word ſignifieth, in which ſenſe I would rather take it, referring to this Attribute, which God ſeems to tax Sinners with the denial of, *Verſ.* 21. telling them that he would open the Records of their Sins before them, and indict them particularly for every one. If therefore you would glorifie this Attribute, which ſhall one day break open your Conſciences, *offer to me a ſincere Confeſſion.* When *David* ſpeaks of the *happineſs* of a pardon'd Man, * he adds, *in whoſe Spirit there is no guile*, not meaning a ſincerity in general, but that ingenuity in Confeſſing. To excuſe or extenuate Sin, is to deny God the knowledg of the depths of our deceitful hearts: When we will mince it rather than aggravate it? lay it upon the inducements of others, when it was the free act of our own wills, ſtudy ſhifts to deceive our Judge, this is to *ſpeak lies of him*, as the expreſſion is, *Hoſ.* 7. 13. As though he were a God eaſie to be cheated, and knew no more than we are willing to declare. What did *Sauls* transferring his Sin from himſelf to the *people*, *but charge God with a defect in this Attribute? When Man could not be like God in his Knowledg, he would fancy a God like to him in his ignorance; and imagine a poſſibility of hiding himſelf from his knowledg, and all Men tread more or leſs in their Fathers ſteps, and are fruitful to deviſe diſtinctions to diſguiſe Errors in Doctrin, and excuſes to palliate Errors in Practice: This Crime *Job* removes from himſelf, when he ſpeaks of ſeveral acts of his ſincerity; *If I cover'd my tranſgreſſion as* Adam, *by hiding my iniquity in my boſom*, I hid not any of my Sins in my own Conſcience, but acknowledg'd God a Witneſs to them, and gave him the glory of his knowledg by a free Confeſſion. I did not conceal it from God as *Adam* did, or as men ordinarily do; as if God could underſtand no more of their ſecret Crimes, than they will let him, and had no more ſenſe of their faults, than they would furniſh him with. As the firſt riſe of Confeſſion is the owning of this Attribute (for the Juſtice of God would

* Joſh. 7. 19.

* Pſal. 2. 1, 2. Camero. *p.* 89. *col.* 1.

* 1 Sam. 15. 15.

* Job 31. 33.

would not ſcare Men, nor the Holineſs of God awe them without a ſenſe of his knowledg of their iniquities) ſo to drop out ſome fragments of Confeſſion, diſcover ſome Sins, and conceal others, is a plain denial of the extenſiveneſs of the Divine Knowledg.

3. It is diſcover'd, *by putting God off with an outſide Worſhip.* Men are often flatterers of God, and think to bend him by formal glavering Devotions, without the concurrence of their hearts, as though he could not pierce into the darkneſs of the Mind, but did as little know us as one Man knows another. There are ſuch things as *feigned Lips**, a contradiction between the Heart and the Tongue, a clamour in the Voice, and ſcoffing in the Soul; a crying, to God, thou art *my Father, the Guide of my youth*, and yet ſpeaking and *doing evil to the utmoſt* of our Power*. As if God could be impos'd upon by fawning pretences; and like old *Iſaac*, take *Jacob* for *Eſau*, and be couzen'd by the ſmell of his Garments: As if he could not diſcern the *Negro* heart under an Angels Garb. Thus *Ephraim*, the Ten Tribes, apoſtatized from the true Religion, would go with their *Flocks* and their *Herds* to *ſeek the Lord**, would Sacrifice multitudes of Sheep and Heifers, which was the main outſide of the *Jewiſh* Religion; only with their Flocks and their Herds, not with their Hearts, with thoſe inward qualifications of deep Humiliation and Repentance for Sin: As though outſide appearances limited Gods obſervation, whereas God had told them before, That he *knew* Ephraim *and* Iſrael *was not hid from him.* Thus to do is to put a cheat upon God, and think to blind his All-ſeeing Eye; and therefore it is called *deceit*, *Pſal.* 78. 36. They did *flatter him with their Mouths*; The word פתה ſignifies to deceive as well as to flatter; not that they or any elſe can deceive God, but it implies an endeavour to deceive him, by a few diſſembling words and geſtures, or an imagination that God was ſatisfied with bare profeſſions, and would not concern himſelf in a further inquiſition: This is an unworthy conceit of God, to fancy that we can ſatisfie for inward Sins, and avert approaching Judgments, by External Offerings, by a loud Voice with a falſe Heart, as if God, (like Children) would be pleaſ'd, with the glittering of an empty Shell, or the ratling of Stones, the chinking of Money, a meer Voice, and crying without inward frames and intentions of ſervice.

* Pſal. 17. 1.

* Jer. 3 4, 5.

* Hoſ. 5. 6.

Verſe 3.

4. *In cheriſhing multitudes of evil thoughts.* No Man but would bluſh for ſhame, if the baſe, impure, ſlovenly thoughts, either in or out of Duties of Worſhip were viſible to the underſtanding of Man; how diligent would he be to curb his luxuriant and unworthy fancies, as well as bite in his words; but when we give the Rains to the Motions of our Hearts, and ſuffer them to run at random without a Curb, 'tis an evidence we are not concern'd for their falling under the notice of the Eye of God; and it argues a very weak belief of this Perfection, or ſcarce any belief at all. Who can think any Mans heart poſſeſſed with a ſenſe of this Infinite Excellency, that ſuffers his Mind, in his Meditation on God, to wander into every Sty, and be picking up Stones upon a Dunghill? What doth it intimate, but that thoſe thoughts are as inviſible, or unaudible to God, as they are to Men without the Garments of Words? * When a Man thinks of obſcene things, his own natural Notions, if reviv'd, would tell him, that God diſcerns what he thinks, that the depths of his heart are open to him: And the voice of thoſe Notions are, Deface thoſe vain imaginations out of your Minds. But what is done? Men caſt away Rational Light, muſter up Conceits, that God ſees them not, knows them not, and ſo ſink into the Puddle of their ſordid Imaginations, as though they remained in darkneſs to God.

* Drexel Nicetas. *lib.* 2. *cap.* 10. *p.* 357.

I might further inſtance.

In *omiſſion of* Prayer, vvhich ariſe ſometime from a flat Atheiſm: Who vvill call upon a God, that believes no ſuch being? Or from partial Atheiſm, either a denial of Gods ſufficiency to help, or of his Omniſcience to knovv, as if God vvere like the Statue of *Jupiter* in *Crete* framed vvithout Ears.

In the *Hypocrital pretences of Men, to exempt them from the ſervice God calls them to.* When Men pretend one thing, and intend another; this lurks in the

the Veins ſometimes of the beſt men; ſometimes it ariſeth from the fear of Man; when Men are more afraid of the power of Man, than of diſſembling with the Almighty: It will pretend a vertue to cover a ſecret wile: And Chooſe the *Tongue of the Crafty*, as the Expreſſion in *Job* *. * Job 15. 5.

The caſe is plain in *Moſes*, who when ordered to undertake an eminent Service, pretends a want of Eloquence, and an ungrateful *ſlowneſs of ſpeech* *. This generous Soul, that before was not afraid to diſcover himſelf in the midſt of *Egypt* for his Country-men, anſwers ſneakingly to God, and would vail his carnal fear, with a pretence of inſufficiency and humility; *Who am I, that I ſhould go unto* Pharaoh *? He could not well alledge an inability to go to *Pharaoh*, ſince he had had an Education in the *Egyptian* Learning, which render'd him capable to appear at Court. God at laſt uncaſeth him, and ſhews it all to be a diſſimulation, and whatſoever was the pretence, fear lay at the bottom, He was afraid of his Life upon his appearance before *Pharaoh*, from whoſe face he had fled upon the ſlaying the *Egyptian*, which God intimates to him, *Exod.* 4. 19. *Go, and return into* Egypt *for all the Men are dead which ſought thy life.* What doth this Carriage ſpeak, but as if Gods Eye were not upon our inward parts, as though we could lock him out of our hearts, that cannot be ſhut out from any creek of the hearts of Men and Angels. * Exod. 4. 10. * Exod. 3. 11.

II. The ſecond Uſe is of *Comfort.* 'Tis a ground of great Comfort under the *preſent diſpenſation* wherein we are; * We have heard the *Doctrinal* part, and God hath given us the *Experimental* part of it in his ſpecial Providence this day, upon the Stage of World. And bleſſed be God that he hath given us a ground of Comfort, without going out of our ordinary courſe to fetch it, whereby it ſeems to be peculiarly of Gods ordering for us. * Nov. 1678. *When the popiſh plot was diſcover'd.*

1. *'Tis a Comfort in all the clandeſtine contrivances of Men againſt the Church.* His Eyes pierce as far as the depths of Hell: Not one of his Churches Adverſaries lies in a miſt, all are as plain as the Stars which he numbers; *Mine Adverſaries are all before thee* *, More exactly known to thee, than I can recount them. 'Tis a Propheſie of Chriſt, wherein Chriſt is brought in ſpeaking to God, of his own and the Churches Enemies: He comforts himſelf with this, that God hath his Eye upon every particular Perſon among his Adverſaries: He knows where they repoſe themſelves, when they go out to Conſult, and when they come in with their Reſolves: He diſcerns all the Rage that Spirits their Hearts, in what corner it lurks, how it acts; all the diſorders, motions of it, and every Object of that Rage; He cannot be deceived by the cloſeſt and ſubtileſt Perſon. Thus God ſpeaks concerning *Zenacharib* and his Hoſt againſt *Jeruſalem* *. After he had ſpoke of the forming of his Church, and the weakneſs of it, he adds, *But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy Rage againſt me; becauſe thy Rage againſt me, and thy Tumult is come up into mine Ears, therefore will I put my Hook in thy Noſe, and my Bridle in thy Lips, and I will turn thee back, &c.* He knows all the methods of the Counſels, the Stages they had laid, the manner of Execution of their Deſigns, all the ways whether they turned themſelves, and would uſe them no better than Men do devouring Fiſh and untam'd Beaſts, with a Hook in the Noſe and a Bridle in the Mouth. Thoſe States-men in *Iſa.* 29. 15. thought their Contrivances too deep for God to fathom, and too cloſe for God to fruſtrate; *They ſeek deep to hide their Counſels from the Lord; ſurely your turning of things upſide down, ſhall be eſteemed as the* Potters *Clay*, of no more force and underſtanding, than a Potters Veſſel, which underſtands not its own form wrought by the Artificer, nor the uſe it is put to by the Buyer and Poſſeſſor; or ſhall be eſteemed as a Potters Veſſel, that can be as eaſily flung back into the Maſs from whence it was taken, as preſerved in the Figure it is now endued with. No ſecret Deſigner is ſhrowded from Gods ſight, or can be ſhelter'd from Gods Arm; He underſtands the Venom of their Hearts, better than we can feel it, and diſcovers their inward fury more plainly, than we can ſee the Sting or Teeth of a Viper when they are opened for miſchief; and to what purpoſe doth God know and ſee them, but in order to deliver his People from them in his * Pſal 69. 19. * Iſai. 37. 28, 29.

own

*Ex. 3. 7, 8. own due time; *I know their ſorrow, and am come down to deliver them* *: The Walls of *Jeruſalem* are continually before him, he knows therefore all that would undermine and demoliſh them; None can hurt *Zion* by any ignorance or inadvertency in God.

'Tis obſervable, that our Saviour aſſuming to himſelf a different Title in every Epiſtle to the *Seven Churches*, doth particularly aſcribe to himſelf this of Knowledg and Wrath in that to *Thyatira*, an Emblem or Deſcription of the *Romiſh* State: * *And unto the Angel of the Church of* Thyatira *write, Theſe things ſaith the Son of God, who hath his Eyes like to a flame of fire, and his Feet like fine Braſs.* His Eyes, like a flame of Fire are of a piercing nature, inſinuating themſelves into all the Pores and parts of the Body they encounter with, and his Feet like braſs to cruſh them with, is explained, *Verſe* 23. *I will kill her Children with Death, and all the Churches ſhall know that I am he which ſearches the Reigns and the Heart, and I Will give to every one of you according to your works.* He knows every deſign of the *Romiſh* Party, deſign'd by that Church of *Thyatira* *. *Jezabel*, there, ſignifies a whoriſh Church, ſuch a Church as ſhall act as *Jezabel*, *Ahab*'s Wife, who was not only a Worſhipper of Idols, but propagated Idolatry in *Iſrael*, ſlew the Prophets, perſecuted *Elijah*, murdered *Naboth*, the Name whereof ſignifies Propheſie, ſeiz'd upon his Poſſeſſion. And if it be ſaid that *Verſe* 19. This Church was commended for her Works, Faith, Patience; 'tis true *Rome* did at firſt ſtrongly profeſs Chriſtianity, maintain'd the intereſt of it, but afterwards fell into the practice of *Jezabel*, and committed Spiritual Adultery: And is ſhe to be owned for a Wife, that now plays the Harlot, becauſe ſhe was honeſt and modeſt at her firſt Marriage; * And though ſhe ſhall be deſtroy'd yet not ſpeedily, *Verſe* 22. *I will caſt her into a Bed*, ſeems to intimate the deſtruction of *Jezabel*, not to be at once and ſpeedily, but in a lingring way, and by degrees, as Sickneſs conſumes a Body.

* Rev. 2, 15.

* *For the Evidence of it I refer you to Dr. More's Expoſition of the ſeven Churches, worthy every Learned and Underſtanding Mans reading, and of every ſober* Romaniſt.

* Coc. *in loc.*

2. This Perfection of God *fits him to be a ſpecial Object of Truſt.* If he were forgetful, what comfort could we have in any promiſe? How could we depend upon him, if he were ignorant of our State? His Compaſſions to pity us, his Readineſs to relieve us, his power to protect and aſſiſt us, would be inſignificant, without his Omniſcience to inform his Goodneſs, and direct the Arm of his power. This perfection is as it were Gods Office of Intelligence. As you Go to your *Memorandum* Book to know what you are to do; ſo doth God to his *Omniſcience*: This perfection is Gods Eye, to acquaint him with the neceſſities of his Church, and directs all his other Attributes in their exerciſe for and about his people. You may depend upon his Mercy that hath promiſed, and upon his Truth to perform, upon his ſufficiency to ſupply you, and his Goodneſs to relieve you, and his Righteouſneſs to reward you, becauſe he hath an infinite Underſtanding to know you and your wants, you and your ſervices. And without this knowledg of his, no comfort could be drawn from any other perfection; none of them could be a *ſure Nail* to hang our hopes and confidence upon. This is that, the Church alvvays Celebrated, *Pſal.* 105. 7. *He hath remembred his Covenant for ever, and the Word which he hath commanded to a thouſand generations*; And *Verſe* 42. *He remembred his holy promiſe; and he remembred for them his Covenant* *. He remembers and underſtands his Covenant, therefore his promiſe to perform it, and therefore our Wants to ſupply them.

* Pſal. 105. 45.

3. And the rather, *becauſe God knows the Perſons of all his own.* He hath in his infinite Underſtanding, the exact number of all the individual perſons that belong to him; 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. *The Lord knows them that are his.* He knows all things, becauſe he hath Created them; and he knovvs his people becauſe he hath not only made them, but alſo choſe them: He could no more chooſe he knew not what, than he could Create he knew not what: he knows them under a *double* Title; of *Creation* as Creatures, in the common Maſs of Creation; as new Creatures by a particular act of *Seperation.* He cannot be ignorant of them in time, whom he fore-knevv from Eternity: His knowledg in time is the ſame he had from Eternity; He foreknevv them that had intend-

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ed to give the Grace of Faith unto; and he knows them after they believe, because he knows his own act, in bestowing Grace upon them, and his own Mark and Seal wherewith he hath stampt them: No doubt but he that *calls the Stars of Heaven by their names* *, knows the number of those living Stars that sparkle in the Firmament of his Church. He cannot be ignorant of their Persons, when he numbers the Hairs of their Heads, and hath Registred their Names in the Book of Life. As he only had an infinite Mercy to make the choice; so he only hath an infinite Understanding to comprehend their Persons. We only know the Elect of God by a Moral assurance in the Judgment of Charity, when the Conversation of Men is according to the Doctrine of God: We have not an infallible knowledg of them, we may be often mistaken; *Judas*, a Devil, may be judged by Man for a Saint, till he be stript of his disguise. God only hath an infallible knowledg of them, he knows his own Records, and the Counterparts in the hearts of his People; None can counterfeit his Seal, nor can any raze it out. * When the Church is either scatter'd, like Dust, by Persecution, or over-grown with Superstition and Idolatry, that there is scarce any grain of true Religion appearing, as in the time of *Elijah*, who complain'd that he was *left alone*, as if the Church had been rooted out of that corner of the World, * yet God knew that he had a *number fed in a Cave*, and had reserved *seven thousand Men* that had preserved the purety of his Worship, and *not bow'd their knee to* Baal. *Christ knew his Sheep*, as well as he is known of them; yea, better than they can know him *. *History* acquaints us, that *Cyrus* had so vast a memory, that he knew the name of every particular Souldier in his Army, which consisted of diverse Nations; Shall it be too hard for an infinite Understanding to know every one of that Host that march under his Banners? may he not as well know them, as know the number, qualities, influences of those Stars which lie conceal'd from our Eye, as well as those that are visible to our Sense? Yes, he knows them, as a General to employ them, as a Shepherd to preserve them: He knows them in the World to guard them, and he knows them when they are out of the World to gather them, and cull out their Bodies, though wrapped up in a Cloud of the putrified Carcases of the Wicked: As he knew them from all Eternity to elect them, so he knows them in time to cloth their Persons with Righteousness, to protect their Persons in Calamity according to his good pleasure, and at last to raise and reward them according to his Promise.

* Psal. 147. 4.

* Turretin's *Sermons*, p. 362.

* 1 Kings 19. 14. 18.

* John 10. 14.

4. We may take *Comfort* from hence, That *our sincerity cannot be unknown, to an infinite Understanding.* Not a way of the Righteous is conceal'd from him, and therefore *they shall stand in Judgment before him*; * *The Lord knows the way of the Righteous*: He knows them to observe them, and he knows them to Reward them. How comfortable is it to appeal to this Attribute of God for our integrity, with *Hezekiah*, 2 Kings 20. 3. *Remember Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart.* Christ himself is brought in this *Prophetical Psalm* drawing out the Comfort of this Attribute, *Psal.* 40. 9. *I have not restrain'd my Lips, Oh Lord, thou knowest*, meaning his faithfulness in declaring the Righteousness of God. *Job* follows the same steps, *Also now, behold, my Record is in Heaven, and my Witness is on high* *: My Innocence hath the Testimony of Men, but my greatest support is in the Records of God. *Also now*; or besides the Testimony of my own Heart, I have another Witness in Heaven that knows the Heart, and can only judg of the principles of my actions, and clear me from the scorns of my Friends, and the accusations of Men, with a justification of my Innocence: He repeats it twice to take the greater comfort in it. God knows, that we do that in the simplicity of our Hearts, which may be judged by Men to be done for unworthy and sordid ends: He knows not only the outward action, but the inward affection; and praises that which Men often dispraise; and writes down that with and *Euge*, *Well done good and faithful Servant*, which Men daub with their severest Censures *. How refreshing is it to consider, that God never mistakes the appearance for reality, nor is lead by the judgment of

* Psal. 1. 6.

* Job 16. 19.

* Rom. 2. 29.

Man? He ſits in Heaven and laughs at their follies and Cenſures. If God had no ſounder and no more piercing a Judgment than Man, wo be to the ſincereſt Souls that are often judged Hypocrites by ſome. What a happineſs is it for Integrity to have a Judg of infinite Underſtanding, who will one day wipe off the durt of Worldly Reproaches?

Again, God knows the leaſt dram of Grace and Righteouſneſs in the Hearts of his People, though but as a *ſmoking Flax*, or as the leaſt bruiſe of a ſaving
* Mat. 12. 20. conviction *; and knows it ſo as to cheriſh it; he knows that work he hath begun, and never hath his Eye off from it to abandon it.

5. The conſideration of this excellent Perfection in God may *comfort us in our ſecret Prayers, ſighs and works.* If God were not of infinite Underſtanding, to pierce into the Heart, what comfort hath a poor Creature that hath a ſcantineſs of Expreſſions, but a Heart in a flame? If God did not underſtand the Heart, Faith and Prayer, which are internal works, would be in vain: How could he give that Mercy our Hearts plead for, if he were ignorant of our inward Affections? Hypocrites might ſcale Heaven by lofty Expreſſions, and a Sincere Soul come ſhort of the happineſs he is prepared for, for want of flouriſhing Gifts. *Prayer* is an internal work, words are but the Garment of Prayer; *Meditation* is the Body, and Affections the Soul and Life
* Pſal. 5. 1. of Prayer; *Give Ear to my words, Oh Lord, conſider my Meditation* *, Prayer is a Rational act, an act of the *mind*, not the act of a *Parrot*: Prayer is an act of the Heart, though the ſpeaking Prayer is the work of the Tongue; Now God gives Ear to the words, but he conſiders the Meditation, the frame of the Heart. Conſideration is a more exact notice than hearing, the act only of the Ear. Were not God of an infinite Underſtanding, and Omniſcient, he might take fine Clothes, a heap of Garments for the Man himſelf; and be put off by glittering words, without a Spiritual Frame. What matter of rejoycing is it, that we call not upon a deaf and ignorant Idol; but on one that liſtens to our ſecret Petitions to give them a diſpatch, that knows our deſires afar off, and from the infiniteneſs of his Mercy, joyn'd with his Omniſcience ſtands ready to give us a return? Hath he not a Book of Remembrance for them that fear him, and for their ſighs and ejaculations to him as
* Mal. 3. 16. well as their diſcourſes of him *; and not only what Prayers they utter, but what gracious and holy thoughts they have of him? That *thought upon his Name.* Though millions of ſupplications be put up at the ſame time, yet they have all a diſtinct File (as I may ſay) in an infinite Underſtanding, which perceives and comprehends them all. As he obſerves millions of Sins committed at the ſame time by a vaſt number of Perſons to Record them in order to Puniſhment; ſo he diſtinctly diſcerns an infinite number of Cries at the ſame moment to Regiſter them in order to an Anſwer.

A ſigh cannot ſcape an infinite Underſtanding, though crowded among a mighty multitude of Cries from others, or cover'd with many unwelcome diſtractions in our ſelves, no more than a believing touch from the Woman that had the Bloudy Iſſue, could be conceal'd from Chriſt, and be undiſcern'd from the preſs of the thronging multitudes: Our groans are as audible and intelligible to him as our words, and he knows what is the mind of his own
* Rom. 8. 27. Spirit, though expreſt in no plainer language than ſobs and heavings *. Thus *David* cheers up himſelf under the neglects of his Friends, *Pſal.* 38. 9. *Lord my deſire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee.* Not a groan of a panting Spirit ſhall be loſt, till God hath loſt his knowledg; Not a Petition forgotten while God hath a Record, nor a Tear dried while God hath a
* Pſal. 56. 8. *Bottle* to reſerve it in *.

Our *ſecret works* are alſo known and obſerved by him; not only our outward labour, but our inward love in it, *Heb.* 6. 10. If with *Iſaac* we go privately into the Field to meditate, or ſecretly *caſt our Bread upon the Waters*, he keeps his Eye upon us to Reward us, and returns the Fruit into our own
* Mat. 6. 4, 6. Boſoms *; Yea, though it be but a Cup of cold Water, from an inward Spring of love given to a Diſciple: *He ſees your works and your labours, and*
* Rev. 2. 2. *faith and patience* in working them *, all the marks of your induſtry, and ſtrength

ſtrength of your intentions, and Will, be as exact at laſt in order to a due *Praiſe*, as to open Sins in order to a juſt *Recompence* *

6. The Conſideration of this excellent Attribute, affords *Comfort in the Afflictions of good Men.* He knows their *Preſſures*, as well as *hears their Cries* *: His knowledg comes not by information from us; but his Compaſſionate liſtening to our Cries ſprings from his own Inſpection into our Sorrows; He is affected with them, before we make any diſcovery of them: He is not ignorant of the beſt Seaſon, when they may be uſefully inflicted, and when they may be profitably removed: The Tribulation and Poverty of his Church is not unknown to him, *Rev.* 2. 8, 9. *I know thy Works and Tribulation, &c.* He knows their Works, and what Tribulation they meet with for him; He ſees their extremities, when they are *toiling* againſt the Wind and Tide of the World *: Yea, the natural exigences of the multitude are not neglected by him, he diſcerns to take care of them: Our Saviour conſidered the *three days faſting* of his Followers, and miraculouſly provides a Diſh for them in the Wilderneſs. No good Man is ever out of Gods Mind, and therefore never out of his Compaſſionate Care: His eye pierceth into their Dungeons and pities their Miſeries. *Joſeph* may forget his Brethren, and the Diſciples not know Chriſt, when he walks upon the Midnight Waves and Turbulent Sea; * but a *Lyons* Den cannot obſcure a *Daniel* from his Sight, nor the depths of the Whales Belly bury *Jonah* from the Divine Underſtanding: He diſcerns *Peter* in his Chains, and *Stephen* under the Stones of Martyrdom: He knows *Lazarus* under his tatter'd Rags, and *Abel* wallowing in his Blood: His Eye and Knowledg goes along with his People, when they are tranſplanted into Foreign Countries, and ſold for Slaves into the *Iſlands of the* Grecians, *for he will raiſe them out of the place*, Joel 3. 6, 7. He would defeat the hopes of the Perſecutors, and applaud the Patience of his people: He knows his People in the Tabernacle of Life, and in the *Valley* of the *Shadow* of Death, *Pſal.* 23. He knows all penal Evils becauſe he commiſſions and directs them: He knows the Inſtruments becauſe they are his *Sword* *, and he knows his gracious Sufferer becauſe he hath his Mark: He diſcerns *Job* in his Anguiſh, and the *Devil* in his Malice: By the direction of this Attribute he ordes Calamities, and reſcues from them. *Thou haſt ſeen it, for thou beholdeſt miſchief and ſpight* *: That is the Comfort of the *Pſalmiſt*, and the Comfort of every Believer, and the Ground of committing themſelves to God under all the injuſtice of Men.

7. 'Tis a Comfort *in all our infirmites.* As he knows our Sins to charge them; ſo he knows the weakneſs of our Nature to pity us. As his infinite Underſtanding may *ſcare* us, becauſe he knows our Tranſgreſſions; ſo it may *relieve* us, becauſe he knows our natural mutability in our firſt Creation: *He knows our frame, he remembers that we are duſt* *. 'Tis the reaſon of the precedent *Verſes*, why he removes our Tranſgreſſion from us, why he is ſo backward in puniſhing; ſo patient in waiting, ſo forward in pitying; Why? He doth not only remember our Sins, but remember our frame or forming, what brittle, though clear glaſſes we were by Creation, how eaſie to be crackt: He remembers our impotent and weak Condition by Corruption; what a ſink we have of vain imaginations that remain in us after Regeneration; he doth not only conſider that we were made according to his image, and therefore able to ſtand, but that we were made of Duſt and weak Matter, and had a ſenſitive Soul, like that of Beaſts, as well as an intellectual Nature, like that of Angels, and therefore liable to follow the dictates of it, without exact care and watchfulneſs. If he remembred only the firſt, there would be no iſſue but Indignation; but the Conſideration of the latter moves his Compaſſion. How miſerable ſhould we be for want of this perfection in the Divine Nature, whereby God remembers and reflects upon his paſt act in our firſt frame, and the mindfulneſs of our Condition excites the motion of his Bowels to us? Had he loſt the knowledg, how he firſt framed us; did he not ſtill remember the mutability of our Nature, as we were form'd and ſtampt in his Mint; how much more wretched would our condition be

* 1 Cor. 4. 5.

* Exod. 3. 7.

* Mark 6. 48.

* Barlow's *Mans Refuge*, p. 29, 30.

* Pſal. 17. 13.

* Pſal. 10. 14.

* Pſal. 103. 14.

than it is? If his remembrance of our Original, be one ground of his Pity, the ſenſe of his Omniſcience ſhould be a ground of our Comfort, in the ſtirring of our infirmities: He remembers we were but Duſt, when he made us; and yet remembers we are but Duſt, while he preſerves and forbears us.

8. 'Tis ſome Comfort *in the fears of ſome lurking Corruption in our Hearts.* We know by this whither to addreſs our ſelves for the ſearch and diſcovery of it: Perhaps ſome Bleſſings we want are retarded, ſome Calamities we underſtand not the particular cauſe of, are inflicted, ſome Petitions we have put up, hang too long for an Anſwer; and the Chariot Wheels of Divine Goodneſs move ſlow and are long in coming: Let us beg the Aid of this Attribute to upon to us the Remora's, to diſcover what baſe Affection there is that retards the Mercies we want, or attracts the Affliction we feel, or bars the Door againſt the return of our ſupplications. What our dim ſight cannot diſcover, the clear Eye of God can make viſible to us. *Job* 10. 2. *Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me.* As in want of Pardon, we particularly plead his Mercy, and in our deſires for the performance of his Promiſe, we argue with him from his faithfulneſs; ſo in the fear of any inſincerity or hidden Corruption we ſhould implore his Omniſcience: For as God is a God in Covenant, our God, our God in the whole of his Nature; ſo the Perfections of his Nature, are employed in their ſeveral Stations, as aſſiſtances of his Creatures. This was *David*'s Practice and Comfort, after that large Meditation on the Omniſcience and Omnipreſence of God, he turns his thoughts of it into Petitions for the employment of it in the concerns of his Soul, and begs a Mercy ſuitable to the glory of this Perfection, *Pſal.* 139. 23. *Search me, Oh God, and try my heart, try me and know my thoughts*; Dive to the bottom, *Verſe* 24. *And ſee if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way Everlaſting.* His deſire is not barely that God ſhould know him, for it would be ſenſeleſs to beg of God that he ſhould have Mercy, or faithfulneſs, or power, or knowledge in his Nature; but he deſires the exerciſe of this Attribute, in the diſcovery of himſelf to himſelf, in order to his ſight of any wicked way, and Humiliation for it, and Reformation of it in order to his Conduct to Everlaſting Life. As we may appeal to this Perfection to Judg us, when the ſincerity of our Actions is Cenſured by others; ſo we may implore it to ſearch us, when our ſincerity is queſtion'd by our ſelves: That our Minds may be enlightned by a Beam from his Knowledg, and the little Thieves may be pull'd out of their Dens in our Hearts by the hand of his Power. In particular, it is our Comfort that we can, and our neceſſity that we muſt Addreſs particularly to this, when we engage ſolemnly in a work of ſelf-examination; that we may have a clearer Eye to direct us than our own, that we may not miſtake Braſs for Gold, or counterfeit Graces for true; that nothing that is filthy and fit to be caſt out, may eſcape our Sight, and preſerve its Stations. And we need not queſtion the laying at the Door of this neglect, (*viz.* not calling in this Attribute to our Aid, whoſe proper Office it is, (as I may ſo ſay) to ſearch and enquire) all the miſtakes, ill ſucceſs, and fruitleſsneſs of our endeavours in ſelf-examination, becauſe we would engage in it, in the pitiful ſtrength of our own dimneſs, and not in the light of Gods Countenance and the aſſiſtance of his Eye, which can diſcern what we cannot ſee, and diſcover that to us, which we cannot manifeſt to our ſelves. 'Tis a Comfort to a learner of an Art, to have a ſkilful Eye to overlook his work, and inform him of the defects. Beg the help of the Eye of God in all your ſearches and ſelf-examinations.

9. The Conſideration of this Attribute is Comfortable *in our aſſurances of, and reflections upon the pardon of Sin, or ſeeking of it.* As God puniſhes Men for Sin according to his knowledg of them, which is greater than the knowledge their own Conſciences have of them; ſo he pardons according to his knowledg: He pardons not only according to our knowledg, but according to his own: He is greater than any Mans Heart, to condemn for that, which a Man is at preſent ignorant of; and greater than our Hearts, to pardon that

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which is not at preſent viſible to us; He knows that which the moſt watchful Conſcience cannot take a ſurvey of: If God had not an infinite Underſtanding of us, how could we have a perfect and full pardon from him? It would not ſtand with his Honour to pardon he knew not what. He knows what Crimes we have to be pardon'd, when we know not all of them our ſelves, that ſtand in need of a gracious Remiſſion; His Omniſcence beholds every Sin to charge it upon our *Saviour*. If he knows our Sins that are black, he knows every mite of Chriſts Righteouſneſs which is pure, and the utmoſt extent of his Merits, as well as the demerit of our iniquities. As he knows the filth of our Sin, he alſo knows the covering of our Saviour: He knows the value of the Redeemers Sufferings, and exactly underſtands every Plea in the intereeſſion of our Advocate. Though God knows our Sins *oculo indice*, yet he doth not ſee them *oculo judice*, with a Judicial Eye: His Omniſcience ſtirs not up his juſtice to Revenge, but his Mercy to Pity. His infinite Underſtanding of what Chriſt hath done, directs him to diſarm his Juſtice, and ſound an Alarm to his Bowels. As he underſtands better than we what we have committed; ſo he underſtands better than we what our *Saviour* hath merited; and his Eye directs his Hand in the blotting out Guilt, and applying the Remedy.

3. The third Uſe ſhall be to Sinners to humble them, and put them upon ſerious Conſideration. This Attribute ſpeaks terrible things to a Profligate Sinner. *Baſil* thinks that the ripping open the Sins of the Damned to their faces by this Perfection of God, is more terrible than their other Torments in Hell. God knows the Perſons of Wicked Men, not one is exempted from his Eye, he ſees all the actions of Men as well as he knows their Perſons; *Job* 11. 11. *He knows vain Men, he ſees wickedneſs alſo.* Job 34. 21. *His Eye is upon all their goings.* He hears the moſt private Whiſpers, *Pſal.* 139. 4. the ſcope, manner, circumſtance of ſpeaking he knows it altogether: *He underſtands all our thoughts*, the firſt bubblings of that bitter Spring, *Pſal.* 139. 2. The quickeſt glances of the Fancy, the cloſeſt muſings of the Mind, and the abortive wouldings or wiſhes of the Will, the language of the Heart, as well as the language of the Tongue; Not a fooliſh thought, or an idle word, not a wanton glace, or a diſhoneſt action; Not a negligent ſervice, or a diſtracting fancy, but is more viſible to him, than the filth of a Dunghill can be to any Man by the help of a Sun Beam. How much better would it be for deſperate Sinners, to have their Crimes known to all the Angels in Heaven, and Men upon Earth, and Devils in Hell, than that they ſhould be known to their Soveraign, whoſe Laws they have violated, and to their Judg, whoſe Righteouſneſs obligeth him to revenge the injury?

1. Conſider, *What a poor Refuge is ſecrecy to a Sinner?* Not the Myſts of a foggy Day, nor the obſcurity of the darkeſt Night, not the cloſeſt Curtains, nor the deepeſt Dungeon, can hide any Sin from the Eye of God. *Adam* is known in his Thickets, and *Jonah* in his Cabin. *Achan*'s Wedge of Gold is diſcern'd by him, though buried in the Earth, and hooded with a Tent. Shall *Sarah* be unſeen by him, when ſhe mockingly laughs behind the Door? Shall *Gehazi* tell a Lye, and comfort himſelf with an imagination of his Maſters ignorance, as long as God knows it? Whatſoever works Men do, are not hid from God, whether done in the darkneſs or Day-light, in the Midnight darkneſs, or the Noon-day Sun: He is all Eye to ſee, and he hath a great Wrath to Puniſh. The Wheels in *Ezekiel* are full of Eyes: A piercing Eye to behold the Sinner, and a ſwift Wheel of Wrath to overtake him. God is Light, and of all things Light is moſt difficultly kept out. The *ſecreteſt Sins are ſet in the light of his Countenance* *, as legible to him, as if writ with a Sun Beam; More viſible to him than the greateſt Print to the ſharpeſt Eye. The Fornications of the *Samaritan Woman*, perhaps known only to her own Conſcience, were manifeſt to Chriſt *. There is nothing ſo ſecretly done, but there is an infallible Witneſs to prepare a Charge. Though God be inviſible to us, we muſt not imagine we are ſo to him; 'tis a vanity therefore to think, we can conceal our ſelves from God, by concealing the

* Pſal 90. 8.

* John 4. 16.

Notions

Notions of God from our ſenſe and practice. If Men be as cloſe from the Eyes of all Men, as from thoſe of the Sun: yea, if they could ſeparate themſelves from their own Shadow, they could not draw themſelves from Gods Underſtanding: How then can darkneſs ſhelter us, or Crafty Artifices defend us? With what ſhame will Sinners be filled, when God, who hath trac'd their Steps, and writ their Sins in a Book, ſhall make a Repetition of their ways, and unvail the Web of their Wickedneſs.

2. What a dreadful Conſideration is this to the *juggling Hypocrite, that maſks himſelf with an appearance of Piety*? An infinite Underſtanding judges not according to the Vails and Shadows, but according to Truth; *He judges not according to appearance* *. The outward Comelineſs of a work impoſeth not on him, his Knowledg, and therefore his Eſtimations are quite of another Nature than thoſe of Men. By this Perfection God looks through the Vail, and beholds the litter of Abominations in the ſecrets of the Soul: the true Quality and Principle of every Work, and judges of them as they are, and not as they appear. Diſguiſed Pretexts cannot deceive him; the Diſguiſes are known afar off before they are weav'd, he pierceth into the depths of the moſt abſtruſe Wills; all ſecret Ends are diſſected before him: Every action is naked in its outſide, and open in its inſide, all are as clear to him as if their Bodies were of Chryſtal, ſo that if there be any ſecret reſerves, he will *certainly reprove us* *. We are often deceiv'd, we may take Wolves for Sheep, and Hypocrites for Believers; for the Eyes of Men are no better than Fleſh, and dive no further than appearance; but an infinite Underſtanding, that fathoms the ſecret depths of the Heart, is too knowing to let a Dream paſs for a Truth, or miſtake a Shadow for a Body. Though we call God Father all our days, ſpeak the language of Angels, or be endowed with the Gift of Miracles, he can diſcern whether we have his Mark upon us; He can eſpy the Treaſon of *Judas* in a Kiſs; *Herod*'s intent of Murdering under a ſpecious pretence of Worſhip: A *Phariſees* fraud under a broad *Philactery*: A Ravenous Wolf under the ſoftneſs of a Sheeps Skin; And the *Devil* in *Samuels* Mantle, or when he would ſhrowd himſelf among the *Sons of God* *. All the Rooms of the Heart, and every atome of Duſt in the leaſt chink of it is clear to his Eye: He can ſtrip Sin from the faireſt Excuſes, pierce into the Heart with more eaſe than the Sun can through the thinneſt Cloud or Vapour; and look through all *Ephraims* ingenuous Inventions to excuſe his *Idolatry* *. Hypocriſie then is a ſenſeleſs thing, ſince it cannot eſcape unmaſking, by an infinite Underſtanding. As all our force cannot ſtop his Arm, when he is reſolved to puniſh; ſo all our ſophiſtry cannot blind his Underſtanding, when he comes to Judge. Woe to the Hypocrite, for God ſees him; all his juggling is open and naked to infinite Underſtanding.

* 1 Sam. 16. 7.

* Job 13. 10.

* Job 1. 6, 7.

* Hoſ. 5. 3.

3. *Is it not alſo a ſenſeleſs thing to be careleſs of Sins committed long ago*? The old Sins forgotten by Men, ſtick faſt in an infinite Underſtanding: Time cannot raze out that which hath been known from Eternity. Why ſhould they be forgotten many years after they were acted, ſince they were foreknown in an Eternity before they were committed, or the Criminal capable to practice them? *Amalek* muſt pay their Arrears of their ancient Unkindneſs to *Iſrael* in the time of *Saul*, though the Generation that committed them were rotten in their Graves *. Old Sins are *written in a Book*, which lies always before God; and not only our own Sins, but the *Sins of our Fathers*, to be requited upon their Poſterity *. What a vanity is it then to be regardleſs of the Sins of an Age that went before us; becauſe they are in ſome meaſure out of our knowledge, are they therefore blotted out of Gods remembrance? Sins are bound up with him, as Men do Bonds, till they reſolve to ſue for the Debt; *The iniquity of* Ephraim *is bound up* *. As his fore-knowledg extends to all acts that ſhall be done, ſo his remembrance extends to all acts that have been done. We may as well ſay, God fore-knows nothing that ſhall be done to the end of the World, as that he forgets any things that hath been done from the beginning of the World. The former Ages of the World are no further diſtant from him than the latter. God hath a *Calendar*, (as it were)

* 1 Sam. 15. 2.

* Iſai. 65. 6. *Behold it is written.*

* Hoſ. 13. 12.

or

or an Account Book of Mens Sins ever since the beginning of the World, what they did in their Childhood, what in their Youth, what in their Manhood, and what in their Old Age: He hath them *in store among his Treasure* *: He hath neither lost his Understanding to know them, nor his Resolution to revenge them: As it follows, * *To me Vengeance belongs.* He intends to enrich his Justice with a glorious manifestation, by rendring a due Recompence. And it is to be observed, that God doth not only necessarily remember them; but sometimes binds himself by an Oath to do it; *Amos* 8. 7. *The Lord hath sworn by the Excellency of* Jacob, *surely I will never forget any of their works.* Or in the Hebrew, *If I ever forget any of their works*; That is, Let me not be accounted a God for ever, if I do forget; Let me lose my Godhead, if I lose my remembrance. 'Tis not less a Misery to the Wicked, than it is a Comfort to the Godly, that their Record is in Heaven.

* Deut. 32. 34.

* Verse 35.

4. Let it be observed, *That this infinite Understanding doth exactly know the sins of Men, he knows so as to consider.* He doth not only know them, but intently behold them; * *His Eye-lids trie the Children of Men*, a Metaphor taken from Men, that contract the Eye-lids, when they would wistly and accurately behold a thing; 'tis not a transient and careless look, *Psal.* 10. 14. *Thou hast seen it*; Thou hast intently beheld it, as the word properly signifies: He beholds and knows the actions of every particular Man, as if there were none but he in the World. And doth not only know, but *ponder* *, and *consider their works* *, He is not a bare Spectator, but a diligent Observer, * *By him actions are weighed*; To see what degree of good or evil there is in them, what there is to blemish them, what to advantage them, what the quality and quantity of every action is. Consideration takes in every Circumstance of the Considered Object: Notice is taken of the place where, the minute when, the Mercy against which it is committed; the number of them is exact in Gods Book; *They have tempted me now these ten times* *, against the demonstrations of my Glory in *Egypt* and the Wilderness. The whole Guilt in every Circumstance is spread before him: His knowledg of Mens Sins is not confused, such an Imperfection an infinite Understanding cannot be subject to, 'Tis exact, for *iniquity is markt before him* *.

* Jer. 11. 4.

* Prov. 5. 21.

* Psal. 33. 15.

* 1 Sam. 2. 3.

* Numb. 14. 22.

* Jer. 2. 22.

5. *God knows Mens miscarriage so as to judge.* This use his Omniscience is put to, to maintain his Soveraign Authority in the exercise of his Justice: His notice of the Sins of Men is in order to a just Retribution, *Psal.* 10. 14. *Thou hast seen mischief to requite it with thy hand.* The Eye of his Knowledg directs the Hand of his Justice; and no sinful action that falls under his Cognizance, but will fall under his Revenge; they can as little escape his Censure as they can his Knowledg: He is a Witness in his Omniscience, that he may be a Judge in his Righteousness: He *knows the hearts of the Wicked*, so as to hate their Works, and testifie his abhorrency of that which is of *high value with Men* *. Sin is not preserved in his Understanding, or written down in his Book to be moth-eaten as an old Manuscript, but to be open'd one day, and Copied out in the Consciences of Men: He writes them to publish them, and sets them in the light of his Countenance, to bring them to the light of their Consciences. What a terrible consideration is it, to think that the Sins of *a day* are upon Record in an Infallible Understanding, much more the Sins of a week; What a number then do the Sins of a *Month*, a *Year*, *ten or forty Years* arise to? How many actions against Charity, against Sincerity; what an infinite number is there of them, all bound up in the Court Rolls of Gods Omniscience, in order to a Tryal, to be brought out before the Eyes of Men? Who can seriously consider all those Bonds, reserv'd in the Cabinet of Gods Knowledg to be sued out against the Sinner in due time, without an unexpressible horror?

* Luke 16. 15.

4. The fourth Use is of *Exhortation. Let us have a sense of Gods Knowledg upon our hearts.* All Wickedness hath a spring from a want of due Consideration and sense of it. *David* concludes it so, * *The proud rose against him, and violent Men sought after his Soul*, because they did *not set God before them.* They think

* Psal. 86. 14.

think God doth not know, and therefore care not what, nor how they act. When the fear of this Attribute is remov'd a Door is open'd to all Impiety: What is there ſo villanous, but the minds of Men will attempt to act? What Reverence of a Deity can be left, when the ſence of his infinite Underſtanding is extinguiſht? What Faith could there be in Judgments in Witneſſes? How would the Foundations of Humane Society be overturn'd? The Pillars upon which Commerce ſtands, be utterly broken and diſſolved? What Society can be preſerved, if this be not truly believed and faithfully ſtuck to? But how eaſily would Oaths be ſwallowed and quickly violated, if the ſence of this Perfection were rooted out of the minds of Men? What fear could they have of calling to Witneſs a Being they imagine blind and ignorant? Men ſecretly imagine, that *God knows not*, or *ſoon forgets*, and then make *bold* to Sin againſt him *, How much does it therefore concern us to cheriſh and keep alive the ſenſe of this? If God *writes us upon the Palms of his Hands*, as the Expreſſion is, to remember us, let us engrave him upon the Tables of our Hearts to remember him. It would be a good Motto to write upon our Minds, God knows all, he is of infinite Underſtanding.

* Ezek. 8. 12.

1. *This would give check to much iniquity.* Can a Mans Conſcience eaſily and delightfully ſwallow that, which he is ſenſible falls under the Cognizance of God, when it is hateful to the Eye of his Holineſs, and renders the Actor odious to him? *Doth he not ſee my ways, and count all my ſteps*, ſaith *Job**. To what end doth he fix this Conſideration? To keep him from *wanton glances*, Temptations have no encouragement to come near him, that is conſtantly arm'd with the thoughts that his Sin is Book't in Gods Omniſcience. If any impudent Devil hath the face to tempt us, we ſhould not have the impudence to joyn iſſue which him under the ſenſe of an infinite Underſtanding. How fruitleſs would his Wiles be againſt this Conſideration? How eaſily would his Snares be crackt, by one ſenſible thought of this? This doth *Solomon* preſcribe to allay the heat of *Carnal imaginations**. It were a uſeful Queſtion to ask, at the appearance of every Temptation, at the entrance upon every Action, as the Church did in Temptations to Idolatry; * *Shall not God ſearch this out, for he knows the ſecrets of the heart?* His Underſtanding comprehends us more than our Conſciences can our acts, or our Underſtanding our thoughts: Who durſt ſpeak Treaſon againſt a Prince, if he were ſure he heard him, or that it would come to his knowledg? A ſenſe of Gods knowledg of Wickedneſs in the firſt motion, and inward contrivance would bar the accompliſhment and execution. The Conſideration of Gods infinite Underſtanding, would cry *ſtand* to the firſt glances of the heart to Sin.

* Job 41. 4.

* Prov. 5. 20. 21.

* Pſal 44. 21.

2. *It would make us watchful over our hearts and thoughts.* Should we harbour any unworthy thoughts in our Cabinet, if our heads and hearts were poſſeſs'd with this uſeful truth, That *God knows every thing which comes into our minds**? We ſhould as much bluſh at the riſing of impure thoughts before the Underſtanding of God, as at the diſcovery of unworthy actions to the knowledg of Men: If we lived under a ſenſe, that not a thought of all thoſe millions, which flutter about our Minds, can be conceal'd from him; how watchful and careful ſhould we be of our hearts and thoughts?

* Ezek. 11. 5.

3. *It would be a good preparation to every Duty.* This Conſideration ſhould be the Preface to every ſervice; The Divine Underſtanding knows how I now act. This would engage us to ſerious Intention, and quell wandring and diſtracting fancies: Who would come before God, with a careleſs and ignorant Soul, under a ſenſe of his infinite Underſtanding, and Prerogative of ſearching the heart? *Oh thou that ſitteſt in Heaven*, was a Conſideration the *Pſalmiſt* had at the beginning of his Prayer *: Whereby he teſtifies not only an apprehenſion of the Majeſty and Power of God, but of his Omniſcience; as one ſitting above, beholds all that is below; Would we offer to God ſuch raw and undigeſted Petitions; would there be ſo much flatneſs in our ſervices; ſhould our hearts ſo often give us the ſlip: Would any hang down their Heads like a Bulruſh, by an affected or counterfeit Humility, while the Heart is filled with Pride, if we did actuate Faith in this Attribute? No, our Prayers would

* Pſal. 123. 1.

be

be more ſound, our Devotions more vigorous, our Hearts more cloſe, our Spirits like the Chariots of *Aminadab*, more ſwift in their motions: Every thing would be done by us with all our might, which would be very feeble and faint, if we conceived God to be of a Finite Underſtanding like our ſelves. Let us therefore before every duty, not draw, but open the Curtains between God and our Souls, and think that we are going before him that *ſees us*, before him that knows us *. And the ſtronger Impreſſions of the Divine Knowledg are upon our Minds, the better would our preparation be for, and he more active our frames in every ſervice: And certainly we may judg of the ſuitableneſs of our preparations, by the ſtrength of ſuch Impreſſions upon us.

* Gen. 16. 13.

4. *This would tend to make us ſincere in our whole Courſe.* This preſcription *David* gave to *Solomon*, to maintain a ſoundneſs and health of Spirit in his walk before God; 1 *Chron.* 28. 9. *And thou* Solomon *my Son, know the God of thy Fathers, and ſerve him with a perfect heart, for the Lord underſtands all the imaginations of the thoughts.* *Joſephus* gives this reaſon for *Abels* Holineſs, that he believed God was ignorant of nothing. As the Doctrine of Omniſcience is the foundation of all Religion; ſo the Impreſſion of it, would promote the practice of all Religion. When *all* our *ways are* imagin'd by us to be *before* the Lord, we ſhall then *keep his precepts* *. And we can never be *perfect* or ſincere, till we *walk before* God, *Gen.* 17. 1. as under the Eye of Gods knowledg. What we ſpeak, what we think, what we act is in his ſight: He knows every place where we are, every thing that we do, as well as Chriſt knew *Nathaniel* under the Fig-tree. As he is too powerful to be vanquiſht, ſo he is too Underſtanding to be deceived: The ſenſe of this would make us walk with as much care, as if the Underſtanding of all Men did comprehend us and our actions.

* Antiquit. *lib.* 1. *cap.* 3.

* Pſal. 119. 168.

5. The Conſideration of this Attribute *would make us humble.* How dejected would a Perſon be, if he were ſure all the Angels in Heaven and Men upon Earth, did perfectly know his Crimes, with all their aggravations? But what is Created Knowledg to an infinite and juſt Cenſuring Underſtanding? When we conſider that he knows our actions, whereof there are multitudes, and our thoughts whereof there are millions: That he views all the Bleſſings beſtow'd upon us; all the injuries we have return'd to him; That he exactly knows his own Bounty, and our ingratitude; all the Idolatry, Blaſphemy, and ſecret enmity in every Mans heart againſt him; all Tyrannical Oppreſſions, hidden Luſts, omiſſions of neceſſary Duties, violation of plain Precepts, every fooliſh Imagination, with all the Circumſtances of them, and that perfectly in their full Anatomy, every mite of unworthineſs and wickedneſs in every Circumſtance; and add to this his Knowledg, the wonders of his Patience, which are miraculous upon the ſcore of his Omniſcience, that he is not as quick in his revenge, as he is in his Underſtanding; but is ſo far from inflicting Puniſhment, that he continues his former Benefits, arms not his Juſtice againſt us, but ſollicites our Repentance, and waits to be Gracious with all this knowledg of our Crimes; ſhould not the Conſideration of this, melt our hearts into Humiliation before him, and make us earneſt in begging pardon and forgiveneſs of him?

Again, Do we not all find a Worm in our beſt Fruit, a Flaw in our ſoundeſt Duties? Shall any of us vaunt, as if God beheld only the Gold, and not any Droſs; as if he knew one thing only, and not another: If we knew ſomething by our ſelves to chear us, do we not alſo know ſomething, yea, many things to condemn us, and therefore to humble us? Let the ſenſe of Gods infinite knowledg therefore be an Incentive and Argument for more Humiliation in us. If we know enough to render our ſelves vile in our own Eyes, how much more doth God know to render us vile in his!

6. The Conſideration of this Excellent Perfection, ſhould *make us to acquieſce in God, and rely upon him in every ſtrait.* In publick, in private: He knows all Caſes, and he knows all Remedies; He knows the Seaſons of bringing them, and he knows the Seaſons of removing them, for his own Glory.

What is *contingent* in reſpect of us, and of our fore-knowledg, and in reſpect of *ſecond* cauſes, *is* it not ſo in regard of Gods, who hath the knowledg of the futurition of all things: He knows all Cauſes in themſelves, and therefore knows what every Cauſe will produce, what will be the event of every Counſel and of every Action? How ſhould we commit our ſelves to this God of infinite Underſtanding, who knows all things, and fore-knows every thing, that cannot be forced through ignorance to take new Counſel, or be ſurpriz'd with any thing, that can happen to us? This uſe the *Pſalmiſt* makes of it, *Pſal.* 10. 14. *Thou haſt ſeen it, the poor committeth himſelf unto thee.* Though *ſome truſt in Chariots and Horſes* *, ſome in Counſels and Counſellors, ſome in their Arms and Courage, and ſome in meer vanity and nothing, yet let us *remember the Name* and Nature *of the Lord our God*, his Divine Perfections, of which this of his infinite Underſtanding and Omniſcience is none of the leaſt, but ſo neceſſary, that without it he could not be God, and the whole World would be a mear Chaos and Confuſion.

* Pſal. 10. 7.

A DISCOURSE UPON THE WISDOM OF GOD.

Rom. XVI. 27.

To God only Wise be Glory through Jesus Christ, for ever, Amen.

THis *Chapter* being the last of this *Epistle*, is chiefly made up of charitable and friendly Salutations and Commendations of particular Persons, according to the earlyness and strength of their several Graces, and their labour of Love for the Interest of God and his People.

In *verse* 17. he warns them not to be drawn aside from the *Gospel Doctrine*, hch had been taught them, by the plausible Pretences and Insinuations, which the Corrupters of the Doctrine and Rule of *Christ* never want from the suggestions of their *Carnal Wisdom*. The Brats of Soul-destroying Errors, may walk about the world in a garb and disguise of *good words, and fair speeches*, as it is in the 18*th Verse*, by *good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.* And for their encouragement to a constancy in the Gospel Doctrine, he assures them, that all those that would dispossess them of Truth, to possess them with Vanity, are but *Satans* Instruments, and will fall under the same Captivity and Yoke with their principal; *Verse* 18. *The God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.*

Whence observe,

1. *All Corrupters of Divine Truth, and Troublers of the Churches Peace, are no better than Devils.* Our Saviour thought the Name *Satan*, a Title merited by *Peter*, when he breathed out an Advice, as an Ax at the Root of the Gospel, the *Death of Christ*, the foundation of all Gospel Truth; and the *Apostle* concludes them under the same Character, which hinder the superstructure, and would mix their Chaff with his Wheat; *Mat.* 16. 23. *Get thee behind me Satan.* 'Tis not, Get thee behind me *Simon*, or, Get thee behind me *Peter*; but, *Get thee behind me Satan: thou art an offence to me*: Thou dost oppose thy self to the Wisdom, and Grace, and Authority of God, to the Redemption of Man, and to the good of the World.

As the *Holy Ghost* is the Spirit of Truth, so is *Satan* the Spirit of Falshood: As the *Holy Ghost* inspires Believers with Truth, so doth the *Devil* corrupt Un-

believers with Error. Let us cleave to the Truth of the Goſpel, that we may not be counted by God as part of the Corporation of Fallen Angels, and not be barely reckon'd as Enemies of God, but in league with the greateſt Enemy to his Glory in the World.

2. *The Reconciler of the World will be the ſubduer of Satan.* The God of peace ſent the *Prince of Peace* to be the Reſtorer of his Rights, and the Hammer to beat in pieces the Uſurper of them. As a God of Truth he will make good his promiſe, as a God of peace he will perfect the deſign his Wiſdom hath laid, and begun to act. In the ſubduing *Satan*, he will be the Conqueror of his Inſtruments: He ſaith not, God ſhall bruiſe your Troublers, and Hereticks; but *Satan*: The fall of a General proves the rout of the Army. Since God, as a *God of Peace* hath delivered his own, he will perfect the Victory, and make them ceaſe from bruiſing the heel of his Spritual ſeed.

3. *Divine Evangelical Truth ſhall be Victorious.* No Weapon formed againſt it ſhall proſper: The Head of the Wicked ſhall fall as low as the feet of the Godly. The *Devil* never yet bluſter'd in the World, but he met at laſt with a diſappointment: His fall hath been like *Lightning*, ſudden, certain, vaniſhing

4. *Faith muſt look back as far as the foundation promiſe. The God of peace, ſhall bruiſe, &c,* The *Apoſtle* ſeems to allude to the firſt promiſe, *Gen.* 2. 15. A Promiſe that hath vigor to nouriſh the Church in all Ages of the VVorld: 'Tis the ſtanding Cordial; out of the Womb of this promiſe all the reſt have taken their birth. The promiſes of the Old Teſtament were deſigned for thoſe under the New, and full performance of them, is to be expected, and will be enjoyed by them. 'Tis a mighty ſtrengthening to Faith, to trace the footſteps of Gods Truth and VViſdom, from the Threatning againſt the Serpent in *Eden*, to the bruiſe he received in *Calvary*, and the Triumph over him upon Mount *Olivet*.

5. *We are to conſide in the promiſe of God but leave the ſeaſon of its accompliſhment to his Wiſdom.* He will *bruiſe Satan under your feet*, therefore do not doubt it; and ſhortly, therefore wait for it: Shortly it will be done, that is, quickly when you think it may be a great way off; or ſhortly, that is, ſeaſonably, when Satans Rage is hotteſt. God is the beſt Judg of the ſeaſons of diſtributing his own mercies, and darting out his own Glory: 'Tis enough to encourage our waiting, that it will be, and that it will be ſhortly; but we muſt not meaſure God's *ſhortly* by our Minutes,

The *Apoſtle* after this concludes with a comfortable Prayer, That ſince they were liable to many Temptations, to turn their backs upon the Doctrin which they had learned; yet he deſires God, who had brought them to the knowledg of his Truth, would confirm them in the belief of it, ſince it was the Goſpel of Chriſt, his dear Son, and a myſtery he had been chary of and kept in his own Cabinet, and now brought forth to the world in purſuance of the ancient Propheſies, and now had publiſh'd to all Nations for that end that it might be obeyed; and concludes with a *Doxology*, a voice of Praiſe, *to him who was only Wiſe* to effect his own purpoſes; *Verſes* 25, 26, 27. *Now to him that is of power to eſtabliſh you, according to my Goſpel and the preaching of Jeſus Chriſt, according to the revelation of the Myſtery, which was kept ſecret ſince the World began; but now is made manifeſt, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the commandment of the Everlaſting God, made known to all Nations for the obedience of Faith.* This *Doxology* is interlac'd with many Comforts for the *Romans*, He explains the *cauſes* of this glory to God, *Power* and *Wiſdom*; Power to eſtabliſh the *Romans* in Grace, which includes his will. This he proves from a Divine Teſtimony, *viz.* the *Goſpel*; the Goſpel committed to him, and preach'd by him, which he commends by calling it the *preaching of Chriſt*; and deſcribes it, for the inſtruction and comfort of the Church, from the Adjuncts, the obſcurity of it under the Old Teſtament, and the clearneſs of it under the New: It was hid from the former Ages, and kept in ſilence; not ſimply and abſolutely, but comparatively and in part; becauſe in the Old Teſtament, the Doctrine of Salvation by Chriſt was confin'd to the limits of *Judea*, preach'd only to the Inhabitants of that Country: *To them he gave his Statutes and his judgments and dealt not ſo magnificently with any Nation* *; but now he cauſes it to

* Pſal. 147. 19. 20.

ſpring

ſpring with greater Majeſty out of thoſe narrow bounds, and ſpread its Wings about the world. This manifeſtation of the Goſpel he declares *firſt* from the *ſubject*, *All Nations*: 2. From the principal *efficient* cauſe of it, *The Commandment and Order of God*: 3. The *Inſtrumental* cauſe, *The Prophetick Scriptures*: 4. From the *End* of it, *The obedience of Faith.* Gomarus *in loc.*

1. Obſerve, *The glorious Attributes of God bear a comfortable reſpect to Believers.* Power and Wiſdom are here mention'd as two props of their Faith; his Power here includes his Goodneſs. Power to help, without will to aſſiſt, is a dry Chip. The *Apoſtle* mentions not Gods power ſimply and abſolutely conſidered, for that of it ſelf is no more comfort to men, than it is to Devils; but as conſidered in the Goſpel Covenant, his power, as well as his other perfections, are ingredients in that Cordial of Gods being *our God*. VVe ſhould never think of the Excellency of the Divine Nature, without conſidering the Duties they demand, and gathering the Honey they preſent.

2. Obſ. *The ſtability of a gracious Soul depends upon the Wiſdom, as well as the Power of God.* It would be a diſrepute to the Almightyneſs of God, if that ſhould be totally vanquiſh'd which was introduc'd by his mighty Arm, and rooted in the Soul by an irreſiſtible Grace. It would ſpeak a want of ſtrength to maintain it, or a change of reſolution, and ſo would be no honour to the wiſdom of his firſt deſign. 'Tis no part of the wiſdom of an Artificer, to leta work wherein he determin'd to ſhew the greatneſs of his Skill, to be daſh'd in pieces, when he hath power to preſerve it. God deſign'd every gracious Soul for a piece of *his workmanſhip* *: What, to have the Skill of his Grace defeated; If any Soul which he hath graciouſly conquer'd ſhould be wreſted from him, what could be thought, but that his power is enfeebled? If deſerted by him, what could be imagin'd, but that he repented of his labour, and alter'd his Counſel, as if raſhly undertaken? Theſe *Romans* were rugged Pieces, and lay in a filthy quarry, when God came firſt to ſmooth them; for ſo the *Apoſtle* repreſents them with the reſt of the Heathen, *Rom.* 1. 19. and would he throw them away, or leave them to the power of his Enemy, after all his pains he had taken with them, to fit them for his Building? Did he not foreſee the deſigns of Satan againſt them; what ſtratagems he would uſe to defeat his purpoſes and ſtrip him of the honour of his work; and would God ſo gratifie his Enemy, and diſgrace his own *Wiſdom?* The deſerting of what hath been acted is a real, Repentance, and argues an Imprudence in the firſt reſolve and attempt. The Goſpel is called, the *Manifold Wiſdom of God*, Eph. 3. 10. the fruit of it in the heart of any Perſon, which is a main deſign of it, hath a title to the ſame Character; and ſhall this Grace, which is the product of this Goſpel, and therefore the birth of *Manifold Wiſdom*, be ſuppreſt? 'Tis at Gods hand we muſt ſeek our fixedneſs and eſtabliſhment, and act Faith upon theſe two Attributes of God. *Power* is no ground to expect ſtability, without *Wiſdom* intereſting the Agent in it, and finding out and applying the means for it. Wiſdom is naked without Power to act, and Power is uſeleſs without VViſdom to direct: They are theſe two excellencies of the Deity, the *Apoſtle* here pitches the Hope and Faith of the converted *Romans* upon for their ſtability. * Eph. 2. 10.

3. Obſ. *Perſeverance of Believers in Grace, is a Goſpel Doctrine.* *According to my Goſpel*: My Goſpel miniſterially, according to that Goſpel Doctrine I have taught you in this *Epiſtle*; (for, as the *Prophets* were Comments upon the *Law*, ſo are the *Epiſtles* upon the *Goſpel:*) This very Doctrine he had diſcours'd of *Rom.* 8. 38, 39. where he tells them, that neither *death* nor *life*, the Terrors of a cruel death, or the Allurements of an honourable and pleaſant life, nor *principalities* and *powers*, with all their ſubtility and ſtrength; not the things we have before us, nor the promiſes of a future felicity, by either Angels in Heaven, or Devils in Hell; not the higheſt Angel, nor the deepeſt Devil, is *able to ſeparate us*, us *Romans*, *from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus.* So that, *According to my Goſpel*, may be according to that Declaration of the Goſpel, which I have made in this *Epiſtle*, which doth not only promiſe the firſt creating Grace, but the Perfecting and crowning Grace; for not only the being of Grace, but the health, livelineſs, and perpetuity of Grace is the fruit of the *New Covenant*, Jer. 32. 40.

4. Obſerve, *That the Goſpel is the ſole Means of a Chriſtians Eſtabliſhment.*

According

According to my Goſpel, that is, *by my Goſpel*. The Goſpel is the Inſtrumental cauſe of our ſpiritual life, 'tis the cauſe alſo of the continuance of it; 'tis the *Seed* whereby we were born, and the *Milk* whereby we are nouriſh'd *; 'tis the *Power of God to ſalvation**, and therefore to all the degrees of it. *John* 17. 17. *Sanctifie them by thy Truth*, or *through thy Truth*; by or through his Truth he Sanctifies us, and by the ſame Truth he eſtabliſheth us: The firſt Sanctification, and the progreſs of it, the firſt lineaments and the laſt colours, are wrought by the Goſpel. The Goſpel therefore ought to be known, ſtudied, and conſidered by us: 'Tis the Charter of our inheritance, and the ſecurity for our ſtanding. The Law acquaints us with our Duty, but contributes nothing to our ſtrength and ſettlement.

* 1 Pet. 1. 23.
* 1 Pet. 2. 2.

5. Obſerve, *The Goſpel is nothing elſe but the Revelation of Chriſt.* Verſe 25. *According to my Goſpel, and the preaching of Jeſus Chriſt*: The diſcovery of the Myſtery, and Redemption, and Salvation, in and by him. 'Tis *Genitivus objecti*, that Preaching wherein Chriſt is declared and ſet out, with the Benefits accruing by him. This is the privilege the *Wiſdom* of God reſerved for the latter times, which the *Old Teſtament-Church* had only under a vail.

6. *'Tis a part of the Excellency of the Goſpel, that it had the Son of God for its Publiſher: The Preaching of Jeſus Chriſt.* It was firſt preached to *Adam* in Paradiſe by God, and afterwards publiſh'd by *Chriſt* in Perſon to the Inhabitants of *Judea*. It was not the Invention of Man, but Copied from the boſom of the Father by him that lay in his boſom. The *Goſpel* we have, is the ſame which our Saviour himſelf preached when he was in the World: He preached it not to the *Romans*; but the ſame Goſpel he preached is tranſmitted to the *Romans*. It therefore Commands our reſpect, who ever ſlights it, 'tis as much as if he ſlighted Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, were he in Perſon to ſound it from his own Lips. The validity of a Proclamation is derived from the Authority of the Prince that dictates it and orders it; yet the greater the Perſon that publiſheth it, the more diſhonour is caſt upon the Authority of the Prince that enjoyns it, if it be contemn'd. The Everlaſting God ordain'd it, and the Eternal Son publiſh'd it.

7. *The Goſpel was of an Eternal Reſolution, though of a temporary Revelation.* Verſe 25. *According to the Revelation of the Myſtery, which was kept ſecret ſince the World began.* 'Tis an Everlaſting Goſpel. It was a Promiſe *before the world began*, Tit. 1. 2. It was not a new Invention, but only kept ſecret among the *Arcana*, in the breaſt of the Almighty. It was hidden from *Angels*, for the depths of it are not yet fully made known to them; their *deſire to look into it*, ſpeaks yet a deficiency in their Knowledg of it *. It was publiſh'd in *Paradiſe*, but in ſuch words as *Adam* did not fully underſtand: It was both diſcover'd and clouded in the Smoke of Sacrifices: It was wrapped up in a Vail under the Law, but not open'd till the Death of the Redeemer: it was then plainly ſaid to the Cities of *Judah*, *behold your God comes*. The whole Tranſaction of it between the Father and the Son, which is the Spirit of the Goſpel, was from Eternity; the Creation of the World was in order to the manifeſtation of it. Let us not then regard the *Goſpel* as a Novelty; the conſideration of it, as one of Gods Cabinet Rarities, ſhould enhance our Eſtimation of it. No Traditions of Men, no invention of vain Wits, that pretend to be wiſer than God, ſhould have the ſame Credit with that which bears date from Eternity.

* 1 Pet. 1. 12.

8. Obſerve, *That Divine Truth is Myſterious. According to the revelation of the myſtery, Chriſt manifeſted in the fleſh.* The whole Scheme of *Godlineſs* is a Myſtery. No Man or Angel could imagine, how two Natures ſo diſtant as the *Divine* and *Human*, ſhould be united; how the ſame Perſon ſhould be Criminal and Righteous; how a Juſt God ſhould have a Satisfaction, and ſinful man a Juſtification; how the Sin ſhould be puniſh'd and the Sinner ſaved. None could imagine ſuch a way of juſtification, as the *Apoſtle* in this *Epiſtle* declares: It was a Myſtery, when hid under the ſhadows of the Law; and a Myſtery to the *Prophets*, when it ſounded from their Mouths; they *ſearched* it, without being able to comprehend it *.

* 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11.

If it be a myſtery, 'tis humbly to be ſubmitted to: *Myſteries* ſurmount Human Reaſon. The ſtudy of the Goſpel muſt not be with a yawning and careleſs frame. Trades you call *Myſteries*, are not learned ſleeping and nodding;

Diligence

diligence is required, we must be Disciples at Gods Feet. As it had God for the Author, so we must have God for the Teacher of it; the Contrivance was his, and the Illumination of our Minds must be from him. As God only manifested the Gospel, so he only can open our Eyes to see the *Mysteries* of Christ in it.

In *Verse* 26. we may observe,

1. *The Scriptures of the Old Testament verifie the substance of the New, and the New doth evidence the Authority of the Old. By the Scriptures of the Prophets made known.* The Old Testament credits the New, and the New illustrates the Old, The New Testament is a Comment upon the Prophetick part of the Old. The Old shews the Promises and Predictions of God, and the New shews the Performance: What was foretold in the Old, is fulfilled in the New; the predictions are cleared by the Events. The Predictions of the Old are Divine, because they are above the reason of man to foreknow: None but an Infinite knowledg could foretell them, because none but an Infinite *Wisdom* could order all things for the accomplishment of them.

The Christian Religion hath then the surest Foundation, since the Scriptures of the *Prophets*, wherein it is foretold, are of undoubted Antiquity, and owned by the *Jews* and many *Heathens*, which are and were the great Enemies of Christ. The *Old Testament* is therefore to be read for the strengthning of our Faith. Our Blessed *Saviour* himself draws the Streams of his Doctrine from the Old Testament: He clears up the Promise of *Eternal Life*, and the Doctrine of the *Resurrection*, from the words of the Covenant, *I am the God of Abraham, &c.* Mat. 22. 32. And our *Apostle* clears up the Doctrin of *justification by Faith* from Gods Covenant with *Abraham*, Rom. 4. It must be read, and it must be read as it is writ: It was writ to a Gospel end, it must be studied with a Gospel Spirit The *Old Testament* was writ to give Credit to the *New*, when it should be manifested in the world. It must be read by us to give strength to our Faith, and establish us in the Doctrin of *Christianity*. How many view it as a bare story, an *Almanack* out of date, and regard it as a dry Bone, without sucking from it the *Evangelical* Marrow? Christ is, in *Genesis*, *Abrahams* Seed; in *Davids* Psalms and the *Prophets*, the *Messiah* and Redeemer of the World.

2. Observe the *Antiquity of the Gospel is made manifest by the Scriptures of the Prophets.* It was of as Ancient a date as any prophesie: The first prophesie was nothing else but a Gospel Charter; it was not made at the Incarnation of Christ, but *made manifest*. It then rose up to its Meridian lustre, and sprung out of the Clouds, wherewith it was before obscur'd. The *Gospel* was preached to the Ancients by the *Prophets*, as well as to the *Gentiles* by the *Apostles*; Heb. 4. 2. *Unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them.* To them first, to us after; to them indeed more cloudy, to us more clear; but they as well as we, were *Evangeliz'd*, as the word signifies.

The Covenant of *grace* was the same in the Writings of the *Prophets*, and the Declarations of the *Evangelists* and *Apostles*. Though by our *Saviours* Incarnation, the Gospel Light was clearer, and by his Ascension, the Effusions of the Spirit fuller and stronger; yet the Believers under the Old Testament, saw *Christ* in the Swadling Bands of Legal Ceremonies, and the Lattice of prophetical Writings; they could not offer one Sacrifice, or read one prophesie with a Faith of the right stamp. *Abrahams* Justifying Faith had *Christ* for its Object, though it was not so Explicit as ours, because the manifestation was not so clear as ours.

3. *All Truth is to be drawn from Scripture.* The *Apostle* refers them here to the *Gospel* and the *Prophets*: The Scripture is the Source of Divine Knowledg; not the Traditions of Men, nor Reason separate from Scripture. Whosoever brings another Doctrine, coyns another Christ; nothing is to be added to what is written, nothing detracted from it. He doth not send us for truth, to the puddles of Human Inventions, to the *Enthusiasms* of our brain; nor to the See of *Rome*, no nor to the Instructions of Angels; but the Writings of the *Prophets*, as they clear up the Declarations of the *Apostles*. The Church of *Rome* is not made here the Standard of truth; but the Scriptures of the *Prophets* are to be the Touch-stone to the *Romans*, for the trial of the *Truth* of the Gospel.

4. *How*

4. *How great is the goodneſs of God?* The Borders of *Grace* are enlarged to the *Gentiles*, and not hid under the Skirts of the *Jews*. He that was ſo long the God of the *Jews*, is now alſo manifeſt to be the God of the *Gentiles*: *The Goſpel is now made known to all Nations, according to the Commandment of the Everlaſting God.* Not only in a way of Common Providence, but ſpecial Grace; in Calling them to the knowledg of himſelf, and a Juſtification of them by Faith, He hath brought Strangers to him, to the *Adoption of Children*, and lodged them under the Wings of the Covenant, that were before *alienated from him* through the univerſal Corruption of Nature. Now he hath manifeſted himſelf a God of Truth, mindful of his promiſe in bleſſing all Nations in the Seed of *Abraham*. The Fury of Devils, and the Violence of men, could not hinder the propagation of this *Goſpel*: Its Light hath been diſperſed as far as that of the Sun; and that *Grace* that ſounded in the *Gentiles* Ears, hath bent many of their Hearts to the Obedience of it

5. Obſerve, That *Libertiniſm and Licentiouſneſs find no encouragement in the Goſpel. It was made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith.* The Goodneſs of God is publiſh'd, that our Enmity to him may be parted with. Chriſts Righteouſneſs is not offered to us to be put on, that we may roll more warmly in our Luſts. The Doctrin of Grace commands us to give up ourſelves to Chriſt to be accepted through him, and to be ruled by him. Obedience is due to God, as a Soveraign Lord in his Law; and 'tis due out of gratitude, as he is a God of Grace in the Goſpel. The diſcovery of a further perfection in God weakens not the right of another, nor the obligation of the Duty the former Attribute claims at our hands. The *Goſpel* frees us from the Curſe, but not from the Duty and ſervice: *We are delivered from the hands of our Enemies, that we might ſerve God in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs*, Luke. 1. 74. *This is the will of God* in the Goſpel, *even our Sanctification.* When a Prince ſtrikes off a Malefactors chains, though he deliver him from the puniſhments of his Crime, he frees him not from the Duty of a Subject: His pardon adds a greater obligation, than his Protection did before while he was Loyal. Chriſts *Righteouſneſs* gives us a Title to Heaven; but there muſt be a *Holineſs* to give us a fitneſs for Heaven.

6. Obſerve, That *Evangelical Obedience, or the Obedience of Faith is only acceptable to God. Obedience of Faith*; *Genitivus ſpeciei*, noting the kind of Obedience God requires; an Obedience ſpringing from Faith, animated and influenced by Faith. Not Obedience of Faith, as though Faith were the Rule, and the Law were abrogated; but to the Law as a *Rule*, and from Faith as a *Principle*. There is no true Obedience before Faith: *Heb.* 11. 6. *Without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*; and therefore without Faith impoſſible to obey him. A good Work cannot proceed from a defil'd *Mind* and *Conſcience*; and without Faith every mans mind is darkned, and his Conſcience polluted *. Faith is the Band of Union to Chriſt, and Obedience is the Fruit of Union; we *cannot bring forth fruit* without being Branches *, and we cannot be Branches without Believing. Legitimate Fruit follows upon Marriage to Chriſt, not before it: *Rom.* 7. 4. *That you ſhould be married to another, even to him that is raiſed from the dead, that you ſhould bring forth fruit unto God.* All Fruit before Marriage is Baſtard, and Baſtards were excluded from the Sanctuary. Our Perſons muſt be firſt accepted in Chriſt, before our Services can be acceptable; thoſe Works are not acceptable where the Perſon is not pardoned. Good Works flow from a pure Heart; but the Heart cannot be pure before Faith. All the Good Works reckoned up in the 11*th Chapter* of the *Hebrews* were from this Spring; thoſe *Heroes* firſt believed, and then obeyed. *By Faith* Abel *was righteous before God*, without it his Sacrifice had been no better than *Cains*: *By Faith* Enoch *pleaſed God*, and had a Divine Teſtimony to his Obedience before his tranſlation: *By Faith* Abraham *offered up* Iſaac, without which he had been no better than a Murderer. All Obedience hath its Root in Faith, and is not done in our own ſtrength, but in the ſtrength and virtue of another, of *Chriſt*, whom God hath ſet forth as our Head and Root.

* Tit. 1. 15.

* John 15. 4, 5.

7. Obſerve, *Faith and Obedience are diſtinct, though inſeparable: The Obedience of Faith. Faith* indeed is Obedience to a Goſpel Command, which enjoyns

us to believe; but it is not all our Obedience. *Juſtification* and *Sanctification* are diſtinct acts of God; Juſtification reſpects the Perſon, Sanctification the Nature; Juſtification is firſt in order of Nature, and Sanctification follows: They are diſtinct but inſeparable; every Juſtified Perſon hath a Sanctified Nature, and every Sanctified Nature ſuppoſeth a Juſtified Perſon. So *Faith* and *Obedience* are diſtinct; Faith as the Principle, Obedience as the Product; Faith as the Cauſe, Obedience as the Effect; the Cauſe and the Effect are not the ſame. By *Faith* we own Chriſt as our Lord; by *Obedience* we regulate our ſelves according to his Command. The acceptance of the Relation to him as a Subject, precedes the performance of our Duty: By Faith we receive his Law, and by Obedience we fullfil it. *Faith* makes us Gods *Children*, Gal. 3. 26. *Obedience* manifeſts us to be Chriſts *Diſciples*, *John* 15. 8. Faith is the Touchſtone of Obedience; the Touchſtone, and that which is tried by it, are not the ſame. But though they are diſtinct, yet they are inſeparable. *Faith* and *Obedience* are joyned together; Obedience follows Faith at the heels. *Faith purifies the heart*, and a pure Heart cannot be without pure Actions. Faith unites us to Chriſt, whereby we partake of his Life; and a living Branch cannot be without *fruit* in its ſeaſon, and *much fruit*, John 15. 5. and that naturally from a *newneſs of Spirit* Rom. 7. 9. not conſtrained by the rigors of the Law, but drawn forth from a ſweetneſs of Love; for *Faith works by Love*. The Love of God is the ſtrong Motive, and Love to God is the quickning Principle; as there can be no Obedience without Faith, ſo no Faith without Obedience.

After all this, the *Apoſtle* ends with the celebration of the *Wiſdom* of God; *To God only wiſe, be glory through Jeſus Chriſt for ever.* The rich Diſcovery of the Goſpel, cannot be thought of by a gracious Soul, without a return of Praiſe to God, and Admiration of his ſingular *Wiſdom*.

Wiſe God.] His *Power* before, and his *Wiſdom* here, are mentioned in conjunction (in which his *Goodneſs* is included, as intereſted in his eſtabliſhing *Power*) as the ground of all the Glory and Praiſe God hath from his Creatures.

Only VViſe.] As Chriſt ſaith, *Mat.* 19. 17. *None is good, but God*; ſo the *Apoſtle* ſaith, None *VViſe*, but God. As all Creatures are *unclean* in regard of his Purity; ſo they are all Fools in regard of his *VViſdom*, yea the glorious *Angels* themſelves*. *VViſdom* is the Royalty of God; the proper Dialect of all his Ways and Works. No Creature can lay claim to it; He is ſo Wiſe, that he is *VViſdom* it ſelf.

* Job 4. 18.

Be glory through Jeſus Chriſt.] As God is only known in and by Chriſt, ſo he muſt be only worſhipped and celebrated in and through Chriſt. In him we muſt Pray to him, and in him we muſt Praiſe him. As all Mercies flow from God through Chriſt to us, ſo all our Duties are to be preſented to God through Chriſt.

In the Greek, *verbatim*, it runs thus; *To the alone VViſe God, through Jeſus Chriſt, to him be glory for ever.* But we muſt not underſtand it, as if God were Wiſe by Jeſus Chriſt; but that Thanks is to be given to God through Chriſt, becauſe in and by Chriſt God hath revealed his Wiſdom to the World. The *Greek* hath a Repetition of the Article ᾧ not expreſt in the Tranſlation, *To him be glory.* *Beza* expungeth this Article, but without reaſon, for ᾧ is as much as αὐτῷ, *To him*; and joyning this, *The only VViſe God* with the 25*th* Verſe, *To him that is of Power to eſtabliſh you*; Reading it thus, *To him that is of Power to eſtabliſh you, the only VViſe God*, leaving the reſt in a *Parentheſis*, it runs ſmoothly, *To him be glory through Jeſus Chriſt.* And *Crellius* the *Socinian* obſerves, that this Article ᾧ, which ſome leave out, might be induſtriouſly inſerted by the *Apoſtle*, to ſhew, that the Glory we aſcribe to God, is alſo given to Chriſt.

We may Obſerve, That neither in this place, nor any where in Scripture, is the *Virgin Mary*, or any of the *Saints*, aſſociated with God or Chriſt in the Glory aſcrib'd to them.

In the Words there is,

1. An *Appropriation* of Wiſdom to God, and a *Remotion* of it from all Creatures; *Only wiſe God.*

2. A *Glorifying* him for it.

The Point I ſhall inſiſt upon, is,

That Wiſdom is a tranſcendent Excellency of the Divine Nature. We have before ſpoken of the *Knowledg* of God, and the infiniteneſs of it: The next Attribute is the *Wiſdom* of God. Moſt confound the *Knowledg* and *Wiſdom* of God together; but there is a manifeſt diſtinction between them in our conception.

I ſhall handle it thus;

1. *Shew what Wiſdom is.* Then lay down,
2. *Some Propoſitions about the Wiſdom of God.* And ſhew,
3. *That God is Wiſe, and and only Wiſe.*
4. *Wherein his Wiſdom appears.*
5. *The Uſe.*

I. *What VViſdom is.* Wiſdom among the *Greeks*, firſt ſignified an eminent Perfection in any Art or Myſtery; ſo a good Statuary, Engraver, or Limner, was called *VViſe*, as having an excellent Knowledg in his particular Art. But afterwards the Title of *VViſe* was appropriated to thoſe that devoted themſelves to the contemplation of the higheſt things, that ſerved for a foundation to Speculative Sciences*. But ordinarily we count a Man a Wiſe Man, when he conducts his Affairs with diſcretion, and governs his paſſions with moderation, and carries himſelf with a due proportion and harmony in all his concerns.

* Amyrant. *Moral. Tom.* 3. *p.* 123.

But in Particular, *VViſdom* conſiſts,

1. *In acting for a right End.* The chiefeſt part of Prudence is in fixing a right End, and in chuſing fit Means, and directing them to that ſcope: To ſhoot at random is a mark of Folly. As he is the wiſeſt Man, that hath the nobleſt End and fitteſt Means; ſo God is Infinitely Wiſe; as he is the moſt excellent Being, ſo he hath the moſt excellent End. As there is none more excellent than himſelf, nothing can be his End but himſelf: As he is the Cauſe of all, ſo he is the End of all; and he puts a true Byaſs into all the Means he uſeth to hit the Mark he aims at: *Of him, and through him, and to him are all things*, Rom. 11. 36.

2. Wiſdom conſiſts, *in obſerving all Circumſtances for Action.* He is counted a Wiſe man, that lays hold of the fitteſt Opportunities to bring his deſigns about, that hath the fulleſt foreſight of all the little Intrigues which may happen in a Buſineſs he is to manage, and Times every part of his Action in an exact harmony with the proper minutes of it. God hath all the Circumſtances of things in one entire Image before him; he hath a proſpect of every little Creek in any deſign. He ſees what Second Cauſes will act, and when they will act this or that; yea, he determines them to ſuch and ſuch Acts; ſo that it is impoſſible he ſhould be miſtaken, or miſs of the due Seaſon of bringing about his own Purpoſes. As he hath more Goodneſs, than to deceive any; ſo he hath more Underſtanding, than to be miſtaken in any thing. Hence the Time of the Incarnation of our Bleſſed Saviour, is called the *Fulneſs of Time*, the proper Seaſon for his coming. Every Circumſtance about Chriſt was Tim'd according to the Predictions of God; even ſo little a thing as *not parting his Garment*, and the giving him *Gall and Vinegar to drink*: And all the Bleſſings he ſhowrs down upon his People, according to the Covenant of Grace, are ſaid to come *in his due ſeaſon*, Ezek. 34. 25, 26.

3. Wiſdom conſiſts, *In willing and acting according to the right Reaſon, according to a right Judgment of things.* We never count a Willful man a Wiſe man, but him only that acts according to a right Rule, when right Counſels are taken and vigorouſly executed. The reſolves and Ways of God are not meer Will, but Will guided by the Reaſon and Counſel of his own Infinite Underſtanding; *Eph.* 1. 11. *VVho works all things according to the counſel of his own will.* The Motions of the Divine Will are not raſh, but follow the Propoſals of the Divine Mind: He chooſes that which is fitteſt to be done, ſo that all his Works are graceful, and all his Ways have a comelineſs and *decorum* in them. Hence all his Ways are ſaid to be *Judgment*, *Deut.* 32. 4. not meer Will.

Hence it appears, that *VViſdom* and *Knowledg* are *two* diſtinct Perfections. *Knowledg* hath its ſeat in the Speculative Underſtanding, *VViſdom* in the Practical. Wiſdom and Knowledg are evidently diſtinguiſh'd as *two* ſeveral gifts of the Spirit in Man, 1 *Cor.* 12. 8. *To one is given by the Spirit the word of VViſdom, to another*

another the word of Knowledg by the ſame Spirit. Knowledg is an underſtanding of general Rules, and Wiſdom is a drawing Concluſions from thoſe Rules in order to particular caſes. A Man may have the Knowledg of the whole Scripture, and have all Learning in the Treaſury of his Memory, and yet be deſtitute of Skill to make uſe of them upon particular Occaſions, and unty thoſe knotty Queſtions which may be propoſed to him, by a ready application of thoſe Rules.

Again, *Knowledg* and *Wiſdom* may be diſtinguiſh'd in our Conception, as two diſtinct Perfections in God: The *Knowledg* of God is his Underſtanding of all things; his *Wiſdom* is the Skillful reſolving and acting of all things. And the *Apoſtle*, in his Admiration of him, owns them as diſtinct, *Oh the depths of the riches, both of the Wiſdom and Knowledg of God*, Rom. 11. 33. Knowledg is the Foundation of Wiſdom, and antecedent to it; Wiſdom, the Superſtructure upon Knowledg: Men may have knowledg without Wiſdom, but not Wiſdom without Knowledg; according to our common Proverb, *The greateſt Clerks are not the wiſeſt Men.* All Practical Knowledg is founded in Speculation, either *Secundum rem*, as in a Man; or *Secundum rationem*, as in God. They agree in this, that they are both Acts of the Underſtanding; but Knowledg is the Apprehenſion of a thing, and Wiſdom is the Appointing and Ordering of things. Wiſdom is the ſplendor and luſtre of Knowledg ſhining forth in Operations, and is an Act both of underſtanding and Will; Underſtanding in Counſelling and Contriving, Will in Reſolving and Executing: *Counſel* and *Will* are link'd together, *Epheſ.* 1. 11.

II. The ſecond thing is to lay down ſome *propoſitions in general*, *concerning the Wiſdom God.*

1. *There is an Eſſential and a Perſonal Wiſdom of God.* The Eſſential Wiſdom, is the Eſſence of God; the Perſonal Wiſdom, is the Son of God. *Chriſt* is called *Wiſdom* by himſelf, *Luke* 7.35. The *Wiſdom of God* by the *Apoſtle*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 24. The *Wiſdom* I ſpeak of belongs to the Nature of God, and is conſidered as a neceſſary perfection. The *perſonal* VViſdom is called ſo, becauſe he opens to us the Secrets of God. If the Son were that Wiſdom whereby the Father is wiſe, the Son would be alſo the Eſſence whereby the Father is God. If the Son were the Wiſdom of the Father, whereby he is Eſſentially wiſe; the Son would be the Eſſence of the Father, and the Father would have his Eſſence from the Son, ſince the Wiſdom of God is the Eſſence of God; and ſo the Son would be the Father, if the VViſdom and Power of the Father were originally in the Son.

2. Therefore Secondly, *The Wiſdom of God is the ſame with the Eſſence of God.* Wiſdom in God is not a Habit added to his Eſſence, as it is in man, but it is his Eſſence. 'Tis like the ſplendor of the Sun, the ſame with the Sun it ſelf; or like the brightneſs of *Chryſtal*, which is not communicated to it by any thing elſe, as the Brightneſs of a Mountain is by the Beam of the Sun, but it is one with the *Chryſtal* it ſelf. 'Tis not a Habit ſuperadded to the Divine Eſſence; that would be repugnant to the ſimplicity of God, and ſpeak him compounded of divers Principles; it would be contrary to the Eternity of his perfections: If he be Eternally Wiſe, his *Wiſdom* is his Eſſence; for there is nothing Eternal, but the Eſſence of God. * As the *Sun* melts ſome things, and hardens others; blackens ſome things, and whitens others, and produceth contrary qualities in different Subjects; yet it is but one and the ſame quality in the *Sun*, which is the cauſe of thoſe contrary Operations: So the perfections of God ſeem to be divers in our Conceptions, yet they are but one and the ſame in God. The wiſdom of God, is God acting Prudently; as the Power of God, is God acting Powerfully, and the Juſtice of God, is God acting Righteouſly: And therefore 'tis more truly ſaid, that God is *Wiſdom*, *Juſtice*, *Truth*, *Power*, than that he is *Wiſe*, *Juſt*, *True*, *&c.* as if he were compounded of ſubſtance and qualities. All the Operations of God proceed from one ſimple Eſſence; as all the Operations of the mind of man, though various, proceed from one faculty of Underſtanding.

* Maimon. *Mor. Part* 1. *cap.* 53.

3. *Wiſdom is the property of God alone. He is only Wiſe.* 'Tis an Honour peculiar to him. Upon the account that no man deſerved the title of *Wiſe*, but that it was a Royalty belonging to God *, *Pythagoras* would not be called σοφὸς, a Title given

* Laert. *lib.* 1. *Proem.*

given to their Learned Men; but φιλόσοφος. The Name *Philoſopher*, aroſe out of a reſpect to this tranſcendent Perfection of God.

1. *God is only Wiſe neceſſarily.* As He is neceſſarily God, ſo he is neceſſarily VViſe; for the Notion of VViſdom is inſeparable from the Notion of a Deity. VVhen we ſay *God is a Spirit*, is *True*, *Righteous*, *Wiſe*; we underſtand that he is tranſcendently theſe, by an intrinſick and abſolute neceſſity, by virtue of his own Eſſence, without the Efficiency of any other, or any Efficiency in and by himſelf. God doth not make himſelf VViſe, no more than he makes himſelf God. As he is a neceſſary Being in regard of his Life, ſo he is neceſſarily VViſe in regard of his Underſtanding. *Syneſius* ſaith, that *God is Eſſentiated*, οὐσιοῦσθαι, *by his Underſtanding*. He places the Subſtance of God in *Underſtanding* and *Wiſdom*: Wiſdom is the firſt vital Operation of God. He can no more be Unwiſe than he can be Untrue; for Folly in the Mind is much the ſame with Falſity in Speech. VViſdom among Men is gained by Age and Experience, furthered by Inſtructions and Exerciſe; but the VViſdom of God is his Nature, As the Sun cannot be without Light, while it remains a Sun; and as Eternity cannot be without Immortality; So neither can God be without VViſdom. As *he only hath Immortality*, 1 *Tim* 6.16. not arbitrarily, but neceſſarily; ſo he only hath *Wiſdom*: Not becauſe he will be Wiſe, but becauſe he cannot but be VViſe. He cannot but contrive Counſels, and exert Operations, becoming the Greatneſs and Majeſty of his Nature.

2. Therefore *only Wiſe originally*. God is αὐθιδακτος αὐτόσοφος. Men acquire Wiſdom by the loſs of their faireſt years; but his *Wiſdom* is the Perfection of the Divine Nature, not the birth of Study or the growth of Experience, but as neceſſary, as Eternal, as his Eſſence. He goes not out of himſelf to ſearch VViſdom: He needs no more the Brains of Creatures in the contrivance of his Purpoſes, than he doth their Arm in the execution of them. He needs no Counſel, he receives no Counſel from any; *Rom.* 11. 34. *Who hath been his Counſellor?* and *Iſai.*40.14. *With whom took he counſel, and who inſtructed him, or taught him in the path of Judgment, and taught him Knowledg, and ſhewed to him the path of Underſtanding?* He is the only Fountain of *Wiſdom* to others; Angels and Men have what VViſdom they have, by communication from him. All created VViſdom is a ſpark of the Divine Light, like that of the *Stars* borrowed from the *Sun*. He that borrows VViſdon from another, and doth not originally poſſeſs it in his own Nature, cannot properly be called *Wiſe*. As God is the only Being, in regard that all other Beings are derived from him; ſo he is only VViſe, becauſe all other VViſdom flows from him. He is the Spring of *Wiſdom* to all; none the Original of VViſdom to him.

3. Therefore *only Wiſe perfectly*. There is no cloud upon his Underſtanding. He hath a diſtinct and certain Knowledg of all things that can fall under action. As he hath a perfect Knowledg without Ignorance, ſo he hath a Beautiful VViſdom without *Mole* or *Wart*. Men are wiſe, yet have not an Underſtanding ſo vaſt as to graſp all things; nor a Perſpicacity ſo clear, as to penetrate into the depths of all Beings. Angels have more delightful and lively ſparks of VViſdom, yet ſo imperfect, that in regard of the VViſdom of God they are *charged with folly* Job 4. 18. Their VViſdom as well as their Holineſs is vailed in the Preſence of God. It vaniſheth, as the glowing of a Fire doth before the beauty of the Sun; or as a Light of a Candle in the midſt of a Sunſhine contracts it ſelf, and none of its Rays are ſeen, but in the body of the Flame. The Angels are not perfectly VViſe, becauſe they are not perfectly Knowing: The *Goſpel*, the great Diſcovery of Gods VViſdom, was hid from them for Ages.

4. Therefore *only Wiſe univerſally*. VViſdom in one Man is of one ſort, in another of another ſort; one is a wiſe Tradeſman, another a wiſe Stateſman, and another a wiſe Philoſopher: One is wiſe in the buſineſs of the VVorld, another is wiſe in Divine Concerns. One hath not ſo much of plenty of one ſort, but he may have a ſcantineſs in another; one may be wiſe for Invention, and fooliſh in Execution; an Artificer may have ſkill to frame an Engine, and not skill to uſe it: The ground that is fit for *Olives*, may not be fit for Vines; that will bear one ſort of Grain and not another. But God hath an Univerſal VViſdom, becauſe his Natures VV*iſe*; 'tis not limited, but hovers over every thing, ſhines in every Being.

Being. His Executions are as wiſe as his Contrivances: He is Wiſe in his Reſolves, and wiſe in his Ways; Wiſe in all the varieties of his Works of Creation, Government, Redemption. As his Will wills all things, and his Power effects all things; ſo his wiſdom is the univerſal Director of the motions of his will, and the executions of his power: As his Righteouſneſs is the meaſure of the matter of his Actions, ſo his VViſdom is the Rule that directs the manner of his Actions. The abſolute power of God is not an unruly power: His VViſdom orders all things, ſo that nothing is done, but what is fit and convenient, and agreeable to ſo excellent a Being: As he cannot do an unjuſt thing becauſe of his righteouſneſs, ſo he cannot do an unwiſe act, becauſe of his infinite wiſdom. Though God be not neceſſitated to any Operation without himſelf, as to the Creation of any thing, yet ſuppoſing he will act, his wiſdom neceſſitates him to do that which is congruous, as his righteouſneſs neceſſitates him to do that which is juſt: So that though the will of God be the principle, yet his wiſdom is the rule of his Actions. We muſt in our conceiving of the order, ſuppoſe wiſdom antecedent to will: None that acknowledges a God, can have ſuch an impious thought, as to affix temerity and raſhneſs to any of his proceedings.

All his Decrees are drawn out of the infinite Treaſury of VViſdom in himſelf. * He reſolves nothing about any of his Creatures without Reaſon; but the reaſon of his purpoſes is in himſelf, and ſprings from himſelf, and not from the Creatures: There is not one thing that he wills, but *he wills by counſel, and works by counſel, Eph.* 1. 11. Counſel writ down every line, every letter, in his eternal Book; and all the Orders are drawn out from thence by his wiſdom and will: VVhat was illuſtrious in the contrivance, glitters in the execution. His underſtanding and will are infinite; what is therefore the act of his will, is the reſult of his underſtanding, and therefore rational: His underſtanding and will joyn hands; there is no conteſt in God, Will againſt Mind, and Mind againſt Will; they are one in God, one in his reſolves, and one in all his works.

* Polhil. *againſt* Sherlock, *p.* 377.

5. Therefore he is *only wiſe perpetually.* As the wiſdom of man is got by ripeneſs of Age, ſo it is loſt by decay of years; 'tis got by inſtruction, and loſt by dotage. The perfecteſt minds, when in the wane, have been darkned with folly: *Nebuchadnezzar* that was wiſe for a man, became as fooliſh as a Brute. But the *Ancient of days* is an unchangeable Poſſeſſor of Prudence; his wiſdom is a mirrour of brightneſs, without a defacing ſpot. It was *poſſeſſed* by him *in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old, Prov.* 8. 22. and he can never be diſpoſſeſſed of it in the end of his works. 'Tis inſeparable from him: The Being of his Godhead may as ſoon ceaſe, as the Beauty of his Mind; *with him is wiſdom, Job* 12. 13. it is inſeparable from him, therefore as durable as his Eſſence. 'Tis a wiſdom infinite, and therefore without increaſe or decreaſe in it ſelf. The experience of ſo many Ages in the Government of the VVorld, hath added nothing to the immenſity of it; as the ſhining of the Sun ſince the Creation of the World, hath added nothing to the light of that glorious Body. As ignorance never darkens his knowledg, ſo Folly never diſgraces his Prudence, God infatuates men, but neither Men nor Devils can infatuate God; he his unerringly wiſe; his Counſel doth not vary and flatter; 'tis not one day one Counſel, and another day another, but it ſtands like an immovable Rock, or a Mountain of Braſs. *The Counſel of the Lord ſtands for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all Generations, Pſal.* 33. 11.

6. He is *only incomprehenſibly wiſe.* His thoughts are *deep, Pſal.* 92. 5. *His judgments unſearchable, his ways paſt finding out, Rom.* 11. 33. Depths that cannot be fathomed. A ſplendor, more dazling to our dim minds, than the light of the Sun to our weak eyes. The wiſdom of one man may be comprehended by another, and over comprehended; and often men are underſtood by others to be wiſer in their Actions, than they underſtand themſelves to be. And the wiſdom of one Angel may be meaſured by another Angel of the ſame perfection, But as the Eſſence, ſo the wiſdom of God is incomprehenſible to any Creature; God is only comprehended by God: The ſecrets of wiſdom in God are double to the expreſſions of it in his works, *Job* 11. 6, 7. *Canſt thou by ſearching find out God.*

There

There is an unfathomable depth in all his Decrees, in all his Works; we cannot comprehend the reaſon of his VVorks, much leſs that of his Decrees, much leſs that in his Nature; becauſe his VViſdom being infinite as well as his power, can no more act to the higheſt pitch, than his power. As his power is not terminated by what he hath wrought, but he could give further teſtimonies of it; ſo neither is his wiſdom, but he could furniſh us with infinite expreſſions and pieces of his skill. As in regard of his Immenſity, he is not bounded by the limits of place; in regard of his Eternity, not meaſured by the minutes of Time; in regard of his Power, not terminated with this or that number of Objects; ſo in regard of his Wiſdom, he is not confin'd to this or that particular mode of working; ſo that in regard of the reaſon of his Actions, as well as the Glory and Majeſty of his Nature, he dwells in *unapproachable light*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 16. and whatſoever we underſtand of his wiſdom in Creation and Providence, is infinitely leſs than what is in himſelf, and his own unbounded Nature.

Many things in *Scripture* are declar'd chiefly to be the acts of the Divine will, yet we muſt not think that they were acts of meer will without wiſdom, but they are repreſented ſo to us, becauſe we are not capable of underſtanding the infinite Reaſon of its acts: His Soveraignty is more intelligible to us than his VViſdom. VVe can better know the Commands of a Superiour, and the Laws of a Prince, than underſtand the reaſon that gave birth to thoſe Laws. VVe may know the Orders of the Divine will, as they are publiſh'd, but not the ſublime Reaſon of his will. Though Election be an act of God's Soveraignty, and he hath no cauſe from without to determine him; yet his infinite wiſdom ſtood not ſilent while meer Dominion acted. VVhatſoever God doth, he doth wiſely, as well as ſoveraignly; though that wiſdom which lies in the ſecret places of the Divine Being, be as incomprehenſible to us, as the effects of his Soveraignty and Power in the VVorld are viſible: God can give a reaſon of his proceeding, and that drawn from himſelf, though we underſtand it not.

The cauſes of things viſible lye hid from us; Doth any man know how to diſtinguiſh the ſeminal vertue of a ſmall Seed from the Body of it, and in what nook and corner that lies, and what that is that ſpreads it ſelf in ſo fair a Plant, and ſo many Flowers? Can we comprehend the Juſtice of God's proceedings in the proſperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the Godly? Yet as we muſt conclude them the fruits of an unerring righteouſneſs, ſo we muſt conclude all his actions the fruits of an unſpotted wiſdom, though the concatenation of all his counſels is not intelligible to us; for he is as eſſentially and neceſſarily wiſe, as he is eſſentially and neceſſarily good and righteous.

God is not only ſo wiſe that nothing more wiſe can be conceiv'd, but he is more wiſe than can be imagin'd; ſomething greater in all his Perfections than can be comprehended by any Creature. 'Tis a fooliſh thing therefore to queſtion that which we cannot comprehend: we ſhould adore inſtead of diſputing againſt it; and take it for granted, that God would not order any thing, were it not agreeable to the Soveraignty of his wiſdom, as well as that of his will. Though the reaſon of man proceed from the wiſdom of God, yet there is more difference between the reaſon of man, and the wiſdom of God, than between the light of the Sun, and the feeble ſhining of the Glow-worm; yet we preſume to cenſure the ways of God, as if our purblind reaſon had a reach above him.

7. *God is only wiſe infallibly.* The wiſeſt men meet with rubs in the way, that make them fall ſhort of what they aim at; they often deſign, and fail; then begin again, and yet all their counſels end in ſmoak, and none of them arrive at perfection. If the wiſeſt Angels lay a plot, they may be diſappointed; for though they are higher and wiſer than man, yet there is one higher and wiſer than they, that can check their Projects. God always compaſſeth his end, never fails of any thing he deſigns and aims at; all his undertakings are counſel and will; as nothing can reſiſt the efficacy of his will, ſo nothing can countermine the ſkill of his counſel; *There is no wiſdom, nor underſtanding, nor counſel againſt the Lord*, *Prov.* 21. 30. He compaſſeth his ends by thoſe actions of Men and Devils, wherein they think to croſs him; they ſhoot at their own Mark, and hit his. *Lucifer's* plot by Divine wiſdom fullfilled God's purpoſe againſt

Lucifer's

Lucifer's mind. The counſel of Redemption by Chriſt, the end of the Creation of the World, rode into the World upon the back of the Serpents Temptation. God never miſtakes the means, nor can there be any diſappointements, to make him vary his Counſels, and pitch upon other means than what before he had ordain'd. His *word that goeth forth of his mouth ſhall not return to him void, but it ſhall accompliſh that which he pleaſes, and it ſhall proſper in the thing whereto he ſent it.*, *Iſa.* 55. 11. What is ſaid of his word, is true of his Counſel, it ſhall proſper in the thing for which it is appointed; it cannot be defeated by all the Legions of Men and Devils; for *as he thinks, ſo ſhall it come to paſs*; *and as he hath purpoſed, ſo ſhall it ſtand*; *The Lord hath purpoſed, and who ſhall diſannul it?* *Iſa.* 14. 24, 27. The wiſdom of the Creature is a drop from the wiſdom of God, and is like a drop to the Ocean, and a ſhadow to the Sun; and therefore is not able to mate the wiſdom of God, which is infinite and boundleſs. No wiſdom is exempted from miſtakes, but the Divine: *He is wiſe* in all his Reſolves, and never *calls back his words and purpoſes*, *Iſa.* 31. 2.

III. The *third General* is to *prove that God is Wiſe.*

This is aſcrib'd to God in *Scripture*; *Dan.* 2. 20. *Wiſdom and might are his*; Wiſdom to contrive, and Power to effect. * Where ſhould Wiſdom dwell, but in the head of a Deity: and where ſhould Power triumph, but in the arm of Omnipotency? All that God doth, he doth artificially, ſkilfully: whence he is called the *Builder of the Heavens*, *Heb.* 11. 10. Τεχνίτης, an artificial and curious Builder, a Builder by Art. And that word, *Prov.* 8. 30. meant of Chriſt, *Then I was by him as one brought up with him*; ſome render it, *Then was I the curious Artificer*; and the ſame word is tranſlated a *cunning workman*, *Cant.* 7. 5. For this cauſe *Counſel* is aſcrib'd to God *; not properly; for Counſel implies ſomething of Ignorance, or irreſolution, antecedent to the conſultation, and a poſture of will afterwards, which was not before. Counſel is properly a laborious deliberation, and a reaſoning of things: An invention of means for the attainment of the end, after a diſcuſſing and reaſoning of all the doubts which ariſe *pro re natâ*, about the matter in counſel: But God hath no need to deliberate in himſelf, what are the beſt means to accompliſh his ends, He is never ignorant, or undetermin'd, what courſe he ſhould take, as men are before they conſult. But it is an expreſſion in condeſcenſion to our Capacity, to ſignifie that God doth nothing but with reaſon and underſtanding, with the higheſt prudence, and for the moſt glorious ends, as men do after conſultation, and the weighing of every foreſeen circumſtance.

* Culverwell. *light of Nature*, *p.* 30.

* Iſa. 46. 10. Jer. 32. 19. *Great in counſel.* Job 12. 13. *He hath counſel and underſtanding.*

Though he acts all things Soveraignly by his will, yet he acts all things wiſely by his underſtanding; and there is not a decree of his will, but he can render a ſatisfactory reaſon for in the face of Men and Angels. As he is the Cauſe of all things, ſo he hath the higheſt wiſdom for the ordering of all things. If wiſdom among men be the knowledg of Divine and Human things, God muſt be infinitely wiſe, ſince knowledg is moſt radiant in him; he knows what angels and men do, and infinitely more; what is known by them obſcurely, is known by him clearly: What is known by man after it is done, was known by God before it was wrought. By his wiſdom as much as by any thing, he infinitely differs from all his Creatures; as by wiſdom Man differs from a Brute. We cannot frame a notion of God, without conceiving him infinitely wiſe. We ſhould render him very inconſiderable, to imagine him furniſht with an infinite knowledg, and not have an infinite wiſdom to make uſe of that knowledg; or to fancy him with a mighty power, deſtitute of prudence. Knowledg without prudence is an eye without motion; and power without diſcretion, is an arm without a head; a hand to act, without underſtanding to contrive and model; a ſtrength to act, without reaſon to know how to act: It would be a miſerable notion of a God, to fancy him with a brutiſh and unguided power. The *Heathens* therefore had, and could not but have this natural notion of God. *Plato* therefore calls him *Mens* *, and *Cleanthes* uſed to call God *Reaſon*, and *Socrates* thought the titleof Λογὸς too magnificent to be attributed to any thing elſe but God alone.

* Eugub. *per. Philoſoph. lib.* 1. *cap.* 5.

Arguments to prove that God is wiſe.

Reaſ. 1. *God could not be infinitely perfect without wiſdom.* A rational Nature is better than an irrational Nature. A man is not a perfect man without reaſon; how

how can God without it, be an infinitely perfect God. Wiſdom is the moſt eminent of all Vertues; all the other perfections of God without this, would be as a body without an eye, a ſoul without underſtanding. A Chriſtian's Graces want their luſter, when they are deſtitute of the guidance of wiſdom: Mercy is a feebleneſs, and Juſtice a cruelty, Patience a timerouſneſs, and Courage a madneſs, without the conduct of wiſdom; ſo the Patience of God would be cowardiſe, his Power an oppreſſion, his Juſtice a tyranny, without wiſdom as the Spring, and Holineſs as the Rule. No attribute of God could ſhine with a due luſtre and brightneſs without it. Power is a great perfection, but wiſdom a greater *. Wiſdom may be without much power, as in *Bees* and *Ants*; but power is a tyrannical thing without wiſdom and righteouſneſs. The *Pilot* is More valuable becauſe of his skill, than the Gally Slave becauſe of his ſtrength; and the conduct of a *General* more eſtimable than the might of a private Souldier. Generals are choſen more by their skill to guide, than their ſtrength to act; What a Clod is a man without Prudence; what a Nothing would God be without it? This is the Salt that gives reliſh to all other perfections in a Creature: This is the Jewel in the Ring of all the Excellencies of the Divine Nature, and Holineſs is the ſplendor of that Jewel.

*Licet magnum ſit poſſe, majus tamen eſt ſapere.

Now God being the *firſt Being*, poſſeſſes whatſoever is moſt noble in any Being. If therefore Wiſdom, which is the moſt noble perfection in any Creature, were wanting to God, he would be deficient in that which is the higheſt Excellency. God being the *living God*, as he is frequently termed in *Scripture*, he hath therefore the moſt perfect manner of living, and that muſt be a pure and intellectual life: Being eſſentially living, he is eſſentially in the higheſt degree of living. As he hath an infinite life above all Creatures; ſo he hath an infinite intellectual life, and therefore an infinite Wiſdom; whence ſome have called God not *ſapientem*, but *ſuper-ſapientem* *, not only wiſe, but above all wiſdom.

*Suarez. *Vol.* 1. *lib.* 1. *cap.* 3. *p.* 10.

Reaſ. 2. *Without infinite Wiſdom he could not govern the World.* Without wiſdom in forming the Matter, which was made by Divine power, the World could have been no other than a *Chaos*; and without wiſdom in Government, it could have been no other than a heap of Confuſion; without wiſdom the World could not have been created in the poſture it is. Creation ſuppoſeth a determination of the will putting power upon acting; the determination of the will ſuppoſeth the counſel of the underſtanding, determining the will: No work, but ſuppoſeth underſtanding as well as will in a rational Agent. As without skill things could not be created, ſo without it things cannot be governed. *Reaſon* is a neceſſary perfection to him that preſides over all things: Without knowledg there could not be in God a foundation for Government, and without wiſdom there could not be an exerciſe of Government; and without the moſt excellent wiſdom, he could not be the moſt excellent Governour. He could not be an univerſal Governour, without a univerſal wiſdom, nor the ſole Governour without an unimitable wiſdom; nor an independant Governour without an original and independent wiſdom; nor a perpetual Governour without an incorruptible wiſdom. He would not be the Lord of the World in all points, without skill to order the affairs of it. Power and wiſdom are foundations of all Authority and Government: Wiſdom to know how to rule, and command; Power to make thoſe Commands obeyed: No regular Order could iſſue out without the firſt, nor could any order be enforced without the ſecond. A feeble wiſdom, and a brutiſh power, ſeldom or never produce any good effect, Magiſtracy without wiſdom, would be a frantick power, a raſh conduct; like a ſtrong arm when the eye is out, it ſtrikes it knows not what, and leads it knows not whither. Wiſdom without power, would be like a great body without feet *, like the knowledg of a *Pilot* that hath loſt his arm, who though he knows the Rule of Navigation, and what Courſe to follow in his Voyage, yet cannot manage the Helm: But when thoſe two, wiſdom and power are link't together, there ariſeth from both a fitneſs for Government: There is wiſdom to propoſe an end, and both wiſdom and power to employ means that conduct to that end. And therefore when God demonſtrates to *Job* his right of Government, and the unreaſonableneſs of *Job*'s quarrelling with his proceedings, he chiefly urgeth upon him the conſideration of thoſe *two excellencies* of his Nature, *power* and *wiſdom*, which

*Amirant. *moral.*

Which are expreſt in his works *. A Prince without Wiſdom, is but a Title Without a Capacity to perform the Office; no man without it is fit for government: Nor could God without Wiſdom, exerciſe a juſt Dominion in the World. He hath therefore the higheſt Wiſdom, ſince he is the univerſal Governour. That Wiſdom which is able to govern a Family, may not be able to govern a City; and that Wiſdom which governs a City, may not be able to govern a Nation or Kingdom, much leſs a World. The bounds of God's government being greater than any, his Wiſdom for government muſt needs ſurmount the Wiſdom of all. * And though the Creatures be not in number actually infinite, yet they cannot be well governed, but by one endowed with infinite Diſcretion. Providential government can be no more without infinite Wiſdom, than infinite VViſdom can be without Providence.

* Chap. 38, 39, 40, 41.

* Amyrald. *deſert. Theol. p* 111.

Reaſ. 3. *The Creatures working for an end, without their own knowledg, demonſtrates the Wiſdom of God that guides them.* All things in the VVorld work for ſome end; the ends are unknown to them, though many of their ends are viſible to us. As there was ſome prime Cauſe, which by his power inſpir'd them with their ſeveral inſtincts, ſo there muſt be ſome ſupream VViſdom, which moves and guides them to their end. As their Being manifeſts his power that endowed them, ſo the acting according to the rules of their Nature, which they themſelves underſtand not, manifeſts his wiſdom in directing them. (Every thing that acts for an end, muſt know that end, or be directed by another to attain that end.) The Arrow doth not know who ſhoots it, or to what end it is ſhot, or what Mark is aimed at; but the Archer that puts it in, and darts it out of the Bow, knows. A Watch hath a regular motion, but neither the Spring nor the Wheels that move, know the end of their motion; no man will judge a wiſdom to be in the VVatch, but in the Artificer that diſpos'd the VVheels and Spring, by a joynt combination to produce ſuch a motion for ſuch an end. Doth either the Sun that enlivens the Earth, or the Earth that travels with the Plant, know what plant it produceth in ſuch a Soil, what temper it ſhould be of, what fruit it ſhould bear, and of what colour? VVhat Plant knows its own medicinal qualities, its own beautiful flowers, and for what uſe they are ordain'd? When it ſtrikes up its head from the Earth, doth it know what proportion of them there will be? Yet it produceth all theſe things in a ſtate of ignorance. The Sun warms the Earth, concocts the humours, excites the vertue of it, and cheriſhes the Seeds, which are caſt into her lap, yet all unknown to the Sun or the Earth. Since therefore that Nature, that is the immediate cauſe of thoſe things, doth not underſtand its own quality, nor operation, nor the end of its action, that which thus directs them muſt be conceived to have an infinite wiſdom. (VVhen things act by a Rule they know not, and move for an end they underſtand not, and yet work harmoniouſly together for one end, that all of them, we are ſure, are ignorant of, it mounts up our minds to acknowledg the VViſdom of that ſupream Cauſe, that hath rang'd all theſe inferior Cauſes in their order, and imprinted upon them the Laws of their motions, according to the *Ideas* in his own Mind, who orders the Rule by which they act, and the end for which they act, and directs every motion according to their ſeveral Natures, and therefore is poſſeſſed with infinite wiſdom in his own Nature.)

Reaſ. 4. *God is the fountain of all Wiſdom in the Creatures and therefore is infinitely wiſe himſelf.* As he hath a fulneſs of being in himſelf, becauſe the ſtreams of being are derived to other things from him; So he hath a fulneſs of VViſdom, becauſe he is the ſpring of wiſdom to Angels and men. That being muſt be infinitely wiſe from whence all other wiſdom derives its original: For nothing can be in the effect, which is not eminently in the cauſe; the cauſe is alway more perfect than the effect, If therefore the creatures are wiſe, the Creator muſt be much more wiſe. If the Creator were deſtitute of wiſdom, the creature would be much more perfect than the Creator. If you conſider the wiſdom of the *Spider* in her web, which is both her houſe and net; the artifice of the *Bee* in her Comb, which is both her chamber and granary; the proviſion of the Piſmire in her repoſitories for corn; the wiſdom of the Creator is illuſtrated by them; whatſoever excellency you ſee in any

creature, is an image of ſome excellency in God. The skill of the Artificer is viſible in the fruits of his Art; a workman tranſcribes his ſpirit in the work of his hands. But the wiſdom of rational creatures, as men, doth more illuſtrate it: All arts among men are the rayes of divine VViſdom ſhining upon them, and by a common gift of the Spirit enlightning their minds to curious inventions, as *Prov.* 8. 12. *I wiſdom find out the knowledg of witty inventions*; that is, I give a faculty to men to find them out; without my wiſdom, all things would be buried in darkneſs and ignorance: VVhatſoever wiſdom there is in the world, it is but a ſhadow of the wiſdom of God, a ſmall Rivulet derived from him, a ſpark leaping out from Uncreated VViſdom. *Iſa.* 54. 16. *He created the Smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and makes the Inſtruments*: The skill to uſe thoſe weapons in VVar-like Enterpriſes is from him, *I have created the waſter to deſtroy*; 'Tis not meant of creating their perſons, but communicating to them their Art; he ſpeaks it there to expell fear from the Church of all war-like preparations againſt them: He had given Men the skill to form and uſe VVeapons, and could as well ſtrip them of it, and defeat their purpoſes: The Art of *husbandry* is a fruit of divine teaching, *Iſa.* 28. 24, 25. If thoſe lower kinds of knowledg, that are common to all Nations, and eaſily learn'd by all, are diſcoveries of Divine wiſdom, much more the nobler Sciences, intellectual and Political VViſdom, *Dan.* 2. 21. *He gives Wiſdom to the Wiſe, and knowledg to them that know underſtanding*; ſpeaking of the more abſtruſe parts of knowledg; *The inſpiration of the Almighty gives Underſtanding*, *Job.* 32. 8. Hence the wiſdom which *Solomon* expreſt in the *Harlots caſe*, 1 *Kings* 3. 28. was in the Judgment of all *Iſrael*, the *Wiſdom of God*; that is, a fruit of Divine VViſdom, a beam communicated to him from God. Every mans Soul is endowed more or leſs with thoſe noble qualities: The Soul of every man exceeds that of a Brute; If the ſtreams be ſo excellent, the Fountain muſt be fuller and clearer. The firſt Spirit muſt infinitely more poſſeſs, what other Spirits derive from him by Creation; where the VViſdom of all the Angels in Heaven and men on Earth collected in one Spirit, it muſt be infinitely leſs than what is in the Spring; for no Creature can be equal to the Creator. As the higheſt Creature already made, or that we can conceive may be made by Infinite Power, would be infinitely below God in the Notion of a Creature, ſo it would be infinitely below God in the Notion of VViſe.

IV. The fourth *Thing* is, *Wherein the Wiſdom of God appears.*

It appears (1.) In *Creation*, (2.) In *Government*, (3.) In *Redemption.*

1. In *Creation.* As in a Muſical Inſtrument, there is firſt the skill of the workman in the frame; then the skill of the Muſician in ſtringing it proper for ſuch Muſical Notes as he will expreſs upon it; and after that the tempering of the Strings by various ſtops to a delightful Harmony: So is the Wiſdom of God ſeen in framing the World, then in tuning it, and afterwards in the motion of the ſeveral Creatures. The Fabrick of the world is called the Wiſdom of God; 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. *After that in the Wiſdom of God the World by Wiſdom knew not God*; *i. e.* by the Creation the world knew not God; the framing Cauſe is there put for the Effect and the work framed: Becauſe the divine Wiſdom ſtept forth in the Creatures to a publick appearance, as if it had preſented it ſelf in a viſible ſhape to Man, giving Inſtructions in and by the Creatures, to know and adore him. What we tranſlate 1 *Gen.* 1. In *the beginning God Created the Heaven and the earth*, the *Targum* expreſſeth, *In the Wiſdom God created the Heaven and the Earth.* Both bear a ſtamp of this perfection on them: And when the *Apoſtle* tells the *Romans*, *Rom.* 1. 20. *the inviſible things of God were clearly underſtood by the things that are made:* the word he uſes is, ποιήμασι, not ἔργοις this ſignifies a work of labour, but ποίημα a work of skill, or a *Poem.* The whole Creation is a *Poem*, every Species a *Stanza*, and every individual Creature a *Verſe* in it. The Creation preſents us with a proſpect of the Wiſdom of God, as a *Poem* doth the Reader with the wit and fancy of the Compoſer: *By wiſdom he created the Earth*, *Pro.* 3. 19. *and ſtretched out the Heavens by diſcretion*, *Jer.* 10. 12. There is not any thing ſo mean, ſo ſmall, but Glitters with a beam of Divine skill; and the conſideration of them would juſtly make every man ſubſcribe to that of the *Pſalmiſt*, *O Lord*, *how manifold are thy works! in Wiſdom haſt thou made them all.* *Pſal.* 104. 24. All, the leaſt as well

* *Omne opus naturæ eſt opus intelligentiæ.*

well as the greateſt, and the meaneſt as well as the nobleſt; even thoſe creatures which ſeem ugly and deformed to us, as Toads, *&c.* becauſe they fall ſhort of theſe perfections which are the dowry of other Animals: In theſe there is a foot-ſtep of Divine Wiſdom, ſince they were not produc'd by him at random, but determin'd to ſome particular end, and deſign'd to ſome uſefulneſs, as parts of the World in their ſeveral natures and ſtations. God could never have had a ſatisfaction in the review of his works, and pronounc'd them *good* or comly, as he did, *Gen.* 1. 31. had they not been agreeable to that eternal original Copy in his own mind: 'Tis ſaid he was *refreſht*, *viz.* with that review, *Exod.* 31. 17. which could not have been, if his peircing eye had found any defect in any thing, which had ſprung out of his hand, or an unſutableneſs to that end for which he created them. He ſeems to do as a man that hath made a curious and polite work, with exact care to peer about every part and line, if he could perceive any imperfection in it, to rectifie the miſtake: But no defect was found by the infinitely wiſe God upon his ſecond examination.

This Wiſdom of the Creation appears,

(1.) In *the variety*, (2.) In *the beauty*, (3.) *The fitneſs of every Creature for its uſe*, (4.) *The ſubordination of one Creature to another, and the joynt concurrence of all to one common end.*

1. In *the Variety*. *Pſal.* 104. 24. *O Lord how manifold are thy works!* How great a variety is there of Animals and Plants, with a great variety of Forms, Shapes, Figurations, colours various ſmells, vertues and qualites! and this variety is produced from one and the ſame Matter, as Beaſts and Plants from the Earth; *Gen.* 1. 11, 24. *Let the earth bring forth living Creatures; and the earth brought forth graſs and the herb yeilding ſeed after his kind*: Such diverſity of Fowl and Fiſh from the water; *Gen.* 1. 20. *Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving Creature that hath life, and Fowl that may fly*; Such a beautiful and active variety from ſo dull a matter as the Earth; ſo ſolid a variety from ſo fluid a matter as the Water; ſo noble a piece as the Body of Man, with ſuch variety of members, fit to entertain a more excellent Soul as a gueſt, from ſo mean a matter as the *duſt of the ground*, *Gen.* 2. 7. This extraction of ſuch variety of forms out of one ſingle and dull matter, is the Chymiſtry of Divine Wiſdom: 'Tis a greater skill to frame noble Bodies of vile Matter, as varieties of precious veſſels of Clay and Earth, than of a nobler Matter, as Gold and Silver.

Again, all thoſe varieties propagate *their kind* in every particular and quality of their nature, and uniformly bring forth exact copies acccording to the firſt patern God made of the *kind*, *Gen.* 1. 11, 12, 24. Conſider alſo how the ſame piece of ground is garniſht with Plants and Flowers of ſeveral vertues, fruits, colours, ſcents, without our being able to perceive any variety in the earth that breeds them, and not ſo great a difference in the Roots that bears them. Add to this, the diverſities of Birds of different colours, ſhapes, Notes conſiſting of various parts, Wings like Oars to cut the Air, and Tails as the Rudder of a Ship to guide their motion.

How various alſo are the endowments of the Creatures? ſome have vegetation, and the power of growth; others have the addition of Senſe, and others the excellency of Reaſon; ſomething wherein all agree, and ſomething wherein all differ; variety in unity, and unity in variety: The wiſdom of the Workman had not been ſo conſpicuous, had there been only one degree of goodneſs: The greateſt skill is ſeen in the greateſt variety.

The comlineſs of the Body is viſible in the variety of members, and their uſefulneſs to one another; What an inform thing had man been, had he been all ear, or all eye? If God had made all the Stars to be Suns, it would have been a demonſtration of his Power, but perhaps leſs of his Wiſdom; No Creatures, with the Natures they now have, could have continued in being under ſo much heat: There was no leſs wiſdom went to the frame of the leaſt, than to the greateſt Creature. It ſpeaks more art in a Limner to paint a *Landskip* exactly, than to draw the Sun, though the Sun be a more glorious Body.

I might inſtance alſo in the different Characters and Features imprinted upon the Countenances of men and women, the differences of Voices and Statures,

whereby they are diſtinguiſht from one another: Theſe are the Foundations of Order and of Human Society and adminiſtration of Juſtice; what confuſion would have been if a grown-up Son could not be known from his Father, the Magiſtrate from the Subject, the Creditor from the Debtor, the Innocent from the Criminal? The Laws God hath given to Mankind, could not have been put in execution: This variety ſpeaks the Wiſdom of God.

2. The Wiſdom of the Creation appears *in the Beauty, and Order, and Scituation of the ſeveral Creatures.* Eccleſ. 3. 11. *He hath made every thing beautiful in his time.* As their Being was a fruit of Divine Power, ſo their Order is a fruit of Divine Wiſdom. All Creatures are as members in the great body of the World, proportion'd to one another, and contributing to the beauty of the whole; * ſo that if the particular forms of every thing, the union of all for the compoſition of the World, and the Laws which are eſtabliſhed in the Order of Nature for its conſervation, be conſidered, it would raviſh us with an admiration of God: All the Creatures are as ſo many Pictures or Statues, exactly fram'd by line; *Pſal.* 19. 4. *Their Line is gone through all the Earth*; Their *Line* a meaſuring, Line, or a Carpenters Rule, whereby he proportions ſeveral pieces to be exactly linkt and coupled together. *Their Line*, that is their harmonious proportion, and the inſtruction from it is gone forth through all the Earth. Upon the account of this harmony, ſome of the ancient *Heathens* framed the Images of their Gods with muſical Inſtruments in their hands, ſignifying that God wrought all things in a due proportion *.

* Amyrant. *Moral. Vol.* 1. *p.* 257.

* Montag. *againſt Selden, p.* 11.

The Heavens ſpeak this Wiſdom in their Order.

The Revolutions of the Sun and Moon determine the Seaſons of the Year, and make Day and Night in an orderly ſucceſſion. The Stars beautifie the Heavens, and influence the Earth, and keep their *Courſes*, *Judges* 5. 20. They keep their ſtations without interfereing with one another; and tho they have roll'd about for ſo many Ages, they obſerve their diſtinct Laws, and in the variety of their Motions have not diſturb'd one anothers Functions.

Plutarch *calls God* ἐμμονικὸς καὶ μυσικὸς *he ſaith, nothing was made without muſick.*

* Charleton *Light of Nature p.* 57.

* The Sun is ſet as the heart in the midſt of this great body, to afford warmth to all: Had it been ſet lower, it had long ſince turned the Earth into flame and aſhes: Had it been placed higher, the Earth would have wanted the nouriſhment and refreſhment neceſſary for it. Too much nearneſs had ruin'd the Earth by parching heat, and too great a diſtance had deſtroyed the Earth by ſtarving it with cold.

The Sun hath alſo its appointed Motion; had it been fixed without motion, half of the Earth had been unprofitable; there had been perpetual darkneſs in a moiety of it; nothing had been produc'd for nouriſhment, and ſo it had been rendred uninhabitable: But now by this motion, it viſites all the *Climates* of the World, *runs its Circuit*, ſo that *nothing is hid from the heat thereof*, Pſal. 19. 6. It imparts its vertue to every Corner of the world in its daily and yearly viſits. Had it been fixed, the fruits of the Earth under it had been parch'd and deſtroy'd before their maturity; but all thoſe inconveniencies are provided againſt by the perpetual motion of the Sun.

* Daille. *mel. part.* 1. *p.* 483.

This motion is orderly*; It makes its daily Courſe from Eaſt to Weſt, its yearly motion from North to South: It goes to the North, till it comes to the Point God hath ſet it, ond then turns back to the South, and gains ſome point every day: It never riſeth nor ſets in the ſame place one day, where it did the day before. The World is never without its light; ſome ſee it Riſing the ſame moment we ſee its ſetting.

* Amyraut. *Predeſtin. p.* 9.

The Earth alſo ſpeaks the Divine Wiſdom; 'tis the Pavement of the VVorld, as the Heaven is the Ceiling of Fretwork. * Tis placed lowermoſt, as being the heavieſt body, and fit to receive the weightieſt Matter, and provided as an Habitation proper for thoſe Creatures, which derive the matter of their bodies from it, and partake of its Earthy nature; and garniſht with other Creatures for the profit and pleaſure of man.

The Sea alſo ſpeaks the ſame Divine VViſdom. He *ſtrengthened the Fountains of the Deep, and gave the Sea a decree, that it ſhould not paſs his Command*, *Prov.* 8. 28, 29. He hath given it certain *Bounds*, that it ſhould not *overflow* the

the Earth, *Job* 28. 11. It contains it ſelf in the ſituation wherein God hath placed it, and doth not tranſgreſs its bounds. What if ſome part of a Country, a little Spot, hath been overflowed by it, and groaned under its waves? Yet for the main, it retains the ſame Channels wherein it was at firſt lodged.

All Creatures are cloathed with an outward Beauty, and endowed with an inward Harmony; there is an agreement in all parts of this great Body; every one is beautiful and orderly; but the beauty of the World reſults from all of them diſpos'd and linkt together.

3. This Wiſdom is ſeen *in the fitneſs of every thing for its end, and the uſefulneſs of it.* Divine Wiſdom is more illuſtrious in the fitneſs and uſefulneſs of this great variety, than in the Compoſure of their diſtinct parts: As the Artificers Skill is more eminent in fitting the Wheels, and ſetting them in order for their due motion, than in the external Fabrick of the Materials which compoſe the Clock.

After the moſt diligent inſpection, there can be found nothing in the Creation unprofitable; nothing but is capable of ſome Service, either for the ſupport of our Bodies, recreation of our Senſes, or Moral Inſtruction of our Minds. Not the leaſt Creature but is formed and ſhap'd and furniſh'd with Members and Parts, in a due proportion for its end and ſervice in the World; nothing is ſuperfluous, nothing defective.

The *Earth* is fitted in its parts *; the Valleys are appointed for Granaries, the Mountains to ſhadow them from the ſcorching heat of the Sun; the Rivers like veins, carry refreſhment to every Member of this Body; Plants and Trees thrive on the face of the Earth, and Metals are ingendred in the Bowels of it, for Materials for Building and other uſes for the ſervice of Man. *There he cauſes the Graſs to grow for the Cattle, and Herb for the Service of Man, that he may bring forth food out of the Earth,* Pſal. 104. 14.

* Amyrant, *ſur diverſes Text. p.* 127.

The *Sea* is fitted for uſe; 'tis a Fiſh-pond for the nouriſhment of Man; a Boundary for the dividing of Lands and ſeveral Dominions; It joyns together Nations far diſtant: A great Veſſel for Commerce, *Pſal.* 104. 26. *There go the Ships.* It affords Vapours to the Clouds, wherewith to water the Earth, which the Sun draws up, ſeparating the finer from the ſalter parts, that the Earth may be fruitful, without being burthened with barrenneſs by the ſalt. The Sea hath alſo its Salt, its ebbs and flouds; the one as Brine, the other as Motion, to preſerve it from Putrification, that it may not be Contagious to the reſt of the World.

Showers are appointed to refreſh the bodies of living Creatures, to open the Womb of the Earth, and *water the Ground to make it fruitful,* Pſal. 104. 3. The Clouds therefore are called the *Chariots of God*; he rides in them in the manifeſtation of his goodneſs and Wiſdom.

* *Winds* are fitted to purifie the Air, to preſerve it from Putrefaction; to carry the Clouds to ſeveral parts, to refreſh the parched Earth, and aſſiſt her Fruits: And alſo to ſerve for the Commerce of one Nation with another by Navigation. God in his Wiſdom and goodneſs *walks upon the wings of the Wind,* Pſal. 104. 3.

* Leſſius.

* *Rivers* are appointed to bathe the Ground, and render it freſh and lively; they fortifie Cities, are the limits of Countreys, ſerve for Commerce, they are the Watring-pots of the Earth, and the Veſſels for Drink for the living Creatures that dwell upon the Earth, God cut thoſe Channels for the *wild Aſſes*, the *Beaſts of the Deſart*, which are his Creatures as well as the reſt, Pſal. 104. 10, 12, 13.

* Daille *melan. part.* 2. *p.* 472, 473.

Trees are appointed for the Habitation of Birds, ſhadows for the Earth, Nouriſhment for the Creatures, Materials for building, and Fuel for the relief of man againſt Cold.

The *Seaſons* of the Year have their uſe; the Winter makes the Juice retire into the Earth, fortifies Plants, and fixes their Roots: It moyſtens the Earth that was dried before by the heat of the Summer, and cleanſeth and prepares it for a new fruitfulneſs. The ſpring calls out the Sap in new Leaves and Fruit: The Summer conſumes the ſuperfluous moiſture, and produceth Nouriſhment for the Inhabitants of the World.

The

* Daille *melang. part.* 1. *p.* 477, &c,

* The *Day* and *Night* have alſo their uſefulneſs: The Day gives Life to Labour, and is a guide to Motion and Action. *Pſal.* 104. 23. *The Sun ariſeth, man goeth forth to his labour until the Evening.* It warms the Air, and quickens Nature; without day the World would be a *Chaos*, an unſeen Beauty. The Night indeed caſts a Vail upon the bravery of the Earth, but it draws the Curtains from that of Heaven; though it darkens below, it makes us ſee the Beauty of the World above, and diſcovers to us a glorious part of the Creation of God, the Tapiſtry of Heaven, and the Motion of the Stars, hid from us by the eminent light of the Day. It procures a Truce from labour, and refreſheth the Bodies of Creatures, by recruiting the Spirits which are ſcattered by watching. It prevents the ruin of Life, by a reparation of what was waſted in the Day. It takes from us the ſight of Flowers and Plants, but it waſheth their Face with Dews for a new Appearance next Morning. The length of the Day and Night, is not without a Mark of Wiſdom; were they of a greater length, as the length of a Week or Month, the one would too much dry, and the other too much moiſten; and for want of Action, the members would be ſtupified. The perpetual *Succeſſion* of Day and Night, is an Evidence of the Divine Wiſdom, in tempering the travel and reſt of Creatures. Hence the *Pſalmiſt* tells us, *Pſal.* 74. 16, 17, *The day is thine, and the night is thine; thou haſt prepared the light of the Sun, and made Summer and Winter*; *i. e.* they are of God's framing, not without a wiſe counſel and end.

Hence let us aſcend to the *Bodies* of living Creatures, and we ſhall find every member fitted for uſe. What a curioſity is there in every Member? Every one fitted to a particular uſe in their ſituation, form, temper, and mutual agreement for the good of the whole: The Eye to direct, the ear to receive directions from others, the hands to act, the feet to move. Every Creature hath members fitted for that Element wherein it reſides: And in the Body, ſome parts are appointed to change the Food into blood, others to refine it, and others to diſtribute and convey it to ſeveral parts for the maintenance of the whole: The Heart to mint vital ſpirits for preſerving Life, and the Brain to coyn Animal Spirits for Life and motion; the Lungs to ſerve for the cooling the heart, which elſe would be parcht as the ground in Summer. The Motion of the Members of the Body by one act of the Will, and alſo without the Will by a natural Inſtinct, is an admirable Evidence of Divine Skill in the ſtructure of the Body; ſo that well might the *Pſalmiſt* cry out, *Pſal.* 139. 14. *I am fearfully and wonderfully made.*

But how much more of this Divine Perfection is ſeen in the *Soul?* A Nature furniſht with a Faculty of Underſtanding to judg of things, to gather in things that are diſtant, and to reaſon and draw Concluſions from one thing to another, with a Memory to treaſure up things that are paſt, with a Will to apply it ſelf ſo readily to what the mind judges fit and comely, and fly ſo ſpeedily from what it judges ill and hurtful. The whole World is a Stage, every Creature in it hath a part to act, and a Nature ſuted to that part and end 'tis deſign'd for; and all concur in a joint Language to publiſh the Glory of Divine VViſdom, they have a Voice to proclaim the *Glory of God*, *Pſal.* 19. 1, 3. And it is not the leaſt part of God's Skill, in framing the Creatures ſo, that upon Man's Obedience, they are the Channels of his Goodneſs; and upon Man's Diſobedience, they can in their Natures be the Miniſters of his Juſtice for the puniſhing of offending Creatures.

4. Fourthly, The VViſdom is apparent *in the linking all theſe uſeful parts together, ſo that one is ſubordinate to the other for a common end.* All parts are exactly ſuted to one another, and every part to the whole, though they are of different Natures, as Lines diſtant in themſelves, yet they meet in one common Center, the good and the preſervation of the Univerſe; they are all joynted together, as the word tranſlated *framed* * ſignifies; knit by fit Bands and Ligaments to contribute mutual Beauty, Strength and Aſſiſtance to one another; like ſo many links of a Chain coupled together, that though there be a diſtance in place, there is a unity in regard of connexion and end, there is a conſent in the whole. *Hoſea* 2. 21, 22. *The Heavens hear the Earth, and the Earth hears the Corn, and the Wine, and*

* Heb. 11. 3.

the

the Oyl. The Heavens communicate their qualities to the *Earth*, and the Eearth conveys them to the Eruits ſhe bears: * The Air diſtributes Light, Wind and Rain to the Earth; the Earth and the Sea render to the Air exhalations and Vapours, and all together charitably give to the Plants and Animals that which is neceſſary for their nouriſhment and refreſhment. The Influences of the Heavens animate the Earth, and the Earth affords matter in part for the Influences it receives from the Regions above. Living Creatures are maintain'd by Nouriſhment; Nouriſhment is conveyed to them by the Fruits of the Earth; the Fruits of the Earth are produced by means of Rain and Heat; matter for Rain and Dew is raiſed by the heat of the Sun; and the *Sun* by its motion diſtributes heat, and quickning vertue to all parts of the Earth. So colours are made for the pleaſure of the Eye, Sounds for the delight of the Ear: Light is formed, whereby the Eye may ſee the one, and Air to convey the Species of Colours to the Eye, and Sound to the Ear; all things are like the Wheels of a Watch compacted: And though many of the Creatures be endowed with contrary qualities, yet they are joyned in a Marriage-knot for the Publick Security, and Subſerviency to the Preſervation and Order of the Univerſe: As the variety of Strings upon an Inſtrument, ſending forth various and diſtinct ſounds, are temper'd together, for the framing excellent and delightful Airs. In this univerſal conſpiring of the Creatures together to one end, is the wiſdom of the Creator apparent; in tuning ſo many Contraries as the Elements are, and preſerving them in their Order, which if once broken, the whole Frame of Nature would crack, and fall in pieces; all are ſo interwoven and inlaid together, by the Divine Workmanſhip, as to make up one intire Beauty in the whole Fabrick: As every part in the Body of Man hath a diſtinct Comelineſs, yet there is beſides, the Beauty of the whole, that reſults from the union of divers parts exactly faſhion'd to one another, and linkt together.

* Daille. 15. *Serm. p.* 170.

By the way,

Uſe. *How much may we ſee of the perfection of God in every thing that preſents it ſelf to our eyes?* And How ſhould we be convinc'd of our unworthy neglect of aſcending to him with reverent and admiring thoughts, upon the proſpect of the Creatures? What dull Scholars are we, when every Creature is our Teacher, every part of the Creature a lively Inſtruction! Thoſe things that we tread under our feet, if uſed by us according to the full deſign of their Creation, would afford rich matter, not only for our heads, but our hearts. As *Grace* doth not deſtroy Nature, but elevate it, ſo neither ſhould the freſher and fuller diſcoveries of Divine VViſdom in Redemption, deface our thoughts of his VViſdom in Creation. Though the greater Light of the Sun, obſcures the leſſer ſparkling of the Stars, yet it gives way in the Night to the diſcovery of them, that God may be ſeen, known, and conſidered in all his VVorks of VVonder, and Miracles of Nature. No part of *Scripture* is more ſpiritual than the *Pſalms*; none filled with clearer Diſcoveries of *Chriſt* in the Old Teſtament; yet how often do the Penmen conſider the Creation of God, and find their *Meditations on him to be ſweet*, as conſider'd in his VVorks? *Pſal.* 104. 34. *My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet.* VVhen? VVhy, after a ſhort Hiſtory of the Goodneſs and VViſdom of God in the Frame of the VVorld, and the Species of the Creatures.

2. The VViſdom of God appears *in his Government of his Creatures.* The regular motion of the Creatures ſpeaks for this Perfection, as well as the exact Compoſition of them. If the exquiſiteneſs of the Frame conducts us to the skill of the Contriver; the exactneſs of their Order, according to his VVill and Law, ſpeaks no leſs the wiſdom of the Governour. It cannot be thought that a raſh and irrational Power preſides over a world ſo well diſpoſed: The diſpoſition of things hath no leſs characters of skill, than the Creation of them. No man can hear an excellent Leſſon upon a *Lute*, but muſt preſently reflect upon the Art of the Perſon that touches it. The Prudence of man appears in wraping up the Concerns of a Kingdom in his mind, for the well-ordering of it; and ſhall not the VViſdom of God ſhine forth, as he is the Director of the VVorld?

I ſhall omit his Government of *Inanimate* Creatures, and confine the Diſcourſe to his Government of *Man*, as *Rational*, as *Sinful*, as *Reſtor'd*.

1. *In his Government of man as a Rational Creature.*

1. *In the Law he gives to man.* Wiſdom framed it, though Will enacted it. The will of God is the Rule of Righteouſneſs to us, but the Wiſdom of God is the Foundation of that Rule of Righteouſneſs which he preſcribes us. * The Compoſure of a *Muſician* is the Rule of ſinging to his Scholars; yet the Conſent and Harmony in that Compoſure, derives not it ſelf from his will, but from his underſtanding; he would not be a Muſician, if his Compoſures were contrary to the Rules of true Harmony: So the Laws of men are compos'd by VViſdom though they are enforc'd by will and Authority.

* Caſtellio *Dialog. l.* 4. *p.* 46.

The *Moral* Law, which was the Law of Nature, the Law imprinted upon *Adam*, is ſo framed, as to ſecure the Rights of God as Supream, and the Rights of Men in their diſtinctions of Superiority and Equality: 'Tis therefore called *holy and good*, *Rom.* 7. 12. *holy*, as it preſcribes our duty to God in his VVorſhip; *good*, as it regulates the offices of human life, and preſerves the common intereſt of Mankind.

1. *'Tis ſuted to the Nature of Man.* As God hath given a Law of Nature, a fixed order to Inanimate Creatures, ſo he hath given a Law of *Reaſon* to Rational Creatures: Other Creatures are not capable of a Law differencing good and evil, becauſe they are deſtitute of Faculties and Capacities to make diſtinction between them. It had not been agreeable to the VViſdom of God to propoſe any Moral Law to them, who had neither underſtanding to diſcern, nor will to chuſe, 'Tis therefore to be obſerved, that whilſt *Chriſt* exhorted others to the embracing his Doctrine, yet he exhorted not little Children, though he took them in his Arms, becauſe though they had Faculties, yet they were not come to ſuch a Maturity, as to be capable of a Rational Inſtruction. But there was a neceſſity for ſome Command for the Government of man; ſince God had made him a Rational Creature, it was not agreeable to his VViſdom to govern him as a Brute, but as a Rational Creature, capable of knowing his Precepts, and voluntarily walking in them; and without a Law, he had not been capable of any exerciſe of his Reaſon in Services reſpecting God.

He therefore gives him a Law with a Covenant annext to it, whereby man is *obliged* to Obedience, and *ſecured* of a Reward. This was enforced with ſevere Penalties, *Death*, with all the Horrours attending it, to deter him from Tranſgreſſion, *Gen.* 2. 17. wherein is implied a Promiſe of continuance of Life, and all its Felicities, to allure him to a mindfulneſs of his Obligation. So perfect a Hedge did Divine Wiſdom ſet about him, to keep him within the bounds of that Obedience, which was both his Debt and Security, that whereſoever he looked, he ſaw either ſomething to invite him, or ſomething to drive him to the payment of his Duty, and perſeverance in it. Thus the Law was exactly framed to the Nature of man; man had twiſted in him a deſire of Happineſs; the Promiſe was ſuted to cheriſh this natural Deſire. He had alſo the Paſſion of Fear; the proper Object of this was any thing deſtructive to his Being, Nature, and Felicity; this the threatning met with. In the whole it was accommodated to man as rational: Precepts to the Law in his mind, promiſes to the natural Appetite, threatnings to the moſt prevailing Affection, and to the implanted Deſires of preſerving both his Being and Happineſs in that Being. Theſe were rational Motives fitted to the nature of *Adam*, which was above the life God had given Plants, and the ſenſe he had given Animals.

The Command given man in Innocence, was ſuted to his ſtrength and power; God gave him not any Command, but what he had ability to obſerve: And ſince we want not power to forbear an Apple in our corrupted and impotent State, he wanted not ſtrength in his ſtate of Integrity. The VViſdom of God Commanded nothing, but what was very eaſie to be obſerved by him, and inferior to his natural Ability. It had been both unjuſt and unwiſe to have commanded him to fly up to the Sun, when he had not wings; or ſtop the Courſe of the Sea, when he had not ſtrength.

2. *'Tis*

2. *'Tis ſuted to the happineſs and benefit of man.* God's Laws are not an act of meer Authority reſpecting his own Glory, but of wiſdom and goodneſs reſpecting mans Benefit. They are perfective of mans Nature, conferring a Wiſdom upon him; *rejoycing his Heart, enlightning his eyes, Pſal.* 19. 7, 8. affording him both a knowledg of God, and of himſelf. To be without a Law, is for man to be as Beaſts, without Juſtice and without Religion: Other things are for the good of the Body, but the Laws of God for the good of the Soul: the more perfect the Law, the greater the benefit. The Laws given to the *Jews* were the honour and excellency of that Nation; *Deut.* 1. 8. *What Nation is there ſo great, that hath Statutes and Judgments ſo righteous?* They were made States-men in the *Judicial* Law, Eccleſiaſticks in the *Ceremonial*, honeſt men in the *Second Table*, and Divine in the *Firſt*. All his Laws are ſuted to the true ſatisfaction of man, and the good of Human Society. Had God framed a Law only for one Nation, there would have been the Characters of a particular Wiſdom; but now an univerſal wiſdom appears, in accommodating his Law, not only to this or that particular Society or Corporation of men, but to the benefit of all mankind in the variety of Climates, and Countries wherein they live: Every thing that is diſturbing to Human Society is provided againſt; nothing is enjoin'd, but what is ſweet, rational and uſeful: It orders us not to attempt any thing againſt the life of our Neighbour, the honour of his Bed, propriety in his Goods, and the clearneſs of his Reputation; and if well obſerved, would alter the face of the World, and make it look with another hue. The World would be alter'd from a bruti ſh to a human World: It would change Lions and Wolves, men of Lion-like and Wolviſh diſpoſition, into reaſon and ſweetneſs. And becauſe the whole Law is ſum'd up in *love*, it obligeth us to endeavour the preſervation of one anothers Beings, the favouring of one anothers Intereſts, and increaſing the Goods, as much as Juſtice will permit, and keeping up one anothers Credits; becauſe love, which is the Soul of the Law, is not ſhewn by a ceſſation from action, but ſignifies an order upon all occaſions in doing good. I ſay were this Law well obſerved, the World would be another thing than it is. It would become a Religious Fraternity, the Voice of Enmity and the Noiſe of Groans and Curſings would not be heard in our Streets: Peace would be in all Borders; plenty of Charity in the midſt of Cities and Countries; Joy and ſinging would ſound in all habitations. Mans advantage was deſign'd in Gods Laws, and doth naturally reſult from the obſervance of them. God ſo ordered them by his Wiſdom, that the obedience of man ſhould draw forth his Goodneſs, and prevent thoſe ſmarting Judgments, which were neceſſary to reduce the Creature to order, that would not voluntarily continue in the order God had appointed. The Laws of men are often unjuſt, oppreſſive, cruel; ſometimes againſt the Law of nature: But an univerſal wiſdom and righteouſneſs glitters in the Divine Law: There is nothing in it, but what is worthy of God, and uſeful for the Creature; ſo that we may well *ſay* with *Job*, *Who teaches like God*, *Job.* 36. 22. or as ſome render it, *who is a law-giver like God? Who can ſay* to him, *thou haſt wrough iniquity* or folly among men? His Precepts where framed for the preſervation of man in that rectitude wherein he was Created, in that likeneſs to God wherein he was firſt made, that there might be a correſpondance between the Integrity of the Creature and the Goodneſs of his Creator, by the Obedience of man; that man might exerciſe his Faculties in Operations worthy of him, and beneficial to the World.

3. The Wiſdom of God is ſeen *in ſuting his Laws to the Conſciences, as well as the Intereſt of all Mankind. Rom.* 2. 14. *The Gentiles do by nature the things contained in the Law*; ſo great an affinity there is between the wiſe Law and the Reaſon of man.

There is a natural Beauty emerging from them, and darting upon the Reaſons, and Conſciences of men, which dictates to them that this Law is worthy to be obſerved in it ſelf. The two main Principles of the Law, The Love and worſhip of God, and doing as we would be done by, have an indelible impreſſion in the Conſciences of all men in regard of the Principle; though they are not ſutably expreſt in the Practiſe. Were there no Law outwardly publiſht, yet every mans Conſcience would dictate to him, that God was to be acknowledged, worſhipped,

loved, as naturally as his Reaſon would acquaint him that there was ſuch a Being as God. This ſutableneſs of them to the Conſciences of men, is manifeſt, in that the Laws of the beſt governed Nations among the Heathen have had an agreement with them. Nothing can be more exactly compoſed, according to the Rules of right and exact Reaſon than this; no man but approves of ſomething in it, yea of the whole when he exerciſeth that dim Reaſon which he hath. Suppoſe any man, (not an abſolute Atheiſt) he cannot but acknowledg the reaſonableneſs of worſhipping God. Grant him to be a Spirit, and it will preſently appear abſurd to repreſent him by any Corporeal Image, and derogate from his Excellency by ſo mean a reſemblance; with the ſame eaſineſs he will grant a reverence due to the Name of God; that we muſt not ſerve our turn of him, by calling him to witneſs to a lie in a ſolemn Oath. That as Worſhip is due to him, ſo ſome ſtated time is a circumſtance neceſſary to the performance of that Worſhip. And as to the *Second Table*, will any man in his right reaſon quarrel with that Command that engageth his Inferiors to honour him; that ſecures his Being from a violent murder, and his goods from unjuſt rapine? and though by the fury of his Luſts he break the Laws of Wedlock himſelf, yet he cannot but approve of that Law, as it prohibits every man from doing him the like injury and diſgrace. The ſutableneſs of the Law to the Conſciences of men, is further evidenced by thoſe furious reflections and ſtrong alarms of Conſcience upon a tranſgreſſion of it, and that in all parts of the World, more or leſs in all men: So exactly hath Divine wiſdom fitted the Law to the Reaſon and Conſciences of men, as one Tally to another. Indeed, without ſuch an agreement, no mans Conſcience could have any ground for a *Hue* and *Cry*, nor need any man be ſtartled with the Records of it. This manifeſts the wiſdom of God in framing his Law ſo, that the Reaſons and Conſciences of all men do one time or other ſubſcribe to it. What Governour in the World is able to make any Law diſtinct from this revealed by God, that ſhall reach all places, all perſons, all Hearts?

We may add to this the extent of his Commands in ordering goodneſs at the root, not only in action but affection; not only in the motion of the Members, but the diſpoſition of the Soul; which ſuting a Law to the inward frame of man, is quite out of the compaſs of the wiſdom of any Creature.

4. His Wiſdom is ſeen *in the incouragements he gives for the ſtudying and obſerving his will, Pſal.* 19. 11. *In keeping the Commandments there is great reward.* The variety of them; there is not any particular *Genius* in man, but may find ſomething ſutable to win upon him in the revealed will of God. There is a ſtrain of Reaſon to ſatisfie the Rational; of Eloquence, to gratifie the Fanciful; of Intereſt to allure the Selfiſh; of Terror, to ſtartle the obſtinate. As a skillful Angler ſtores himſelf with Baits, according to the Appetites of the ſorts of fiſh he intends to catch; ſo in the Word of God, there are varieties of Baits, according to the varieties of the Inclinations of men; Threatnings to work upon Fear; Promiſes to work upon Love; Examples of holy men ſet out for Imitation; and thoſe plainly, neither his Threatnings nor his Promiſes are dark as the *Heathen* Oracles; but peremptory, as becomes a Soveraign Law-giver; and plain, as was neceſſary for the underſtanding of a Creature: As he deals graciouſly with men in exhorting and incouraging them; ſo he deals wiſely herein, by taking away all Excuſe from them if they ruine the intereſt of their Souls by denying Obedience to their Soveraign.

Again, the Rewards God propoſeth are accommodated, not to the Brutiſh parts of man, his Carnal Senſe and Fleſhly Appetite; but to the Capacity of a Spiritual Soul, which admits only of Spiritual Gratifications; and cannot in its own Nature, without a ſordid ſubjection to the Humors of the Body, be moved by Senſual Propoſals. God backs his Precepts with that which the Nature of Man longed for, and with Spiritual Delights; which can only ſatisfie a rational Appetite: And thereby did as well gratifie the nobleſt Deſires in man, as Oblige him to the nobleſt Service and Work *. Indeed Vertue and Holineſs being perfectly amiable, ought chiefly to affect our Underſtandings, and by them draw our Wills to the eſteem and purſuit of them. But ſince the deſire of Happineſs is inſeparable from the Nature of Man, as impoſſible to be diſ-joyn'd, as an Inclination

* Amyrant.

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to deſcend to be ſevered from heavy Bodies, or an inſtinct to aſcend from Light and Airy of Subſtances; God ſerves himſelf of the Inclination of our Natures to happineſs, to ingender in us an eſteem and affection to the Holineſs he doth require. He propoſeth the enjoyment of a ſupernatural Good and everlaſting Glory, as a Bait to that inſatiable longing our Natures have for Happineſs, to receive the impreſſion of Holineſs into our Souls. And beſides, he doth proportion Rewards according to the degrees of mens Induſtry, Labour, and Zeal for him; and weighs out a recompence, not only ſuted to, but above the ſervice. He that improves *five Talents*, is to be ruler over *five Cities*; that is, a greater proportion of Honour and Glory than another, *Luke* 19. 17, 18. As a wiſe Father excites the affection of his Children to things worthy of Praiſe, by varieties of Recompenſes according to their ſeveral Actions. And it was the VViſdom of the *Steward*; in the Judgment of our *Saviour*, to give every one the *portion that belonged to him*, *Luke* 12. 42. There is no part of the Word wherein we meet not with the will and Wiſdom of God, varieties of Duties, and varieties of encouragement mingled together.

5. The Wiſdom of God is ſeen *In fitting the Revelations of his will to after-times, and for the preventing of the foreſeen Corruptions of men.* The whole Revelation of the mind of God is ſtored with Wiſdom in the VVords, connexion, ſence; It looks backwards to paſt, and forwards to Ages to come: A hidden wiſdom lies in the bowels of it, like Gold in a Mine.

The Old Teſtament was ſo compoſed, as to fortifie the New, when God ſhould bring it to light. The Foundations of the Goſpel were laid in the Law: The Predictions of the *Prophets*, and figures of the Law were ſo wiſely framed and laid down in ſuch clear expreſſions, as to be Proofs of the Authority of the New Teſtament, and Convictions of Jeſus his being the *Meſſiah*, *Luke* 24. 14. Things *concerning Chriſt* were written *in Moſes, the Prophets, and Pſalmes*, and do to this day ſtare the *Jews* ſo in the face, that they are fain to invent abſurd and Nonſenſical Interpretations to excuſe their Unbelief, and continue themſelves in their obſtinate Blindneſs. And in purſuance of the efficacy of thoſe Predictions, it was a part of the VViſdom of God to bring forth the *Tranſlation* of the Old Teſtament, (by the means of *Ptolomy* King of *Egypt* ſome hundreds of years before the coming of Chriſt,) into the *Greek* Language, the Tongue the moſt known in the World; And why? to prepare the *Gentiles* by the reading of it, for that gracious Call he intended them, and for the entertainment of the Goſpel, which ſome few years after was to be publiſht among them; that by reading the Predictions ſo long before made, they might more readily receive the accompliſhment of them in their due time.

The Scripture is written in ſuch a manner, as to obviate Errors foreſeen by God to inter into the Church. It may be wondred, why the *Univerſal* Particle ſhould be inſerted by Chriſt, in the giving the *Cup* in the Supper, which was not in the diſtributing the *Bread*, *Mat.* 26. 27. *Drink ye all of it*; Not at the diſtributing the Bread, *Eat you all of it*: And *Mark* in his Relation tells us, *They all drank of it*, *Mark* 11. 23. The Church of *Rome* hath been the occaſion of diſcovering to us the Wiſdom of our Saviour in inſerting that Particle *all*, ſince they were ſo bold to exclude the Communicants from the Cup by a trick of Concomitancy. Chriſt foreſaw the Error, and therefore put in a little word to obviate a great Invaſion: And the Spirit of God hath particularly left upon record, that *Particle*, as we may reaſonably ſuppoſe to ſuch a purpoſe. And ſo in the deſcription of the *bleſſed Virgin*, *Luke* 1. 27. There is nothing of her Holineſs mentioned, which is with much diligence recorded of *Elizabeth*; *Verſ.* 6. *Righteous, walking in all the commandments of God blameleſs*; Probably to prevent the ſuperſtition which God foreſaw would ariſe in the World. And we do not find more undervaluing ſpeeches, uttered by Chriſt to any of his Diſciples in the exerciſe of his Office, than *to her*, except to *Peter*. As when ſhe acquainted him with the want of Wine at the Marriage in *Cana*, ſhe receives a ſlighting anſwer: *Woman, what have I to do with thee? John* 2. 4. And when one was admiring the *bleſſedneſs* of her that bare him, he turns the diſcourſe another way, to pronounce a *bleſſedneſs* rather belonging to them that *hear the Word*

of God and keep it, *Luke* 11. 27, 28. in a mighty VViſdom to Antidote his people againſt any conceit of the prevalency of the Virgin over him in Heaven, in the Exerciſe of his Mediatory Office.

2. As his VViſdom appears in his Government by his Laws, *ſo it appears in the various inclinations and conditions of Men.* As there is a diſtinction of ſeveral Creatures, and ſeveral qualities in them, for the Common good of the World; ſo among men there are ſeveral inclinations and ſeveral Abilities, as Donatives from God, for the Common advantage of Human Society; As ſeveral Chanels cut out from the ſame River run ſeveral wayes, and refreſh ſeveral Soils; one Man is qualified for one Employment, another marked out by God for a different Work, yet all of them fruitful to bring in a Revenue of Glory to God, and a harveſt of Profit to the reſt of Mankind. How unuſeful would the Body be, if it had but *one Member*? 1 *Cor.* 12. 19. How unprovided would a Houſe be, if it had not Veſſels of Diſhonour as well as of Honour? The Corporation of Mankind would be as much a *Chaos*, as the Matter of the Heavens and the Earth was, before it was diſtinguiſht by ſeveral forms breathed into it at the Creation. Some are inſpired with a particular *Genius* for one Art, ſome for another: Every man hath a diſtinct Talent. If all were Huſband-men, where would be the inſtruments to Plow and Reap? If all were Artificers: where would they have Corn to nouriſh themſelves? All men are like Veſſels, and Parts in the Body, deſign'd for diſtinct Offices and Functions for the good of the whole, and mutually return an advantage to one another.

As the variety of Gifts in the Church is a fruit of the Wiſdom of God, for the preſervation and increaſe of the Church, ſo the variety of Inclinations and Employments in the World is a fruit of the *Wiſdom* of God, for the preſervation and ſubſiſtance of the World by mutual Commerce: VVhat the *Apoſtle* largely diſcourſeth of the former, in 1 *Cor.* 12. may be applied to the other.

The various Conditions of men is alſo a fruit of Divine VViſdom. Some are Rich, and ſome Poor; the Rich have as much need of the Poor, as the Poor have of the Rich: If the Poor depend upon the Rich for their livelyhood, the Rich depend upon the Poor for their Conveniencies. Many Arts would not be learn'd by men, if Poverty did not oblige them to it; and many would faint in the learning of them, if they were not thereunto encouraged by the Rich.

The Poor labour for the Rich, as the Earth ſends Vapours into the vaſter and fuller Air; and the Rich return advantages again to the Poor, as the Clouds do the Vapours in Rain upon the Earth. As Meat would not afford a nouriſhing Juyce without Bread, and Bread without other Food would immoderately fill the Stomach, and not be will digeſted; ſo the Rich would be unprofitable in the Commonwealth without the Poor, and the Poor would be burthenſom to a Commonwealth without the Rich: The Poor could not be eaſily govern'd without the Rich, nor the Rich ſufficiently and conveniently provided for without the Poor. If all were Rich, there would be no Objects for the exerciſe of a Noble part of Charity: If all were Poor, there were no Matter for the exerciſe of it. Thus the Divine Wiſdom planted various Inclinations, and diverſified the Conditions of Men for the publick advantages of the VVorld.

II. Gods *Wiſdom* appears, *in the government of Men, as Fallen and Sinful*; or *in the government of Sin.* After the Law of God was broke, and Sin invaded and conquer'd the VVorld; Divine VViſdom had another Scene to act in, and other Methods of Government were neceſſary. The *Wiſdom* of God is then ſeen in ordering thoſe Jarring Diſcords, drawing *Good* out of *Evil*, and Honour to himſelf out of that, which in its own Nature tended to the ſupplanting of his Glory. God being a Soveraign *Good*, would not ſuffer ſo great an *Evil*, to enter, But to ſerve himſelf of it for ſome greater End; for all his Thoughts are full of *Goodneſs* and *Wiſdom*.

Now though the Permiſſion of Sin be an Act of his Soveraignty, and the Puniſhment of Sin be an Act of his Juſtice; yet the Ordination of Sin to good, is an Act of his *Wiſdom*, whereby he doth diſpoſe the Evil, over-rules the malice, and orders the Events of it to his own Purpoſes. *Sin* in it ſelf is a Diſorder, and therefore God doth not permit Sin for it ſelf; for in its own Nature it hath nothing of

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Amiableneſs; but he wills it for ſome Righteous End, which belongs to the manifeſtation of his Glory, which is his aim in all the acts of his Will: He wills it not as Sin, but as his *Wiſdom* can order it to ſome greater Good than was before in the World, and make it contribute to the beauty of the Order he intends. As a dark Shadow is not delightful and pleaſant in it ſelf, nor is Drawn by a Painter for any Amiableneſs there is in the Shadow it ſelf, but as it ſerves to ſet forth that beauty, which is the main deſign of his Art; ſo the glorious Effects which ariſe from the Entrance of Sin into the World, are not from the Creatures Evil, but the Depths of Divine Wiſdom.

Particularly,

1. *Gods VViſdom is ſeen in the bounding of Sin.* As it is ſaid of the *VVrath of Man*, it *ſhall praiſe him*, and *the remainder of VVrath* God doth *reſtrain*, Pſal. 76. 10. He ſets limits to the boyling Corruption of the Heart, as he doth to the boiſterous VVaves of the Sea, *Hitherto ſhalt thou go, and no further.* As God is the Rector of the VVorld, he doth ſo reſtrain Sin, ſo temper and direct it, as that Human Society is preſerved, which elſe would be overflown with a Deluge of VVickedneſs, and Ruine would be brought upon all Communities. The VVorld would be a Shambles, a Brothel-houſe, if God by his VViſdom and Goodneſs, did not ſet bars to that VVickedneſs which is in the Hearts of Men: The whole Earth would be as bad as Hell. Since the Heart of Man is a Hell of Corruption, by that, the Souls of all Men would be excited to the acting the worſt Villanies; ſince *every thought of the heart of Man is only evil, and that continnally*, Gen. 6. 5. if the *VViſdom* of God did not ſtop theſe Floud-gates of *Evil* in the Hearts of men, it would overflow the World, and fruſtrate all the Gracious Deſigns he carries on among the Sons of Men. VVere it not for this *Wiſdom*, every Houſe would be filled with Violence, as well as every Nature is with Sin. VVhat harm would not ſtrong and furious Beaſts do, did not the Skill of Man tame and bridle them? How often hath Divine VViſdom reſtrain'd the Viciouſneſs of Human Nature, and let it run, not to that point they deſign'd, but to the end he propoſed? *Laban*'s Fury, and *Eſau*'s Enmity againſt *Jacob*, were pent in within bounds for *Jacobs* ſafety, and their Hearts over-ruled from an intended deſtruction of the good Man to a perfect Amity *. * Gen. 31. 29. & Gen. 32.

2. Gods *Wiſdom* is ſeen, *in the bringing glory to himſelf out of Sin.*

(1.) *Out of Sin it ſelf.* God erects the Trophies of Honour upon that, which is a Natural means to hinder and deface it. His glorious Attributes are drawn out to our view, upon the occaſion of Sin, which otherwiſe had lain hid in his own Being. Sin is altogether black and abominable; but by the Admirable *Wiſdom* of God, he hath drawn out of the dreadful darkneſs of Sin, the ſaving Beams of his Mercy, and diſplayed his Grace in the *Incarnation* and *Paſſion* of his Son for the Atonement of Sin. Thus he permitted *Adams* Fall, and wiſely order'd it: for a fuller diſcovery of his own Nature, and a higher elevation of Mans good, that *as Sin reigned to death, ſo might Grace reign through Righteouſneſs to Eternal life, by Jeſus Chriſt*, *Rom.* 5. 21. The unbounded Goodneſs of God could not have appeared without it. His Goodneſs in rewarding Innocent Obedience, would have been manifeſted; but not his Mercy, in pardoning Rebellious Crimes: An Innocent Creature is the Object of the Rewards of Grace, as the ſtanding Angels are under the Beams of Grace; but not under the Beams of Mercy, becauſe they were never Sinful, and conſequently never Miſerable. Without Sin the Creature had not been Miſerable: Had Man remained Innocent, he had not been the Subject of Puniſhment; and without the Creatures Miſery, Gods Mercy in ſending his Son to ſave his Enemies, could not have appeared. The abundance of Sin is a Paſſive occaſion for God to manifeſt the abundance of his Grace.

The Power of God in the changing the Heart of a Rebellious Creature, had not appeared, had not Sin infected our Nature. We had not clearly known the Vindictive Juſtice of God, had no Crime been committed; for that is the proper Object of Divine VVrath. The Goodneſs of God could never have permitted Juſtice to exerciſe it ſelf upon an Innocent Creature, that was not guilty either Perſonally, or by Imputation. *Pſal.* 11. 7. *The righteous Lord loveth Righteouſneſs, his countenance doth behold the upright.* VViſdom is illuſtrious hereby. God ſuffered Man to fall into a Mortal Diſeaſe, to ſhew the vertue of his own Reſtoratives

ſtoratives to cure Sin, which in it ſelf is Incurable by the Art of any Creature. And otherwiſe this Perfection whereby God draws *Good* out of *Evil*, had been utterly uſeleſs, and would have been deſtitute of an Object wherein to diſcover it ſelf.

Again *Wiſdom* in ordering a Rebellious head-ſtrong VVorld to its own ends, is greater than the ordering an Innocent VVorld, exactly obſervant of his Precepts, and complying with the End of the Creation. Now, without the entrance of Sin, this *VViſdom* had wanted a Stage to act upon. Thus God raiſed the Honour of his *VViſdom*, while Man ruin'd the Integrity of his Nature; and made uſe of the Creatures breach of his Divine Law, to eſtabliſh the Honour of it in a more ſignal and ſtable manner, by the Active and Paſſive Obedience of the Son of his Boſom. Nothing ſerves God ſo much, as an occaſion of glorifying himſelf, as the entrance of Sin into the VVorld; by this occaſion God communicates to us the knowledg of thoſe Perfections of his Nature, which had elſe been folded up from us in an Eternal Night; his Juſtice had lain in the dark, as having nothing to puniſh; his Mercy had been obſcure, as having none to pardon; a great part of his VViſdom had been ſilent, as having no ſuch Object to order.

2. His *Wiſdom* appears, *In making uſe of ſinful Inſtruments.* He uſes the Malice and Enmity of the *Devil* to bring about his own Purpoſes, and makes the ſworn Enemy of his Honour contribute to the Illuſtrating of it againſt his will. This great Crafts-Maſter he took in his own net; and defeated the Devil by the Devils Malice; by turning the Contrivances he had hatch'd and accompliſh'd againſt Man, againſt himſelf. He uſed him as a *Tempter*, to grapple with our *Saviour* in the *Wilderneſs*, whereby to make him fit to ſuccour us; and as the God of this World, to inſpire the wicked *Jews* to Crucifie him, whereby to render him actually the *Redeemer* of the World, and ſo made him an Ignorant Inſtrument of that Divine Glory he deſign'd to ruin.

* Moulins *Serm. Decad.* 10. *p.* 231, 232.

* 'Tis more Skill to make a curious piece of Workmanſhip with ill condition'd Tools, than With Inſtruments naturally fitted for the work: 'Tis no ſuch great wonder for a Limner to draw an exact piece with a fit Pencil and ſutable Colours, as to begin and perfect a beautiful work with a Straw and Water, things improper for ſuch a deſign. This *Wiſdom* of God is more admirable and aſtoniſhing, than if a Man were able to rear a vaſt Palace by Fire, whoſe nature is to conſume Combuſtible matter, not to erect a Building.

To make thinks ſerviceable contrary to their own Nature, is a *Wiſdom* peculiar to the Creator of Nature. Gods making uſe of *Devils*, for the glory of his Name, and the good of his People, is a more amazing piece of Wiſdom, than his Goodneſs in employing the Bleſſed Angels in his work. To promiſe, that the *World*, (which includes the *God* of the World) and *Death*, and *Things preſent*, let them be as Evil as they will, ſhould be *ours*, that is, for our good, and for his glory, is an act of Goodneſs; but to make them ſerviceable to the Honour of *Chriſt*, and the good of his People, is a Wiſdom that may well raiſe our higheſt Admirations*: They are for Believers, as they are for the *glory of Chriſt*, and as *Chriſt is for the glory of God.*

* 1 Cor. 3. 22.

To Chain up *Satan* wholly, and fruſtrate his Wiles, would be an Argument of Divine Goodneſs; but to ſuffer him to run his riſque, and then improve all his Contrivances for his own glorious and gracious Ends and Purpoſes, manifeſts beſides his Power and Goodneſs, his *Wiſdom* alſo. He uſes the Sins of Evil Inſtruments for the *glory of his Juſtice*, *Iſa.* 10. 5, 6, 7. Thus he ſerved himſelf of the Ambition and Covetouſneſs, of the *Aſſyrians*, *Chaldeans*, and *Romans*, for the Correction of his People and Puniſhment of his Rebels. Juſt as the *Roman* Magiſtrates uſed the fury of *Lions* and other wild Beaſts, in their *Theatres*, for the Puniſhment of Criminals: The *Lions* acted their Natural temper in tearing thoſe that were expos'd to them for a Prey; but the intent of the Magiſtrates was to puniſh their Crimes. The Magiſtrate inſpir'd not the *Lions* with their Rage, that they had from their Natures; but ſerved themſelves of that Natural Rage, to execute Juſtice.

3. Gods *Wiſdom* is ſeen *in bringing good to the Creature out of Sin.* He hath ordered Sin to ſuch an end as Man never dreamt of, the Devil never imagin'd, and

Sin

Sin in its own Nature could never attain. Sin in its own Nature tends to no good, but that of Puniſhment, whereby the Creature is brought into order. It hath no relation to the Creatures good in it ſelf, but to the Creatures miſchief: But God, by an act of Infinite Wiſdom brings good out of it to the Creature, as well as glory to his Name, contrary to the Nature of the Crime, the Intention of the Criminal, and the Deſign of the Tempter.

(God willed Sin, that is, he willed to permit it, that he might communicate himſelf to the Creature in the moſt excellent manner.) He willed the Permiſſion of Sin, as an occaſion to bring forth the Myſtery of the *Incarnation* and *Paſſion* of our Saviour; as he permitted the Sin of *Joſephs* Brethren that he might uſe their Evil to a good end. He never, becauſe of his Holineſs, wills Sin as an End; but in regard of his Wiſdom he wills to permit it as a Means and Occaſion: And thus, to draw good out of thoſe things which are in their own Nature moſt contrary to Good, is the higheſt pitch of Wiſdom.

1. *The Redemption of Man in ſo excellent a way, was drawn from the occaſion of Sin.* The greateſt Bleſſing that ever the World was bleſt with, was uſher'd in by Contrarieties, by the Luſt and irregular Affection of Man; the *firſt Promiſe* of the Redeemer by the Fall of *Adam*, Gen. 3. 15. and the *bruiſing the heel of that Promiſed Seed*, by the blackeſt Tragedy acted by wicked Rebels, the Treachery of *Judas*, and the Rage of the *Jews*; the higheſt Good hath been brought forth by the greateſt Wickedneſs. As God out of the *Chaos* of rude and indigeſted Matter framed the firſt Creation; ſo from the Sins of Men, and Malice of Satan, he hath erected the Everlaſting *Scheme* of Honour in a New Creation of all things by *Jeſus Chriſt*.

The *Devil* inſpir'd Man, to content his own fury in the Death of Chriſt; and God order'd it to accompliſh his own deſign of Redemption in the Paſſion of the *Redeemer*: The Devil had his Diabolical Ends, and God over-powers his Action to ſerve his own Divine ends. The Perſon that betrayed him, was admitted to be a Spectator of the moſt private Actions of our *Saviour*, that his Innocence might be juſtified; to ſhew, that he was not afraid to have his Enemies Judges of his moſt retir'd Privacies. While they all thought to do their own Wills, Divine *Wiſdom* orders them to do Gods Will. *Acts* 2. 23. *Him being delivered by the determinate Counſel and Fore-knowledg of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have Crucified and ſlain.* And wherein the Crucifiers of Chriſt ſinned, in ſhedding the richeſt Blood, upon their Repentance they found the expiation of their Crimes, and the diſcovery of a ſuperabundant Mercy. Nothing but Blood was aimed at by them: The beſt Blood was ſhed by them; but Infinite *Wiſdom* makes the *Croſs* the Scene of his own Righteouſneſs, and the Womb of Mans Recovery.

By the occaſion of Mans Lapſed ſtate, there was a way open to raiſe Man to a more excellent Condition, than that whereinto he was put by Creation: And the depriving Man of the happineſs of an Earthly *Paradiſe*, in a way of Juſtice, was an occaſion of advancing him to a Heavenly Felicity, in a way of Grace. The Violation of the Old Covenant, occaſionally introduc'd a better: The loſs of the firſt Integrity, uſher'd in a more ſtable Righteouſneſs, an *Everlaſting Righteouſneſs*, *Dan.* 9. 24. And the falling of the Firſt Head, was ſucceeded by one whoſe ſtanding could not but be Eternal.

The fall of the *Devil* was ordered by Infinite Wiſdom, for the good of that Body from which he fell. 'Tis ſuppoſed by ſome, that the *Devil* was the Chief Angel in Heaven, the Head of all the reſt; and that he Falling, the Angels were left as a Body without a Head; and after he had Politically beheaded the Angels, he endeavoured to deſtroy Man, and rout him out of *Paradiſe*: But God takes the opportunity to ſet up his *Son*, as the Head of Angels and Men. And thus whilſt the Devil endeavoured to ſpoil the Corporation of Angels, and make them a Body contrary to God, God makes Angels and Men one Body under one Head, for his Service.

The *Angels* in loſing a defectible Head, attained a more excellent and glorious Head in another Nature, which they had not before; though of a Lower Nature in his Humanity, yet of a more glorious Nature in his Divinity: From whence many

many ſuppoſe they derive their Confirming Grace, and the ſtability of their ſtanding. *All things in Heaven and Earth are gathered together in Chriſt*, *Eph.* 1. 10. ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι, All united in him, and reduced under one Head: That though our *Saviour* be not properly their *Redeemer*, for Redemption ſuppoſeth Captivity, yet in ſome ſenſe he his their Head and Mediator; ſo that now the Inhabitants of Heaven and Earth are but *one Family*, *Epheſ.* 3. 15. And the *Innumerable Company of Angels* are parts of that Heavenly and Triumphant *Jeruſalem*, and that *General Aſſembly*, whereof *Jeſus Chriſt* is *Mediator*, *Heb.* 12. 22, 29.

2. *The Good of a Nation often, by the skill of Divine Wiſdom, is promoted by the Sins of ſome Men.* The *Patriarchs* ſelling *Joſeph* to the *Midianites* *, was without queſtion a Sin, and a breach of Natural Affection; yet by Gods Wiſe Ordination, it proved the Safety of the whole Church of God in the World, as well as the *Egyptian* Nation*.

* Gen. 37. 28.

* Gen. 45. 5, 8. & Gen. 50. 30.

The *Jews* Unbelief was a ſtep whereby the *Gentiles* aroſe to the knowledg of the *Goſpel*: As the ſetting of the *Sun* in one place, is the *riſing* of it in another*. He uſes the Corruptions of Men Inſtrumentally to propagate his Goſpel: He built up the True Church by the *Preaching of ſome out of envy*, *Phil.* 1. 15. as he bleſſed *Iſrael* out of the Mouth of a *Falſe Prophet*, *Numb.* 23. How often have the Hereſies of Men been the occaſion of clearing up the Truth of God, and fixing the more lively Impreſſions of it on the Hearts of Believers?

* Mat. 22. 9.

Neither *Judah* nor *Tamar*, in their Luſt, dreamt of a Stock for the *Redeemer*; yet God gave a Son from that Unlawful Bed, whereof *Chriſt came according to the fleſh*; *Gen.* 38. 29. compared with *Mat.* 1. 3.

Jonahs Sin was probably the firſt and remote occaſion of the *Ninivites* giving credit to his Propheſie: His Sin was the cauſe of his Puniſhment, and his being flung into the Sea might facilitate the reception of his Meſſage, and excite the *Ninivites* Repentance, whereby a Cloud of ſevere Judgment was blown away from them.

'Tis thought by ſome, That when *Jonah* paſſed through the Streets of *Niniveh* with his Proclamation of *Deſtruction*, he might be known by ſome of the Mariners of that Ship, from whence he was caſt Over-board into the Sea, and might after their Voyage be occaſionally in that City, the *Metropolis* of the Nation, and the place of ſome of their Births; and might acquaint the People, that this was the ſame Perſon they had caſt into the Sea by his own conſent, for his acknowledg'd running from the *Preſence of the Lord*; for that he had told them *Jonah* 1. 10. and the Mariners *Prayer*, Verſe 14. evidenceth it, whereupon they might conclude his Meſſage worthy of Belief, ſince they knew from ſuch Evidences, that he had ſunk into the Bowels of the Waters, and now ſaw him ſafe in their Streets, by a Deliverance unknown to them; and that therefore that Power that delivered him, could eaſily verifie his Word in the threatned Judgment.

Had *Jonah* gone at firſt without committing that Sin, and receiving that Puniſhment, his Meſſage had not been judged a Divine Prediction, but a fruit of ſome Enthuſiaſtick madneſs: His Sin upon this account was the firſt occaſion of averting a Judgment from ſo great a City.

3. *The good of the Sinner himſelf is ſometimes promoted by Divine Wiſdom, ordering the Sin.* As God had not permitted Sin to enter upon the World, unleſs to bring Glory to himſelf by it; ſo he would not let Sin remain in the little World of a Believers Heart, if he did not intend to order it for his good. What is done by Man to his damage and diſparagement, is directed by Divine wiſdom to his advantage; not that it is the *intent* of the Sin, or the Sinner; but it is the *event* of the Sin, by the ordination of Divine Wiſdom and Grace.

As without the *Wiſdom* of God permitting Sin to enter into the World, ſome Attributes of God had not been Experimentally known; ſo ſome Graces could not have been exercis'd: For where had there been an Object for that Noble *Zeal*, in vindicating the Glory of God, had it not been invaded by an Enemy? The intenſeneſs of Love to him could not have been ſo ſtrong, had we not an Enemy to hate for his ſake. Where had there been any place for that Noble part of Charity in holy Admonitions and Compaſſion to the Souls of our Neighbours, and Endeavours to reduce them out of a deſtructive to a happy Path?

Path? Humility would not have had ſo many grounds for its growth and exerciſe, and holy Sorrow had had no fewel.

And as without the appearance of Sin, there had been no exerciſe of the Patience of God; ſo without Afflictions, the Fruits of Sin, there had been no ground for the exerciſe of the Patience of a Chriſtian, one of the Nobleſt parts of Valour. Now Sin being Evil, and ſuch as cannot but be Evil, hath no reſpect in it ſelf to any good, and cannot work a gracious End, or any thing profitable to the Creature; nay it is a hindrance to any good, and therefore what good comes from it, is *Accidental*, occaſioned indeed by Sin, but efficiently cauſed by the over-ruling *Wiſdom* of God, taking occaſion thereby to diſplay it ſelf and the Divine Goodneſs.

The *Sins* and *Corruptions* remaining in the Heart of a Man, God orders for good, and there are good effects by the direction of his Wiſdom and Grace.

I. *As the Soul reſpects God.*

1. *God often brings forth a ſenſibleneſs of the neceſſity of Dependance on him.* The Nurſe often lets the Child ſlip, that it may the better know who ſupports it, and may not be too venturous and confident of its own ſtrength. *Peter* would truſt in *Habitual* Grace, and God ſuffers him to Fall, that he might truſt more in *Aſſiſting* Grace; *Mat.* 26. 35. *Though I ſhould die with thee, yet I will not deny thee.* God leaves ſometimes the brighteſt Souls in an *Eclipſe*, to manifeſt, that their Holineſs, and the peſervation of it, depend upon the darting out his Beams upon them,

As the Falls of Men are the effects of their coldneſs and remiſneſs in acts of Faith and Repentance; ſo the fruit of theſe Falls is often a running to him for Refuge, and a deeper ſenſibleneſs where their Security lies. It makes us Lower our ſwelling Sails, and come under the Lee and Protection of Divine Grace. When the Pleaſures of Sin anſwer not the expectations of a Revolted Creature, he reflects upon his former ſtate, and ſticks more cloſe to God, when before God had little of his Company; *Hoſ.* 2. 7. *I will return to my firſt huſband, for then it was better with me than now.*

As God makes the Sins of Men ſometimes an occaſion of their Converſion; ſo he ſometimes makes them an occaſion of a further Converſion. *Oneſimus* run from *Philemon*, and was met with by *Paul*, who proved an Inſtrument of his Converſion, *Philem.* 10. *My Son* Oneſimus, *whom I have begotten in my Bonds.* His flight from his Maſter, was the occaſion of his Regeneration by *Paul* a Priſoner.

The Falls of Believers God orders to their further ſtability: He that is fallen for want of uſing his Staff, will Lean more upon it to preſerve himſelf from the like Diſaſter.

God, by permitting the Lapſes of Men, doth often make them deſpair of their own ſtrength to ſubdue their Enemies, and rely upon the ſtrength of *Chriſt*, wherein God hath laid up Power for us, and ſo becomes ſtronger in that ſtrength which God hath ordained for them.

We are very apt to truſt in our ſelves, and have confidence in our own worth and ſtrength; and God lets looſe Corruptions to abate this ſwelling humor. This was the reaſon of the Apoſtle *Pauls Thorn in the fleſh*, 2. *Cor.* 12. 9. whether it were a Temptation, or Corruption, or Sickneſs, that he might be ſenſible of his own inability, and where the *ſufficiency of Grace* for him was placed.

He that is in danger of Drowning, and hath the Waves come over his head, will with all the might he hath, lay hold upon any thing near him, which is capable to Save him. God lets his People ſometimes ſink into ſuch a condition, that they may lay the faſter hold on him *who is near to all that call upon him.*

2. *God hereby raiſeth higher Eſtimations of the value and vertue of the Blood of Chriſt.* As the great Reaſon why God permitted Sin to enter into the World, was to honour himſelf in the *Redeemer*; ſo the Continuance of Sin, and the Conqueſts it ſometimes makes in Renewed Men, are to honour the Infinite value and vertue of the *Redeemers* Merit, which God from the beginning intended to magnifie: The Value of it, in taking off ſo much ſucceſſive Guilt; and the Vertue of it, in waſhing away ſo much daily filth.

The *Wiſdom* of God hereby keeps up the Credit of *Imputed Righteouſneſs*, and manifeſts the Immenſe Treaſure of the *Redeemers* Merit to pay ſuch daily Debts. Were we perfectly Sanctified, we ſhould ſtand upon our own Bottom, and imagine no need of the continual and repeated Imputation of the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt for our Juſtification: We ſhould confide in Inherent Righteouſneſs, and ſlight Imputed.

If God ſhould take off all Remainders of Sin, as well as the Guilt of it, we ſhould be apt to forget that we are Fallen Creatures, and that we had a *Redeemer:* But the Reliques of Sin in us, mind us of the neceſſity of ſome higher ſtrength to ſet us right: They mind us both of our own Miſery, and the Redeemers perpetual benefit. God by this keeps up the Dignity and Honour of our *Saviours* Blood to the height, and therefore ſometimes lets us ſee, to our own coſt, what filth yet remains in us for the imployment of that Blood, which we ſhould elſe but little think of, and leſs admire. Our Gratitude is ſo ſmall to God, as well as Man, that the firſt Obligations are ſoon forgot, if we ſtand not in need of freſh ones ſucceſſively to ſecond them; we ſhould loſe our Thankful Remembrance of the firſt vertue of *Chriſts Blood in waſhing us*, if our Infirmities did not mind us of freſh Reiterations and Applications of it.

Our *Saviours* Office of *Advocacy* was erected eſpecially for Sins committed after a Juſtified and Renewed ſtate *. We ſhould ſcarce remember we had an *Advocate*, and ſcarce make uſe of him without ſome ſenſible Neceſſity; but our Remainders of Sin diſcover our Impotency, and an impoſſibility for us either to expiate our Sin, or conform to the Law, which neceſſitates us to have recourſe to that Perſon whom God hath appointed, to make up the breaches between God and us.

* 1 John 2. 1.

So the *Apoſtle* wraps up himſelf in the Covenant of *Grace* and his Intereſt in Chriſt, after his conflict with Sin, *Rom. 7. ult. I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt. Now*, after ſuch a Body of Death, a Principle within me that ſends up daily ſteams; yet as long as I ſerve God with my Mind, as long as I keep the main Condition of the Covenant, there is *no Condemnation* *: Chriſt takes my part, procures my acceptance, and holds the Band of Salvation firm in his hands. The brightneſs of Chriſts Grace, is ſet off by the darkneſs of our Sin. We ſhould not underſtand the Soveraignty of his Medicines, if there were no Reliques of Sin for him to exerciſe his Skill upon: The *Phyſicians* Art is moſt experimented, and therefore moſt valued in Relapſes, as dangerous as the former Diſeaſe. As the *Wiſdom* of God brought our *Saviour* into Temptation, that he might have Compaſſion to us; ſo it permits us to be overcome by Temptation, that we might have due Valuations of him.

* Rom. 8. 1.

3. *God hereby often engageth the Soul to a greater Induſtry for his glory.* The higheſt *Perſecuters*, when they have become Converts, have been the greateſt Champions for that Cauſe they both hated and oppreſt. The *Apoſtle Paul* is ſuch an Inſtance of this, that it needs no enlargement. By how much they have failed of anſwering the end of their Creation in glorifying God; by ſo much the more they ſummon up all their Force for ſuch an end, after their Converſion; to reſtore as much as they can of that Glory to God, which they by their Sin had robb'd him of. Their Sins, by the order of *Divine Wiſdom*, prove Whetſtones to ſharpen the edge of their Spirits for God. *Paul* never remembred his Perſecuting Fury, but he doubled his Induſtry for the Servive of God, which before he trampled under his feet. The further we go back, the greater Leap many times we take forward.

Our *Saviour*, after his Reſurrection, put *Peter* upon the exerciſe of that *Love* to him, which had ſo lately ſhrunk his head out of Suffering *; and no doubt, but the conſideration of his baſe Denial, together with a reflection upon a gracious Pardon, engag'd his ingenuous Soul to ſtronger and fiercer flames of Affection. A Believers Courage for God, is more ſharpned oftentimes by the ſhame of his Fall: He endeavours to repair the faults of his Ingratitude and Diſingenuity, by larger and ſtronger ſteps of Obedience. As a Man in a fight, having been foil'd by his Enemy, reaſſumes new Courage by his Fall; and is many times oblig'd to his Foil, both for his Spirit and his Victory. A gracious Heart will, upon the very mo-

* John 21. 15, 16, 17.

tions

tions to ſin, double its Vigor, as well as by good ones: It is uſually more quickned both in its motion to God and for God, by the Temptations and motions to Sin, which run upon it. This is another good the *Wiſdom* of God brings forth from Sin.

4. Again, *Humility towards God, is another Good, Divine Wiſdom brings forth from the occaſion of Sin.* By this God beats down all good opinion of our ſelves. *Hezekiah* was more humbled by his fall into Pride, than by all the Diſtreſs he had been in by *Senacharibs* Army, 2 *Chron.* 32. 26. *Peters* Confidence before his fall, gave way to an humble Modeſty after it: You ſee his Confidenee, *Mark* 14. 24. *Though all ſhould be offended in thee, yet will not I*; and you have the mark of his Modeſty, *John* 21. 17. 'Tis not then, Lord, I will love thee to the death, I will not ſtart from thee; but, *Lord, thou knoweſt that I love thee.* I cannot aſſure my ſelf of any thing after this miſcarriage; but, Lord, thou knoweſt there is a Principle of Love in me to thy Name: He was aſham'd, that himſelf who appeared ſuch a Pillar, ſhould bend as meanly as a Shrub to a Temptation.

The reflection upon Sin, lays a man as low as Hell in his Humiliation, as the Commiſſion of Sin did in the Merit. When *David* comes to exerciſe Repentance for his Sin, he begins it from the Well-head *of Sin* *, his Original Corruption, and draws down the ſtreams of it to the laſt commiſſion: Perhaps he did not ſo ſeriouſly humble himſelf for the Sin of his Nature all his days, ſo much as at that time; at leaſt, we have not ſuch Evidences of it. And *Hezekiah humbled himſelf for the pride of his heart*; not only for the Pride of *his Act* *, but for the Pride in the Heart, which was the Spring of that Pride in Act, in *ſhewing his Treaſures* to the *Babyloniſh Ambaſſadors*. God lets Sin continue in the Hearts of the beſt in this World, and ſometimes gives the Reins to Satan, and a mans own Corruption, to keep up a ſenſe of the ancient Sale we made of our ſelves to both.

* Pſal. 51. 5.

* 2 Chron. 32. 26.

II. *In regard of our ſelves.* Herein is the wonder of Divine Wiſdom, that God many times makes a Sin, which meritoriouſly fits us for Hell, a Providential occaſion to fit us for Heaven; when it is an occaſion of a more humble Faith and believing Humility, and an occaſion of a through Sanctification and growth in Grace, which prepares us for a ſtate of Glory.

1. *He makes uſe of one Sin's breaking out to diſcover more*; and ſo brings us to a ſelf-abhorrency and Indignation againſt ſin, the firſt ſtep towards Heaven. Perhaps *David*, before his groſs Fall, thought he had no Hypocriſie in him. We often find him appealing to God for his Integrity, and deſiring God to *try him*, if any *guile* could be found in his Heart, as if he could find none himſelf: But his Lapſe into that great Wickedneſs, makes him diſcern much falſeneſs in his Soul, when he deſires God to *renew a right Spirit* within him, and ſpeaks of *Truth in the inward parts*, *Pſal.* 51. 6, 10. The ſtirring of one Corruption, makes all the Mud at the bottom appear, which before a Soul did not ſuſpect. No man would think there were ſo great a Cloud of Smoke contain'd in a little Stick of Wood, were it not for the powerful operation of the Fire, that both diſcovers and ſeparates it. *Job*, that curſed the day of his Birth, and uttered many Impatient expreſſions againſt God upon the account of his own Integrity; upon his Recovery from his Affliction, and Gods cloſe application of himſelf, was wrought to a greater *Abhorrency of himſelf*, than ever we read he was exercis'd in before *. The Hoſtile acts of Sin increaſe the Souls hatred of it; and the deeper our Humiliations are for it, the ſtronger impreſſions of abhorrency are made upon us.

* Job 42. 6.

2. *He often orders it, to make Conſcience more tender, and the Soul more watchful.* He that finds by his Calamity, his Enemy to have more ſtrength againſt him than he ſuſpected, will double his Guards and quicken his Diligence againſt him. A being overtaken by ſome Sin, is by the *Wiſdom* of God diſpos'd to make us more fearful of cheriſhing any occaſion to enflame it, and watchful againſt every motion and ſtart of it. By a Fall, the ſoul hath more experience of the Deceitfulneſs of the Heart; and by obſerving its methods, is render'd better able to watch againſt them. 'Tis our ignorance of the Devices of *Satan*, and our own hearts, that makes us obnoxious to their ſurprizes. A fall into one Sin is often

often a prevention of more which lay in wait for us. As the fall of a ſmall Body into an Ambuſh, prevents the deſign of the Enemy upon a greater. As God ſuffers Hereſies in the Church, to try our Faith; ſo he ſuffers Sins to remain, and ſometimes to break out, to try our Watchfulneſs. This advantage he brings from them, to ſteel our Reſolutions againſt the ſame Sins, and quicken our Circumſpection for the future againſt new Surprizes by a Temptation. *Davids* Sin was *ever before him*, *Pſal.* 51. 3. and made his Conſcience cry, *Blood*, *Blood*, upon every occaſion: He refuſed the *Water of the Well of Bethlehem*, 2 *Sam.* 23. 16, 17. becauſe it was gained with the hazard of Lives: He could endure nothing that had the taſte of Blood in it. Our fear of a thing depends much upon a Trial of it: A Child will not fear too near approaches to the Fire, till he feels the ſmart of it.

Mortification doth not wholly ſuppreſs the Motions of Sin, though it doth the Reſolutions to commit it; but that there will be a proneneſs in the Reliques of it, to entice a Man into thoſe Faults, which upon ſight of their blemiſhes coſt him ſo many Tears. As great Sickneſſes after the Cure are more watch'd, and the Body humour'd, that a Man might not fall from the Crazineſs they have left in him; which he is apt to do, if Relapſes are not carefully provided againſt. A man becomes more careful of any thing, that may contribute to the reſurrection of an expir'd Diſeaſe.

3. *God makes it an occaſion of the Mortification of that Sin, which was the matter of the Fall.* The livelineſs of one Sin in a Renewed Man, many times is the occaſion of the death of it. A wild Beaſt, while kept cloſe in a Den, is ſecure in its life; but when it breaks out to Rapine, it makes the Maſter reſolve to prevent any further miſchief by the death of it. The impetuous ſtirring of a humor in a diſeaſe, is ſometime *Critical*, and a *Prognoſtick* of the ſtrength of Nature againſt it, whereby the Diſeaſe loſeth its ſtrength by its ſtruggling, and makes room for health to take place by degrees. One Sin is uſed by God for the deſtruction both of it ſelf and others: As the Fleſh of a *Scorpion* cures the biting of it. It ſometimes by wounding us loſeth its Sting, and like the *Bee* renders it ſelf uncapable of a ſecond Revenge. *Peter*, after his groſs Denial, never denied his Maſter afterwards. The Sin that lay undiſcovered, is by a Fall become viſible, and ſo more obvious to a mortifying ſtroke. The Soul lays the faſter hold on Chriſt and the Promiſe, and goes out againſt that Enemy in the Name of that *Lord of Hoſts* of which he was too negligent of before; and therefore as he proves more ſtrong, ſo more ſucceſsful: He hath more ſtrength, becauſe he hath leſs confidence in himſelf, and more in God, the prime ſtrength of his Soul. As it was with Chriſt, ſo it is with us, while the *Devil* was bruiſing his Heel, he was bruiſing his Head; and while the Devil is bruiſing our heel, the God of Peace and Wiſdom is ſometimes bruiſing his head both in us and for us; ſo that the ſtrugglings of Sin, are often as the faint groans or bitings of a Beaſt that is ready to expire. 'Tis juſt with a Man ſometimes, as with a Running Fountain that hath Mud at the bottom, when it is ſtirred the Mud tinctures and defiles it all over; yet ſome of that Mud hath a vent with the Streams which run from it, ſo that when it is re-ſettled at the bottom, 'tis not ſo much in quantity as it was before. God by his *Wiſdom* weakens the Sin, By permitting it to ſtir and defile.

4. *Sometimes Divine Wiſdom makes it an occaſion to promote a Sanctification in all parts of the Soul.* As the working of one Ill-humor in the Body, is an occaſion of caſhiering not only that, but the reſt by a ſound Purge. As a Man that is a little Cold, doth not think of the Fire; but if he ſlips with one Foot into an Icy-puddle, he haſtens to the Fire, whereby not only that part, but all the reſt receive a warmth and ſtrength upon that occaſion: Or, as if a Perſon fall into the Mire, his Cloaths are waſhed; and by that means cleanſed, not only from the filth at preſent contracted, but from the former Spots that were before unregarded. God by his *Wiſdom* brings ſecret Sins to a diſcovery, and thereby cleanſeth the Soul of them.

Davids Fall might be ordered as an anſwer to his former Petition, *Pſal.* 19. 12. *Cleanſe thou me from my ſecret ſins*; and as he did earneſtly pray after his Fall, ſo no doubt but he endeavour'd a thorough Sanctification, *Pſal.* 51. 7. *Purge me, waſh*

waſh me; and that he meant not only a *Sanctification* from that ſingle Sin, but from all, Root and Branch, is evident by that Complaint of the flaw in his Nature *verſe.* 5. the Droſs and Chaff which lies in the heart is hereby diſcovered, and an opportunity adminiſtred of throwing it out, and ſearching all the corners of the Heart to diſcover where it lay. As God ſometime takes occaſion from one Sin to reckon with Men in a way of Juſtice for others; ſo he ſometimes takes occaſion from the commiſſion of one Sin, to bring out all the actions againſt the Sinner, to make him, in a way of gracious Wiſdom, ſet more cordially upon the work of *Sanctification.*

A great Fall ſometimes hath been the occaſion of a Mans Converſion. The Fall of Mankind occaſioned a more bleſſed Reſtoration; and the Falls of particular Believers, oft-times occaſion a more extenſive Sanctification. Thus the *only wiſe God* makes poyſons in Nature, to become Medicines in a way of Grace and Wiſdom.

5. *Hereby the growth in Grace is furthered.* 'Tis a wonder of Divine Wiſdom, to ſubſtract ſometimes his Grace from a Perſon, and let him fall into Sin, thereby to occaſion the increaſe of habitual Grace in him, and to augment it by thoſe ways that ſeem'd to depreſs it. By making Sins an occaſion of a more vigorous acting the contrary Grace, the wiſdom of God makes our corruptions in their own nature deſtructive, to become profitable to us. Grace often breaks out more ſtrongly afterwards, as the *Sun* doth with its heat, after it hath been mask'd and interrupted with a Miſt: They often, through the mighty working of the Spirit make us more *humble*, and *Humility fits us to receive more Grace from God* *. How doth Faith, that ſunk under the Waves, lift up its head again, and carry the Soul out with a greater livelineſs? What ardours of Love, what flouds of Repenting Tears, what ſeverity of Revenge, what horrours at the remembrace of the Sin, what Tremblings at the appearance of a ſecond Temptation? So that Grace ſeems to be awaken'd to a *new* and more vigorous *life* *. The broken Joynt is many times ſtronger in the Rupture, than it was before. The Luxuriancy of the Branches of Corruption, is an occaſion of purging, and purging is with a deſign to make Grace more fruitful; *John* 15.2. *He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*

* James 4. 6.

* 2 Cor. 7. 11.

Thus Divine Wiſdom doth both ſharpen and brighten us by the duſt of Sin, and ripen and mellow the fruits of Grace by the dung of Corruption. Grace grows the ſtronger by oppoſition, as the Fire burns hotteſt and cleareſt, when it is moſt ſurrounded by a cold Air; and our natural heat reaſſumes a new ſtrength by the coldneſs of the Winter. The ſoyl under a *Diamond*, though an imperfection in it ſelf, increaſeth the beauty and luſtre of the Stone. The Enmity of Man was a commendation of the Grace of God: It occaſioned the breaking out of the Grace of God upon us; and is an occaſion, by the Wiſdom and Grace of God, of the increaſe of Grace many times in us.

How ſhould the Conſideration of Gods Incomprehenſible Wiſdom, in the management of Evil, ſwallow us up in Admiration; who brings forth ſuch beauty, ſuch eminent Diſcoveries of himſelf, ſuch excellent good to the Creature, out of the bowels of the greateſt Contrarieties, making dark ſhadows ſerve to diſplay and beautifie to our apprehenſions the Divine Glory? If Evil were not in the World, Men would not know what Good is: They would not behold the luſtre of Divine VViſdom; as without Night we could not underſtand the beauty of the Day.

Thugh God is not the Author of Sin, becauſe of his Holineſs, yet he is the Adminiſtrator of Sin by his VViſdom, and accompliſheth his own Purpoſes, by the Iniquities of his Enemies, and the Lapſes and Infirmities of his Friends.

Thous much for the Second, *The Government of Man in his Lapſed ſtate, and the Government of Sin*, wherein the *Wiſdom* of God doth wonderfully appear.

III. *The Wiſdom of God appears in the Government of Man in his Converſion and Return to him.* If there be a Counſel in framing the loweſt Creature, and in the minuteſt paſſages of Providence; there muſt needs be a higher *Wiſdom* in the government of the Creature to a ſupernatural end, and framing the Soul to be a monument of his Glory. The *Wiſdom* of God is ſeen with more Admirations,

and

* Eph. 3. 10. and in more varieties by the Angels *in the Church*, than in the Creation * ; that is, informing a Church out of the Rubbiſh of the World, out of Contrarieties and Contradictions to him ; which is greater than the framing a Celeſtial and Elementary World out of a rude *Chaos*. The moſt glorious bodies in the world, even thoſe of the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*, have not ſuch ſtamps of Divine Skill upon them, as the *Soul* of Man; nor is there ſo much of Wiſdom in the Fabrick and faculties of that, as in the reduction of a blind, wilful, rebellious Soul to its own happineſs, and Gods glory ; *Eph.* 1. 11, 12. *He worketh all things according to the counſel of his own Will, that we ſhould be for the praiſe of his glory.* If all things, then this, which is none of the leaſt of his works : To the praiſe of the glory of his Goodneſs in his work, and to the praiſe of the Rule of his work, his Counſel, in both the act of his *Will*, and the act of his *Wiſdom*. The reſtoring of the Beauty of the Soul, and its fitneſs for its true end, ſpeaks no leſs *Wiſdom*, than the firſt draught of it in Creation : And the application of Redemption, and bringing forth the fruits of it is as well an act of his Prudence, as the contrivance was of his Counſel.

Divine *Wiſdom* appears,

First, *In the Subjects of Converſion.* His Goodneſs reigns in the very Duſt, and he erects the Walls and Ornaments of his *Temple* from the Clay and Mud of the World : He paſſes over the *Wiſe*, and *Noble*, and *Mighty*, that may pretend ſome grounds of boaſting in their own natural or acquired Endowments ; and pitches upon the moſt contemptible Materials, wherewith to build a ſpiritual Tabernacle for himſelf, 1 *Cor.* 1. 26, 27. *The fooliſh, and weak things of the World* ; thoſe that are naturally moſt unfit for it, and moſt refractory to it. Herein lies the skill of an Architect, to render the moſt knotty, crooked, and inform pieces, by his art, ſubſervient to his main purpoſe and deſign. Thus God hath ordered from the beginning of the World, contrary Tempers, various Humors, divers Nations, as Stones of ſeveral Natures, to be a *Building* for himſelf, *filthy framed together*, and
* 1 Cor. 3. 9. to be his own Family *. Who will queſtion the skill that alters a black Jet into a clear *Chryſtal*, a *Glow-worm* into a *Star*, a *Lion* into a *Lamb*, and a *Swine* into a *Dove*? The more intricate and knotty any buſineſs is, the more eminent is any Nans ability and Prudence, in untying the knots and bringing it to a good Iſſue. The more deſperate the Diſeaſe, the more admirable is the Phyſicians Skill in the Cure.

He pitches upon Men for his ſervice, who have Natural diſpoſitions to ſerve him in ſuch ways as he diſpoſeth of them, after their Converſion : So *Paul* was naturally a Conſcientious man ; what he did againſt Chriſt was from the dictates of an erroneous Conſcience, ſoak'd in the *Phariſaical* Interpretations of the *Jewiſh* Law : He had a ſtrain of Zeal to proſecute what his depraved Reaſon and Conſcience did inform him in. God pitches upon this Man, and works him in the Fire for his Service : He alters not his Natural diſpoſition, to make him of a Conſtitution and Temper contrary to what he was before ; but directs it to another object, claps in another Byaſs into the Bowl, and makes his Ill-governed Diſpoſitions move in a new way of his own appointment, and guided that Natural heat to the ſervice of that Intereſt, which he was before ambitious to extirpate. As a high metled Horſe, when left to himſelf, creates both diſturbance and danger. But under the conduct of a wiſe Rider, moves regularly ; not by a change of his Natural fierceneſs, but a skilful management of the Beaſt to the Riders purpoſe.

2. *In the ſeaſons of Converſion.* The Prudence of Man conſiſts in the Timing the execution of his Counſels ; and no leſs doth the *Wiſdom* of God conſiſt in this. As he is a *God of Judgment*, or *Wiſdom*, he waits to introduce his Grace into the Soul in the fitteſt Seaſon.

This Attribute, *Paul* in the ſtory of his own Converſion puts a particular remark upon, which he doth not upon any other, in that Catalogue he reckons up 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. *Now unto the King Eternal, Immortal, Inviſible, the only Wiſe God, be Honour and Glory for ever and ever, Amen.* A moſt ſolemn *Doxology*, wherein *wiſdom* ſits upon the Throne above all the reſt, with a ſpecial *Amen* to the glory of it ; which refers to the Timing of his Mercy ſo to *Paul*, as made moſt for the glory of his Grace, and the encouragement of others from him as the Patern. God took him at a time when he was upon the brink of Hell ; when he

was

was ready to devour the New-born Infant Church at *Damaſcus*; when he was Arm'd with all the Authority from without, and fired with all the Zeal from within, for the proſecution of his Deſign: *Then* God ſeizeth upon him, and runs him in a Chanel for his own Honour, and his Creatures happineſs.

'Tis obſervable * how God ſet his Eye upon *Paul* all along in his furious courſe, and lets him have the Reins, without putting out his hand to bridle him; yet no motion he could take, but the Eye of God runs along with him: He ſuffered him to *kick againſt the pricks* of Miracles, and the convincing Diſcourſe of *Stephen*, at his Martyrdom. There were many that Voted for *Stephens* Death, as the Witneſſes that flung the *Stones* firſt at him; but they are not named, only *Saul*, who teſtified his Approbation as well as the reſt, and that by watching the *Witneſſes* Cloaths while they were about that bloody work, *Acts* 7. 58. *The Witneſſes laid their cloaths at a young Mans feet, named Saul.* Again, though Multitudes were conſenting to his Death, yet *Acts* 8. 1. *Saul* only is mentioned. Gods Eye is upon him, yet he would not at that time ſtop his Fury: He goes on further, and makes *havock of the Church*, *Acts* 8. 3. He had ſurely many more Accomplices, but none are named (as if none regarded with any deſign of Grace) but *Saul*: Yet God would not reach out his hand to Change him, but Eyes him; waiting for a fitter opportunity, which in his *Wiſdom* he did foreſee. And therefore *Acts* 9. 1. the Spirit of God adds a *Yet*; *Saul yet breathing out Threatnings.* It was not Gods time *yet*, but it would be ſhortly. But when *Saul* was putting in execution his deſign againſt the Church of *Damaſcus*, when the *Devil* was at the top of his Hopes, and *Saul* in the height of his Fury, and the *Chriſtians* ſunk into the depth of their Fears; the *Wiſdom* of God lays hold of the opportunity, and by *Pauls* Converſion at this Seaſon, defeats the Devil, diſappoints the *High Prieſts*, ſhields his People, diſcharges their Fears by pulling *Saul* out of the Devils hands, and forming Satans Inſtrument to a holy Activity againſt him.

* *Which I have upon another Occaſion noted.*

3. The *Wiſdom* of God appears, *In the manner of Converſion.* So great a Change God makes, not by a deſtruction, but with a preſervation of, and ſutableneſs to Nature. As the *Devil* Tempts us, not by offering violence to our Natures, but by propoſing things convenient to our Corrupt Natures; ſo doth God ſolicite us to a Return, by propoſals ſuted to our Faculties. As he doth in Nature convey Nouriſhment to Men, by means of the Fruits of the Earth, and produceth the Fruits of the Earth by the Influences of Heaven; the Influences of Heaven do not force the Earth, but excite that Natural virtue and ſtrength which is in it. So God produceth Grace in the Soul by the Means of the *Word*, fitted to the capacity of Man, as Man, and proportion'd to his Rational faculties, as Rational.

It would be contrary to the *Wiſdom* of God, to move Man like a Stone, to invert the order and priviledge of that Nature which he ſettled in Creation; for then God would in vain have given Man Underſtanding and Will: Becauſe without moving Men according to thoſe Faculties, they would remain unprofitable and unuſeful in Man. * God doth not reduce us to himſelf, as Logs, by a meer force; or as Slaves forced by a Gudgel, to go forth to that place, and do that work which they have no ſtomach to: But he doth accommodate himſelf to thoſe Foundations he hath laid in our Nature, and guides us in a way agreeable thereunto, by an Action as ſweet as powerful; clearing our Underſtandings of dark Principles whereby we may ſee his Truth, our own Miſery, and the Seat of our Happineſs; and bending our Wills according to this Light, to deſire and move conveniently to this End of our Calling: *Efficaciouſly*, yet *agreeably*; powerfully, yet without impoſing on our Natural Faculties; *ſweetly without Violence in ordering the Means, but effectually without Failing in accompliſhing the End. And therefore the *Scripture* calleth it, *Teaching*, John 6. 45. *Alluring*, Hoſ. 2. 14. *Calling us to ſeek the Lord*, Pſal. 27. 8. *Teaching*, is an act of Wiſdom: *Alluring*, an act of Love; *Calling*, an act of Authority: But none of them argue a violent conſtraint. The principles that moves the Will is Supernatural; but the Will, as a Natural Faculty, concurs in the act or motion.

* Daillé *ſur* Philip. *Part.* 1. *p.* 545, 546.

* Sanderſon, *Part* 2. *p.* 205.

God doth not act in this in a way of Abſolute Power, without an Infinite Wiſdom,

dom, ſuting himſelf to the Nature of the things he acts upon: He doth not change the *Phyſical* Nature, though he doth the *Moral*. As in the Government of the World, he doth not make heavy things aſcend, nor light things deſcend, ordinarily; but guides their Motions according to their Natural qualities: So God doth not ſtrain the Faculties beyond their due pitch. He lets the nature of the Faculty remain; but changes the Principle in it: The Underſtanding remains Underſtanding, and the Will remains Will. But where there was before Folly in the Underſtanding, he put in a Spirit of Wiſdom; and where there was before a ſtoutneſs in the Will, he forms it to a pliableneſs to his offers. He hath a Key to fit every Ward in the Lock, and opens the Will without injuring the Nature of the Will.

He doth not change the Soul by an alteration of the Faculties, but by an alteration of ſomething in them: Not by an Inroad upon them, or by meer power, or a blind Inſtinct; but by propoſing to the Underſtanding ſomething to be known, and informing it of the Reaſonableneſs of his Precepts, and the Innate goodneſs and excellency of his Offers, and by inclining the Will to love and embrace what is propoſed. And things are propos'd under thoſe Notions, which uſually move our Wills and Affections. We are moved by things as they are good, pleaſant, profitable; we entertain things as they make for us, and deteſt things as they are contrary to us. Nothing effects us but under ſuch qualities; and God ſutes his Encouragements to theſe Natural Affections which are is us: His Power and Wiſdom go hand in hand together; his Power to act what his Wiſdom orders, and his Wiſdom to conduct what his Power executes. He brings Men to him in ways ſuted to their Natural diſpoſitions. The ſtubborn he tears like a *Lion*, the gentle he wins like a *Turtle*, by ſweetneſs; he hath a Hammer to break the ſtout, and a Cord of Love to draw the more pliable Tempers: He works upon the more Rational in a way of Goſpel Reaſon; upon the more Ingenuous in a way of kindneſs, and draws them by the *Cords of Love*.

The *Wiſe-men* were led to Chriſt by a *Star*, and Means ſuted to the knowledg and ſtudy that thoſe *Eaſtern* Nations uſed, which was much in *Aſtronomy*: He worketh upon others by Miracles accommodated to every ones ſenſe, and ſo proportions the Means according to the Nature of the Subjects he works upon.

4. *The Wiſdom of God is apparent in his Diſcipline, and Penal Evils.* The Wiſdom of Human Governments it ſeen in the matter of their Laws, and in the Penalties of their Laws, and in the proportion of the Puniſhment to the Offence, and in the good that redounds from the Puniſhment either to the Offender, or to the Community.

The *Wiſdom* of God is ſeen in the Penalty of Death upon the Tranſgreſſion of his Law; both in that it was the greateſt Evil that Man might fear, and ſo was a convenient means to keep him in his due bound, and alſo in the proportion of it to the Tranſgreſſion. Nothing leſs could be in a Wiſe Juſtice inflicted upon an Offender for a Crime againſt the higheſt Being, and the Supream Excellency: But this hath been ſpoken of before, in the *Wiſdom of his Laws*. I ſhall only mention ſome few, it would be too tedious to run into all.

1. His *Wiſdom* appears *in Judgments, in the ſuting them to the qualities of Perſons, and nature of Sins.* He *deviſeth evil*, *Jer.* 18. 11. his Judgments are fruits of Counſel. *He alſo is wiſe, and will bring Evil*, *Iſai.* 31. 2. Evil ſutable to the Perſon offending, and Evil ſutable to the Offence committed: As the Huſbandman doth his Threſhing Inſtruments to the Grain: He hath a Rod for the *Cummin*, a tenderer Seed, and a Flayl for the harder; ſo hath God greater Judgments for the obdurate Sinner, and lighter for thoſe that have ſomething of tenderneſs in their Wickedneſs, *Iſai.* 28. 27, 29. *Becauſe he is wonderful in Counſel, and excellent in working*; ſo Some underſtand the place, *With the froward, he will ſhew himſelf froward.*

He proportions puniſhment to the Sin, and writes the cauſe of the Judgment in the Forehead of the Judgment it ſelf. *Sodom* burned in Luſt, and was conſumed by *Fire from Heaven*. The *Jews* ſold Chriſt for *Thirty pence*; and at the Taking of *Jeruſalem*, *Thirty of them* were ſold for a Penny. So *Adonibezek*

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Cut off the Thumbs and great Toes of others, and he is ſerved in the ſame kind, *Judg.* 1. 7. The *Bable* Builders deſign'd an indiſſoluble union, and God brings upon them an unintelligible Confuſion. And in *Exod.* 9. 9. the *Aſhes of the Furnace*, where the *Iſraelites* burnt the *Egyptian* Bricks ſprinkled towards Heaven, brought *Boyls* upon the *Egyptian* Bodies, that they might feel in their own, what Pain they had cauſed in the *Iſraelites* fleſh; and find by the ſmart of the inflamed *Scab*, what they had made the *Iſraelites* endure. The *Waters* of the River *Nilus* are *turned into Blood*, wherein they had ſtifled the breath of the *Iſraelites* Infants: And at laſt the Prince, and the flower of their Nobility, are drowned in the *Red Sea*.

'Tis part of the *Wiſdom* of Juſtice to proportion puniſhment to the Crime, and the degrees of Wrath to the degrees of malice in the Sin. Afflictions alſo are wiſely proportion'd: God, as a *wiſe Phyſician*, conſiders the nature of the humor and ſtrength of the Patient, and ſutes his Medicines both to the one and the other, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13.

2. *In the ſeaſons of Puniſhments and Afflictions.* He ſtays till Sin be ripe, that his Juſtice may appear more equitable, and the Offender more inexcuſable; *Dan.* 9. 14. he *watches upon the evil to bring it upon Men.* To bring it in the juſt Seaſon and order, for his righteous and gracious purpoſe; his Righteous purpoſe on the Enemies, and his Gracious purpoſe on his people.

Jeruſalems Calamity came upon them, when the City was full of people at the Solemnity of the *Paſſeover*, that he might mow down his Enemies at once, and Time their Deſtruction to ſuch a moment wherein they had Timed the Crucifixion of his Son. He watched over the Clouds of his Judgements, and kept them from pouring down, till his people the *Chriſtians* were provided for, and had departed out of the City to the Chambers and retiring places God had provided for them. He made not *Jeruſalem* the Shambles for his Enemies, till he had made *Pella* and other places, the Ark of his Friends. As *Pliny* tells us, the providence of God holds the Seas in a calm for *fifteen days*, that the *Halcyons*, little Birds, that frequent the Shoar, may build their Neſts, and hatch up their Young. The Judgment upon *Sodom* was ſuſpended for ſome hours, till *Lot* was ſecured.

* God ſuffer'd not the Church to be Invaded by Violent Perſecutions, till ſhe was eſtabliſh'd in the Faith: He would not expoſe her to ſo great Combats, while ſhe was weak and feeble, but gave her time to fortifie her ſelf, to be render'd more capable of bearing up under them. He ſtifled all the motions of paſſion the Idolaters might have for their Superſtition, till Religion was in ſuch a condition, as rather to be increaſed and purified, than extinguiſh'd by Oppoſition. *Paul* was ſecur'd from *Nero's* Chains, and the Nets of his Enemies, till he had broke off the Chain of the Devil from many *Cities* of the *Gentles*, and catched them by the Net of the *Goſpel* out of the Sea of the World. * Daille *ſur* 1 Cor. 10. *p.* 390.

Thus the *Wiſdom* of God is ſeen in the Seaſons of Judgments and *Afflictions*.

3. *It is apparent in the gracious iſſue of Afflictions and Penal Evils.* It is a part of Wiſdom to bring *Good* out of the *Evil* of *puniſhment*, as well as to bring *Good* out of *Sin*. The Church never was ſo like to Heaven, as when it was moſt Perſecuted by Hell: The Storms often cleans'd it, and the Lance often made it more healthful. *Jobs* Integrity had not been ſo clear, nor his Patience ſo illuſtrious, had not the *Devil* been permitted to afflict him. God by his *Wiſdom* outwits *Satan*; when he by his Temptations intends to pollute us and buffet us, God orders it to purifie us; he often brings the cleareſt light out of the thickeſt darkneſs, makes Poyſons to become Medicines. * *Death* it ſelf, the greateſt puniſhment in this Life, and the entrance into Hell in its own Nature, he hath by his Wiſe contrivance, made to his People the Gate of Heaven, and the paſſage into Immortality. Penal Evils in a Nation often end in a publick Advantage: Troubles and Wars among a people are many times not deſtroying, but Medicinal, and cure them of that Degeneracy, Luxury, and Effeminateneſs, they contracted by a long peace. * Turretin, *Serm. p.* 53.

4. This *Wiſdom* is evident, *In the various Ends which God brings about by Afflictions.* The attaiment of various Ends by one and the ſame Means, is the

fruit of the Agents Prudence. By the ſame Affliction, the wiſe God corrects ſometimes for ſome baſe Affection, excites ſome ſleepy Grace, drives out ſome lurking Corruption, refines the Soul, and ruines the luſt; diſcovers the greatneſs of a Crime, the Vanity of the Creature, and the Sufficiency in himſelf.

The *Jews* bind *Paul*, and by the Judge he is ſent to *Rome*; while his Mouth is ſtopt in *Judea*, 'tis open'd in one of the greateſt Cities of the World, and his Enemies unwittingly contribute to the increaſe of the *knowledge of Chriſt* by thoſe *Chains*, in that *City* * that triumphed over the Earth. And his Afflictive Bonds added Courage and reſolution to others, *Phil.* 1. 14. *Many waxing confident by my Bonds*; which could not in their own Nature produce ſuch an effect, but by the order and contrivance of Divine Wiſdom: In their own nature, they would rather make them diſguſt the Doctrine he ſuffered for, and cool their Zeal in the propagating of it, for fear of the ſame diſgrace and hardſhip they ſaw him ſuffer*. But the *Wiſdom* of God changed the nature of theſe Fetters, and conducted them to the glory of his Name, the encouragement of others, the increaſe of the Goſpel, and the comfort of the *Apoſtle* himſelf. *Phil.* 1. 12, 13, 18. The Sufferings of *Paul* at *Rome* confirm'd the *Philippians*, a People at a diſtance from thence, in the Doctrine they had already received at his hands.

* Acts 28. 31.

* Daille *ſur* Phlip. *Parta.* *pag.* 116, 117.

Thus God makes *Sufferings* ſometimes which appear like Judgments, to be like the *Viper* on *Pauls* hand, *Acts* 28. 6. A means to clear up Innocence, and procure favour to the Doctrine among thoſe *Barbarians*. How often hath he multiplied the Church by Death and Maſſacres, and increaſed it by thoſe means uſed to annihilate it?

5. The Divine *Wiſdom* is apparent *in the Deliverances he affords to other parts of the World, as well as to his Church.* There are delicate compoſures, curious threds in his Webs, and he works them like an Artificer. *A goodneſs wrought* for them, *curiouſly wrought*, Pſal. 31. 19.

1. *In making the Creatures ſubſervient in their Natural order to his gracious Ends and Purpoſes.* He orders things in ſuch a manner, as not to be neceſſitated to put forth an extraordinary Power in things, which ſome part of the Creation might accompliſh. Miraculous productions would ſpeak his power; but the ordering the Natural courſe of things, to occaſion ſuch effects they were never intended for, is one part of the glory of his *Wiſdom*. And that his *Wiſdom* may be ſeen in the courſe of Nature, he conducts the Notions of Creatures, and acts them in their own ſtrength; and doth that by various windings and turnings of them, which he might do in an inſtant by his Power, in a Supernatural way. Indeed ſometimes he hath made Invaſions on Nature, and ſuſpended the Order of their Natural Law for a ſeaſon, to ſhew himſelf the Abſolute Lord and Governour of Nature: Yet if frequent Alterations of this nature were made, they would impede the knowledg of the nature of things, and be ſome bar to the diſcovery and glory of his *VViſdom*; which is beſt ſeen by moving the wheels of inferior Creatures, in an exact regularity to his own Ends. He might, when his little Church in *Jacobs* Family was like to ſtarve in *Canaan*, have for their preſervation turn'd the *Stones* of the Country into Bread; but he ſends them down to *Egypt* to procure Corn, that a way may be opened for their removal into that Country; the Truth of his Prediction in their Captivity accompliſh'd, and a way made after the declaration of his great Name *Jehovah*, both in the fidelity of his VVord, and the greatneſs of his power, in their deliverance from that Furnace of Affliction. He might have ſtruck *Goliah*, the Captain of the *Philiſtines* Army, with a Thunderbolt from Heaven, when he Blaſphemed his Name and ſcar'd his people; but he uſeth the Natural ſtrength of a *Stone*, and the Artificial motion of a *Sling*, by the Arm of *David*, to confront the *Giant*, and thereby to free *Judea* from the ravage of a potent Enemy. He might have delivered the *Jews* from *Babylon* by as ſtrange Miracles, as he uſed in their Deliverance from *Egypt*: He might have plagu'd their Enemies, gather'd his people into a Body, and protected them by the bulwark of a *Cloud* and a *Pillar of Fire*, againſt the Aſſaults of their Enemies. But he uſes the differences between the *Perſians* and thoſe of *Babylon*, to accompliſh his Ends. How ſometimes hath the veering about of the wind on a ſudden been the loſs of a Navy, when it hath been upon the point of Victory, and driven back

back the Deſtruction upon thoſe which intended it for others? And the accidental ſtumbling, or the Natural fierceneſs of a Horſe, flung down a General in the midſt of a Battle, where he hath loſt his life by the throng, and his death hath brought a defeat to his Army, and deliverance to the other party, that were upon the brink of ruine? Thus doth the *Wiſdom* of God link things together according to Natural order, to work out his intended preſervation of a People.

2. *In the ſeaſon of deliverance.* The Timing of Affairs is a part of the Wiſdom of Man, and an eminent part of the *Wiſdom* of God. It is in *due ſeaſon* he ſends the *former and the latter Rain*, when the Earth is in the greateſt Indigence, and when his Influences may moſt contribute to the bringing forth and ripening the Fruit. The dumb Creatures have *their meat from him in due ſeaſon* :* And in his due ſeaſon have his darling People their Deliverance. When *Paul* was upon his Journey to *Damaſcus* with a Perſecuting Commiſſion, he is ſtruck down for the ſecurity of the *Church* in that City. The Nature of the *Lion* is changed in due ſeaſon for the preſervation of the *Lambs* from worrying. The *Iſraelites* are miraculouſly reſcued from *Egypt*, when their Wits were at a loſs, when their danger to Human underſtanding was unavoidable; when Earth and Sea refus'd protection, then the Wiſdom and Power of Heaven ſtept in to effect that, which was paſt the skill of the Conductors of that multitude. And when the Lives of the *Jews* lay at the ſtake, and their Necks were upon the Block at the mercy of their Enemies Swords by an Order from *Shuſhan*; not only a reprieve, but a Triumph arrives to the *Jews*, by the *Wiſdom* of God guiding the Affair, whereby of Perſons deſign'd to execution, they are made Conquerors, and have opportunity to exerciſe their Revenge inſtead of their Patience, proving *Triumphers* where they expected to be ſufferers*. How ſtrangely doth God by ſecret ways bow the hearts of Men, and the nature of things to the execution of that which he deſigns, notwithſtanding all the reſiſtance of that which would traverſe the ſecurity of his People? How often doth he trap the *wicked* in the work of their own hands, make their confidence to become their ruine, and enſnare them in thoſe Nets they wrought and laid for others? *Pſal.* 9. 16. *The wicked is ſnared in the works of his own hands. He ſcatters the proud in the imagination of their hearts, Luke.* 1. 51. in the height of their hopes, when their deſigns have been laid ſo deep in the foundation, and knit, and cemented ſo cloſe in their ſuperſtructure, that no Human Power or Wiſdom could raze them down: He hath then diſappointed their projects, and befool'd their Craft. How often hath he kept back the Fire, when it hath been ready to devour; broke the Arrows when they have been prepared in the Bow; turned the Spear into the bowels of the Bearers, and wounded them at the very inſtant they were ready to wound others.

* Pſal. 104. 27

* Eſth. 8, & 9.

3. *In ſuting Inſtruments to his purpoſe.* He either finds them fit, or makes them on a ſuddain fit for his gracious ends. If he hath a *Tabernacle* to build, he will fit a *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab*, with the Spirit of Wiſdom and Underſtanding in all *cunning workmanſhip*, *Exod.* 31. 3, 6. If he finds them crooked pieces, he can, like a wiſe *Architect*, make them ſtrait Beams for the rearing his Houſe, and for the honour of his Name.

He ſometimes picks out men, according to their natural Tempers, and employs them in his work: *Jehu*, a man of a furious Temper, and ambitious Spirit, is called out for the deſtruction of *Ahab*'s Houſe. *Moſes*, a man furniſht with all *Egyptian* wiſdom, fitted by a generous Education, prepared alſo by the Affliction he met with in his flight, and one who had had the benefit of converſation with *Jethro*, a man of more than an ordinary wiſdom and goodneſs, as appears by his prudent and religious Counſel; this man is called out to be the Head and Captain of an oppreſt people, and to reſcue them from their Bondage, and ſettle the firſt National Church in the world. So *Elijah*, a high ſpirited man, of a hot and angry temper, one that ſlighted the Frowns, and undervalued the Favour of Princes, is ſet up to ſtem the Torrent of the *Iſraelitiſh Idolatry*. So *Luther*, a man of the ſame temper, is drawn out by the ſame VViſdom to encounter the Corruptions in the Church, againſt ſuch Oppoſition, which a milder Temper would have ſunk under. The *Earth* in *Rev.* 12. 16. Is made an Inſtrument *to help the woman*: When the Grandees of that Age transferred the Imperial power upon *Conſtantine*;

who became afterwards a protecting and nurſing Father to the Church, an end which many of his Favourers never deſign'd, nor ever dreamt of: But God by his infinite Wiſdom made theſe ſeveral Deſigns like ſeveral Arrows ſhot at Rovers, meet in one Mark to which he directed them, *viz.* in bringing forth an Inſtrument to render Peace to the World, and Security and Increaſe to his Church.

III. *The Wiſdom of God doth wonderfully appear in Redemption.* His Wiſdom in *Creation* raviſheth the Eye and Underſtanding; his Wiſdom in *Government*, doth no leſs affect a curious Obſerver of the Links and Concatenation of the means; but his wiſdom in *Redemption* mounts the Mind to a greater aſtoniſhment. The works of Creation are the *Footſteps* of his Wiſdom; the work of Redemption is the *Face* of his Wiſdom: A man is better known by the Features of his Face, than by the Prints of his Feet. We with *open face*, or *a revealed face, beholding the glory of the Lord*, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *Face* there, refers to God, not to us; the glory of God's wiſdom is now open, and no longer covered and vailed by the ſhadows of the Law. As we behold the Light glorious, as ſcattered in the Air before the appearance of the Sun, but more glorioufly in the Face of the Sun, when it begins its Race in our Horizon. All the Wiſdom of God in Creation and Government in his variety of Laws, was like the light, the *three firſt* days of the Creation, diſperſt about the World, but the *fourth* day it was more glorious, when all gathered into the Body of the *Sun*, *Gen.* 1. 4, 16. So the Light of Divine wiſdom and glory, was ſcattered about the VVorld, and ſo more obſcure, till the *fourth Divine* day of the VVorld about the *four thouſandth year*, it was gathered into one Body, the Sun of Righteouſneſs, and ſo ſhone out more glorioufly to Men and Angels. All things are weaker, the thinner they are extended, but ſtronger, the more they are united and compacted in one Body and Appearance. In Chriſt, in the diſpenſation by him, as well as in his Perſon, were *hid all the treaſures of Wiſdom and knowledg*, *Coloſſ.* 2. 3. Some Doles of VViſdom were given out in Creation, but the Treaſures of it opened in Redemption; the higheſt degrees of it that ever God did exert in the VVorld. Chriſt is therefore called the *wiſdom of God*, as well as the *power of God*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 24. aud the Goſpel is called the *wiſdom of God*. Chriſt is the wiſdom of God *principally*, and the Goſpel *inſtrumentally*, as it is the power of God inſtrumentally to ſubdue the heart to himſelf. This is wrapped up in the appointing Chriſt as Redeemer, and open'd to us in the revelation of it by the Goſpel.

1. *It is a hidden wiſdom.* In this regard God is ſaid in the *Text*, to be *only wiſe*; and it is ſaid to be a *hidden wiſdom*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. and *wiſdom in a myſtery*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 7. incomprehenſible to the ordinary Capacity of an Angel, more than the abſtruſe qualities of the Creatures are to the underſtanding of man. No wiſdom of Men or Angels is able to ſearch all the Veins of this Mine, to tell all the threds of this VVeb, or to underſtand the luſtre of it; they are as far from an ability fully to comprehend it, as they were at firſt to contrive it. That wiſdom that invented it, can only comprehend it. In the uncreated Underſtanding only there is a clearneſs of light without any ſhadow of darkneſs. VVe come as ſhort of full apprehenſions of it, as a Child doth of the Counſel of the wiſeſt Prince. It is ſo hidden from us, that without Revelation, we could not have the leaſt imagination of it, and though it be revealed to us, yet without the help of an Infiniteneſs of Underſtanding, we cannot fully fathom it, 'Tis ſuch a tractate of Divine wiſdom, that the Angels never before had ſeen the Edition of it, till it was publiſh'd to the VVorld, *Eph.* 3. 10. *To the intent that now unto Principalities and Powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church, the manifold Wiſdom of God. Now* made known to them, not before; and now made known to them *in the heavenly places.* They had not the knowledg of all heavenly Myſteries, though they had the poſſeſſion of heavenly Glory: They knew the *Prophecies* of it in the VVord, but attained not a clear Interpretation of thoſe Prophecies, till the things that were prophecied of came upon the Stage.

2. *Manifold wiſdom*: So 'tis called. As *manifold* as myſterious. Variety in the Myſtery, and Myſtery in every part of the Variety. It was not one ſingle act, but a variety of Counſels met in it; a conjunction of excellent ends and excellent means

means. The glory of God, the ſalvation of Man, the defeat of the Apoſtate Angels, the diſcovery of the bleſſed Trinity in their Nature, Operations, their combin'd and diſtinct Acts and Expreſſions of Goodneſs: The means are the conjunction of *two Natures* infinitely diſtant from one another; the union of Eternity and Time, of Mortality and Immortality: Death is made the way to Life, and Shame the path to Glory. The weakneſs of the Croſs is the reparation of man; and the Creature is made wiſe by the *fooliſhneſs of preaching*; fallen man grows rich by the poverty of the Redeemer, and man is filled by the emptineſs of God: The Heir of Hell made a Son of God, by God's taking upon him the *form of a Servant*; the Son of Man advanc'd to the higheſt degree of Honour, by the Son of God becoming of *no reputation*.

'Tis called *Eph.* 1. 8. *abundance of Wiſdom and Prudence*. Wiſdom in the Eternal Counſel, contriving a way; Prudence in the Temporary Revelation, ordering all Affairs and Occurrences in the World for the attaining the end of his Counſel. Wiſdom refers to the Myſtery; Prudence to the manifeſtation of it in fit ways and convenient ſeaſons. Wiſdom, to the contrivance and order; Prudence, to the execution and accompliſhment. In all things God acted as *became him*, as a wiſe and juſt Governour of the World, *Heb.* 2. 10. Whether the wiſdom of God might not have found out ſome other way, or whether he were, in regard of the neceſſity and naturalneſs of his Juſtice, limited to this, is not the queſtion: But that it is the beſt and wiſeſt way for the manifeſtation of his glory, is out of queſtion.

This wiſdom will appear in the different Intereſts reconciled by it. In the Subject, the *ſecond Perſon* in the Trinity, wherein they were reconciled: In the *two Natures*, wherein he accompliſh'd it; whereby God is made known to man in his Glory, Sin eternally condemned, and the repenting and believing ſinner eternally reſcued. The honour and righteouſneſs of the Law vindicated both in the Precept and penalty. The *Devil*'s Empire overthrown by the ſame Nature he had overturned, and the Subtilty of Hell defeated by that Nature he had ſpoiled: The Creature engaged in the very act to the higheſt Obedience and Humility, that as God appears as a God upon his Throne, the Creature might appear in the loweſt poſture of a Creature, in the depths of reſignation and dependance; the publication of this made in the Goſpel, by ways congruous to the wiſdom which appeared in the execution of his Counſel, and the Conditions of enjoying the fruit of it, moſt wiſe and reaſonable.

1. *The greateſt different Intereſts are reconcil'd, Juſtice in puniſhing, and Mercy in pardoning.* For man had broken the Law, and plung'd himſelf into a Gulf of miſery: The Sword of Vengeance was unſheathed by Juſtice, for the puniſhment of the Criminal: The Bowels of Compaſſion were ſtirred by mercy, for the reſcue of the miſerable. Juſtice ſeverely beholds the Sin, and mercy compaſſionately reflects upon the miſery. Two different claims are entred by thoſe concerned Attributes: Juſtice votes for deſtruction, and Mercy votes for ſalvation. Juſtice would draw the Sword, and drench it in the blood of the Offender; Mercy would draw the Sword, and turn it from the breaſt of the Sinner. Juſtice would edge it, and mercy would blunt it. The Arguments are ſtrong on both ſides.

1. *Juſtice pleads.* I arraign, before the Tribunal, a Rebel, who was the glorious Work of thy hands, the Center of thy rich Goodneſs, and a Counterpart of they own Image; he is indeed miſerable, whereby to excite thy Compaſſion; but he is not miſerable, without being Criminal. Thou didſt create him in a ſtate, and with ability to be otherwiſe: The riches of thy Bounty aggravate the blackneſs of his Crime. He is a Rebel, not by neceſſity, but *will*. What conſtraint was there upon him to liſten to the Counſels of the Enemy of God? What force could there be upon him, ſince it is without the compaſs of any Creature to work upon, or conſtrain the Will? Nothing of ignorance can excuſe him; the Law was not ambiguouſly expreſſ'd, but in plain words, both as to Precept and Penalty it was writ in his nature in legible Characters: Had he received any diſguſt from thee after his Creation, it would not excuſe his Apoſtacy, ſince, as a Soveraign, thou wert not obliged to thy Creature. Thou hadſt provided all things richly

for

for him; he was crowned with glory and honour: Thy infinite power had beſtowed upon him an Habitation richly furniſhed, and varieties of Servants to attend him. Whatever he viewed without, and whatever he viewed within himſelf, were ſeveral Marks of thy Divine Bounty, to engage him to Obedience: Had there been ſome reaſon of any diſguſt, it could not have ballanced that kindneſs which had ſo much reaſon to oblige him: However, he had received no courteſie from the fallen Angel to oblige him to turn into his Camp. Was it not enough, that one of thy Creatures would have ſtript thee of the glory of Heaven, but this alſo muſt deprive thee of thy glory upon Earth, which was due from him to thee as his Creator? Can he charge the difficulty of the Command? No: It was rather below, than above his ſtrength. He might rather complain that it was no higher, whereby his obedience and Gratitude might have a larger ſcope, and a more ſpacious Field to move in, than a Precept ſo light, ſo eaſie, as to abſtain from one Fruit in the Garden. What excuſe can he have, that would prefer the liquoriſhneſs of his Senſe before the dictates of his reaſon, and the Obligations of his Creation? The Law thou didſt ſet him, was righteous and reaſonable, and ſhall Righteouſneſs and Reaſon be rejected by the Supream and Infallible Reaſon, becauſe the rebellious Creature hath trampled upon it? What? Muſt God abrogate his holy Law, becauſe the Creature hath ſlighted it? What Reflection will this be upon the Wiſdom that enacted it; And upon the Equity of the Command and Sanction of it? Either Man muſt ſuffer, or the Holy Law be expunged, and for ever out of date. And is it not better, Man ſhould Eternally ſmart under his Crime, than any diſhonourable Reflections of Unrighteouſneſs be caſt upon the Law, and of folly, and want of foreſight upon the Lawgiver? Not to puniſh, would be to approve the Devils Lye, and juſtifie the Creatures Revolt. It would be a Condemnation of thy own Law as unrighteous, and a Sentencing thy own Wiſdom as imprudent. Better Man ſhould for ever bear the Puniſhment of his Offence, than God bear the diſhonour of his Attributes: Better Man ſhould be miſerable, than God ſhould be unrighteous, unwiſe, falſe, and tamely bear the denial of his Soveraignty. But what advantage would it be to gratifie Mercy by Pardoning the Malefactor? Beſides the irreparable diſhonour to the Law, the falſifying thy veracity in not executing the denounced threatning, he would receive incouragement by ſuch a grace to ſpurn more at thy Soveraignty, and oppoſe thy Holineſs by running on in a courſe of ſin with hopes of Impunity: If the Creature be reſtored, it cannot be expected, that he that hath fared ſo well, after the breach of it, ſhould be very careful of a future obſervance: His eaſie readmiſſion would abet him in the repetition of his Offence, and thou ſhalt ſoon find him caſt off all Moral dependance on thee. Shall he be reſtored without any Condition, or Covenant; He is a Creature not to be governed without a Law, and a Law is not to be enacted without a Penalty. What future regard will he have to thy Precept, or what fear will he have of thy Threatning, if his Crime be ſo lightly paſt over? Is it the ſtability of thy Word? What reaſon will he have to give credit to that, which he hath found already diſregarded by thy ſelf? They Truth in future Threatnings will be of no force with him, who hath experienced thy laying it aſide in the former. 'Tis neceſſary therefore that the rebellious creature ſhould be puniſhed for the preſervation of the honour of the Law and the honour of the Lawgiver, with all thoſe perfections that are united in the compoſure of it.

2. Secondly, *Mercy doth not want a Plea.* 'Tis true indeed, the ſin of man wants not its aggravations: He hath ſlighted thy Goodneſs, and accepted thy Enemy as his Counſellor; but it was not a pure act of his own, as the *Devils* revolt was: He had a Tempter, and the Devil had none: He had, I acknowledge, an Underſtanding to know thy Will, and a Power to obey it; yet he was mutable and had a capacity to fall. It was no difficult task that was ſet him, nor a hard yoke that was laid upon; yet he had a brutiſh part, as well as a rational, and ſenſe as well as Soul; whereas the fallen Angel was a pure intellectual Spirit. Did God create the World to ſuffer an eternal diſhonour, in leting himſelf be outwitted by *Satar*, and his work wreſted out of his hands? Shall the work of eternal

nal Counſel preſently ſink into irreparable deſtruction, and the honour of an Almighty and wiſe Work be loſt in the ruine of the Creature? This would ſeem contrary to the nature of thy Goodneſs, to make Man only to render him miſerable: To deſign him in his Creation for the Service of the Devil, and not for the Service of his Creator. What elſe could be the iſſue, if the chief work of thy Hand, defaced preſently after the erecting, ſhould for ever remain in this marred condition; What can be expected upon the continuance of his miſery, but a perpetual hatred, and enmity of thy Creature againſt thee? Did God in Creation deſign his being hated, or his being loved by his Creature? Shall God make a holy Law, and have no obedience to that Law from that Creature whom it was made to govern? Shall the curious workmanſhip of God, and the excellent Engravings of the Law of Nature in his heart, be ſo ſoon defaced, and remain in that blotted condition for ever? This fall thou couldſt not but in the treaſures of thy Infinite Knowledg foreſee; Why hadſt thou Goodneſs then to Create him in an Integrity, if thou wouldſt not have Mercy to pity him in Miſery? Shall thy Enemy for ever trample upon the honour of thy Work, and triumph over the Glory of God, and applaud himſelf in the ſucceſs of his ſubtility? Shall thy Creature only paſſively glorifie thee as an Avenger, and not actively as a Compaſſionater? Am not I a perfection of thy Nature as well as Juſtice? Shall Juſtice ingroſs all, and I never come into view? 'Tis reſolved already, that the fallen Angels ſhall be no Subjects for me to exerciſe my ſelf upon; and I have now leſs reaſon than before to plead for them: They fell with a full conſent of will, without any motion from another; and not content with their own Apoſtacy they envy thee, and thy glory upon Earth, as well as in Heaven, and have drawn into their party the beſt part of the Creation below: Shall Satan plunge the whole Creation in the ſame irreparable ruine with himſelf; If the Creature be reſtored, will he contract a boldneſs in ſin by impurity? Haſt thou not a Grace to render him ingenuous in Obedience, as well as a Compaſſion to recover him from Miſery? What will hinder, but that ſuch a Grace, which hath eſtabliſhed the ſtanding Angels, may eſtabliſh this recovered Creature? If I am utterly excluded from exerciſing my ſelf on men, as I have been from Devils, a whole Species is loſt; nay, I can never expect to appear upon the Stage: If thou wilt quite ruine him by Juſtice, and create another World, and another man, if he ſtand, they Bounty will be eminent, yet there is no room for mercy to act unleſs by the Commiſſion of ſin, he expoſeth himſelf to Miſery; and if ſin enter into another World, I have little hopes to be heard then, if I am rejected now. VVorlds will be perpetually created by Goodneſs, Wiſdom, and Power: Sin entring into theſe Worlds, will be perpetually puniſhed by Juſtice; and Mercy, which is a perfection of thy Nature, will for ever be commanded ſilence, and lie wrapt up in an eternal Darkneſs. Take occaſion now therefore to expoſe me to the knowledg of thy Creature, ſince without miſery, mercy can never ſet foot into the VVorld.

Mercy pleads, if man be ruined, the Creation is in vain; Juſtice pleads, if man be not ſentenced, the Law is in vain; Truth backs Juſtice, and Grace abets Mercy. VVhat ſhall be done in this ſeeming Contradiction? Mercy is not manifeſted, if man be not pardoned; Juſtice will complain, if man be not puniſhed.

3. *An expedient is found out by the Wiſdom of God to anſwer theſe Demands, and adjuſt the Differences between them.* The wiſdom of God anſwers, I will ſatisfie your Pleas. The Pleas of Juſtice ſhall be ſatisfied in puniſhing, and the pleas of Mercy ſhall be received in pardoning. Juſtice ſhall not complain for want of puniſhment, nor mercy for want of Compaſſion. I will have an infinite Sacrifice to content Juſtice; and the Vertue and Fruit of that Sacrifice ſhall delight mercy. Here ſhall Juſtice have puniſhment to accept, and Mercy ſhall have pardon to beſtow. The Rights of both are preſerved, and the Demands of both amicably accorded in puniſhment and pardon, by transferring the puniſhment of our Crimes upon a ſurety, exacting a Recompence from his Blood by *Juſtice*, and conferring life and ſalvation upon us by *Mercy* without the expence

pence of one drop of our own. This is Juſtice ſatisfied in its Severities, and Mercy in its Indulgences. The riches of Grace are twiſted with the terrors of Wrath. The bowels of Mercy are wound about the flaming Sword of Juſtice, and the Sword of Juſtice protects and ſecures the bowels of Mercy. Thus is God righteous without being cruel, and merciful without being unjuſt; his Righteouſneſs inviolable, and the World recoverable. Thus is a reſplendent Mercy brought forth in the midſt of all the Curſes, Confuſions, and VVrath threatned to the Offender.

Thus is the admirable temperament found out by the VViſdom of God, His *Juſtice* is honoured in the Sufferings of Man's Surety; and his *Mercy* is honoured in the application of the *propitiation* to the Offender. *Rom.* 3. 24, 25. *Being juſtified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt: Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God.* Had we in our perſons been Sacrifices to Juſtice, Mercy had for ever been unknown; had we been ſolely foſtered by Mercy, Juſtice had for ever been ſecluded; had we, being guilty, been abſolved, Mercy might have rejoyced, and Juſtice might have complained; had we been ſolely puniſhed, Juſtice would have triumphed, and mercy grieved. But by this *medium* of Redemption, neither hath ground of Complaint: *Juſtice* hath nothing to charge, when the puniſhment is inflicted; *Mercy* hath whereof to boaſt when the Surety is accepted. The Debt of the Sinner is transferred upon the Surety, that the Merit of the Surety may be conferred upon the Sinner; ſo that God now deals with our ſins in a way of conſuming Juſtice, and with our Perſons in a way of relieving Mercy, 'Tis highly better, and more glorious, than if the Claim of one had been granted, with the excluſion of the demand of the other: It had then been either an unrighteous Mercy, or a mercileſs Juſtice: 'Tis now a righteous Mercy, and a merciful Juſtice.

2. *The Wiſdom of God appears in the Subject or Perſon wherein theſe were accorded*; The *ſecond Perſon* in the bleſſed Trinity. There was a congruity in the *Sons* undertaking and effecting it rather than any other Perſon, according to the order of the Perſons, and the ſeveral functions of the perſons, as repreſented in *Scripture*. The Father, after Creation, is the *Law-giver*, and preſents man with the Image of his own Holineſs and the way to his Creatures happineſs: But after the Fall, man was too impotent to perform the Law, and too polluted to enjoy a Felicity. *Redemption* was then neceſſary; not that it was neceſſary for God to redeem man, but it was neceſſary for man's happineſs, that he ſhould be recovered. To this the *ſecond Perſon* is appointed, that by Communion with him, man might derive a happineſs, and be brought again to God. But ſince man was blind in his *Underſtanding*, and an Enemy in his *will* to God, there muſt be the exerting of a Vertue to enlighten his mind, and bend his Will to underſtand, and accept of this Redemption: And this work is aſſigned to the *third perſon*, the Holy Ghoſt.

1. *It was not congruous that the Father ſhould aſſume Human Nature, and ſuffer in it for the Redemption of man.* He was *firſt in order*, he was the Lawgiver, and therefore to be the Judge. As Lawgiver, it was not convenient he ſhould ſtand in the ſtead of the Law-breaker; and as a Judge, it was as little convenient he ſhould be reputed a Malefactor: That he who had made a Law againſt ſin, denounced a Penalty upon the commiſſion of ſin, and whoſe part it was actually to puniſh the ſinner, ſhould become ſin for the wilful Tranſgreſſor of his law, He being the *Rector*, how could he be an *Advocate* and Interceſſor to himſelf? How could he be the Judge and the Sacrifice? A Judge, and yet a Mediator to himſelf? If he had been the Sacrifice, there muſt be ſome Perſon to examine the validity of it, and pronounce the Sentence of acceptance. Was it agreeable that the Son ſhould ſit upon a Throne of Judgment, and the Father ſtand at the Bar, and be reſponſible to the Son? That the Son ſhould be in the place of a Governour, and the Father in the place of the Criminal? That the Father ſhould be bruiſed *by the Son, as the Son was by the Father; * that the Son ſhould awaken a Sword againſt the Father, as the Father did againſt the Son; that the Father ſhould be ſent by the Son as the Son was by the Father *: The *order* of the perſons in the bleſſed Trinity

* Iſa. 53. 10.
* Zach. 13. 70.
* Gal. 4. 4.

Trinity had been inverted and diſturbed. Had the Father been ſent, he had not been firſt in order; the Sender is before the Perſon ſent: As the Father begets, and the Son is begotten, *Joh.* 1. 14. ſo the Father ſends, and the Son is ſent. He whoſe order is to ſend, cannot properly ſend himſelf.

2. *Nor was it congruous that the Spirit ſhould be ſent upon this Affair.* If the *Holy Ghoſt* had been ſent to redeem us, and the Son to *apply* that Redemption to us, the order of the Perſons had alſo been inverted: The Spirit then, who was *third* in order, had been *ſecond* in Operation. The Son would then have received of the Spirit, as the Spirit doth now of *Chriſt*, *and ſhew it unto us*, *Joh.* 1. 15. As the *Spirit* proceeded from the Father and the Son, ſo the proper Function and Operation of it, was in order after the Operations of the Father and the Son: Had the Spirit been ſent to redeem us, and the Son ſent by the Father and the Spirit to apply that Redemption to us; the Son in his acts had proceeded from the Father and the Spirit; the Spirit, as Sender, had been in order before the Son; whereas the Spirit is called *the Spirit of Chriſt*, as ſent by Chriſt from the *Father*, *Gal.* 4. 6. *Joh.* 15. 27. But as the order of the Works, ſo the order of the Perſons is preſerved in their ſeveral Operations. *Creation*, and a Law to govern the Creature, precedes *Redemption*. Nothing, or that which hath no being, is not capable of a redeemed being. Redemption ſuppoſeth the exiſtence and the miſery of a Perſon redeemed. As Creation precedes Redemption, ſo Redemption precedes the *application* of it. As Redemption ſuppoſeth the being of the Creature, ſo application of Redemption ſuppoſeth the efficacy of Redemption. According to the order of theſe Works is the order of the Operations of the *three Perſons*. *Creation* belongs to the Father, the firſt Perſon. *Redemption*, the ſecond work, is the Function of the Son, the ſecond Perſon. *Application*, the third work, is the Office of the Holy Ghoſt, the third Perſon. The Father orders it, the Son acts it, the Holy Ghoſt applies it. He purifies our Souls to underſtand, believe, and love theſe Myſteries. He forms Chriſt in the womb of the Soul, as he did the Body of Chriſt in the womb of the Virgin. As the Spirit of God *moved upon the waters*, to garniſh and adorn the World, after the matter of it was formed, *Gen.* 1. 2. ſo he moves upon the heart, to ſupple it to a complyance with Chriſt, and draws the Lineaments of the new Creation in the Soul, after the Foundation is laid.

* Amyraut. *Moral. Tom.* 5. *p.* 478, 479, 480.

The Son pays the price that was due from us to God, and the Spirit is the earneſt of the Promiſes of Life and Glory purchaſed by the Merit of that Death.* 'Tis to be obſerved, that the *Father*, under the diſpenſation of the Law, propoſed the Commands, with the Promiſes and Threatnings, to the Underſtandings of Men; and *Chriſt*, under the diſpenſation of Grace, when he was upon the Earth, propoſeth the Goſpel as the Means of Salvation, exhorts to Faith as the Condition of ſalvation; but it was neither the Function of the one, or the other, to diſplay ſuch an efficacy in the Underſtanding, and Will to make men believe and obey, and therefore there were ſuch few Converſions in the time of Chriſt, by his Miracles: But this work was reſerved, for the fuller and brighter appearance of the *Spirit*, whoſe Office it was to convince the World of the neceſſity of a Redeemer, becauſe of their loſt condition; of the Perſon of the Redeemer, the Son of God; of the ſufficiency and efficacy of Redemption, becauſe of his righteouſneſs and acceptation by the Father. The Wiſdom of God is ſeen in preparing and preſenting the Objects, and then in making impreſſion of them upon the Subjects he intends. And thus is the *order of the three Perſons* preſerved.

2. *The ſecond Perſon had the greateſt congruity to this work.* He by whom God created the World, was moſt conveniently imployed in reſtoring the defaced World: Who more fit to recover it from its lapſed ſtate, than he that had *erected* it in its primitive ſtate? *Hebr.* 1. 2. *He was the light of men* in Creation, and therefore it was moſt reaſonnable he ſhould be the light of men in Redemption. Who fitter to reform the Divine Image, than he that firſt formed it? Who fitter to ſpeak for us to God, than he who was *the Word*? *Joh.* 1. 1. Who could better intercede with the Father, than he who was the only begotten and beloved Son? Who ſo fit to redeem the forfeited Inheritance as the *Heir of all things*? Who

John. 1. 4.

fitter and better to prevail for us to have the right of Children, than he that poſſeſſed it by Nature? We fell from being the Sons of God, and who fitter to introduce us into an adopted ſtate: than the Son of God? Herein was an expreſſion of the richer Grace, becauſe the firſt ſin was immediately againſt the wiſdom of God, by an ambitious affectation of a Wiſdom equal to God: That that Perſon, who was the *wiſdom of God*, ſhould be made a Sacrifice for the expiation of the ſin againſt wiſdom.

3. *The wiſdom of God is ſeen in the two Natures of Chriſt, whereby this Redemption was accompliſhed.* The Union of the two Natures was the Foundation of the Union of God, and the fallen Creature.

1. *The Union it ſelf is admirable: The Word is made Fleſh*, Joh. 1. 14. One *equal with God in the form of a Servant*, *Phil.* 2. 7. When the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks of *God manifeſted in the fleſh*, he ſpeaks *the Wiſdom of God in a Myſtery*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. That which is incomprehenſible to the Angels, which they never imagined before it was revealed, which perhaps they never knew till they beheld it. I am ſure, under the Law the Figures of the *Cherubims* were placed in the Sanctuary with their *faces looking towards the Propitiatory*, in a perpetual poſture of Contemplation and Admiration, *Exod.* 37. 9. to which the Apoſtle alludes, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12.

Myſterious is the wiſdom of God to unite Finite and infinite, Almightineſs and Weakneſs, Immortality and Mortality, Immutability with a Thing ſubject to Change; to have a Nature from Eternity, and yet a Nature ſubject to the Revolutions of Time; a Nature to make a Law, and a Nature to be ſubjected to the Law; to be *God bleſſed for ever*, in the boſom of his Father, and an Infant expoſed to Calamities from the Womb of his Mother: Terms ſeeming moſt diſtant from union, moſt uncapable of conjunction, to ſhake hands together, to be moſt intimately conjoyned; Glory and Vileneſs, Fulneſs and Emptineſs, Heaven and Earth; the Creature with the Creator; he that made all things, in one Perſon with a Nature that is made; *Immanuel*, God and Man in one: That which is moſt Spiritual to partake of that which is Carnal fleſh and blood: * One with the Father in his Godhead, one with us in his Manhood: The Godhead to be in him in the fulleſt Perfection, and the Manhood in the greateſt Purity: The Creature one with the Creator, and the Creator one with the Creature. Thus is the incomprehenſible Wiſdom of God declared in the *Word being made Fleſh.*

* Heb. 2. 14.

2. *In the manner of this Union.* A Union of *two Natures*, yet no Natural Union. It tranſcends all the Unions viſible among Creatures *: It is not like the Union of Stones in a Building, or of two pieces of timber faſtned together, which touch one another only in their Superficies and outſide, without any intimacy with one another. By ſuch a kind of Union, God would not be man: The World could not ſo be made Fleſh. Nor is it Union of Parts to the whole, as the Members and the Body; the Members are Parts, the Body is the whole; for the whole reſults from the Parts, and depends upon the Parts: But Chriſt being God, is independent upon any thing. The parts are in order of Nature before the whole, but nothing can be in order of Nature before God. Nor is it as the Union of two Liquors, as when Wine and Water are mixed together; for they are ſo Incorporated, as not to be diſtinguiſh'd from one another; no man can tell which Particle is Wine, and which is Water. But the Properties of the Divine Nature are diſtinguiſhable from the Properties of the Humane. Nor is it as the Union of the Soul and Body, ſo as that the Deity is the form of the Humanity, as the Soul is the form of the Body: For as the Soul is but a part of the Man, ſo the Divinity would be then but a part of the Humanity; and as a form, or the Soul is in a ſtate of Imperfection, without that which it is to inform; ſo the Divinity of Chriſt would have been Imperfect, till it had aſſumed the Humanity. And ſo the perfection of an Eternal Deity would have depended on a Creature of Time.

* *Savana triump. crucis* Lib. 3. cap. 7. *p.* 211.

This Union of *two Natures* in Chriſt is incomprehenſible: And it is a myſtery we cannot arrive to the top of, How the Divine Nature, which is the ſame with that of the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, ſhould be united to the human Na-

tures;

ture; without its being ſaid, that the Father and the Holy Ghoſt were united to the Fleſh; but the Scripture doth not encourage any ſuch Notion; It ſpeaks only of the Word, the Perſon of the Word being made Fleſh. And in his being made Fleſh, diſtinguiſheth him from the Father, as *the only begotten of the Father*, *John* 1. 14. The Perſon of the Son was the term of this Union.

1. *This Union doth not confound the Properties of the Deity, and thoſe of the Humanity.* They remain diſtinct and entire in each other. The Deity is not changed into Fleſh, nor the Fleſh transform'd into God: They are diſtinct and yet united: They are conjoyned, and yet unmixt: The Dues of either Nature are preſerved. 'Tis impoſſible that the Majeſty of the Divinity can receive an alteration: 'Tis as impoſſible that the meanneſs of the Humanity can receive the Impreſſions of the Deity, ſo as to be changed into it; and a creature be metamorphos'd into the Creator, and Temporary Fleſh become Eternal, and Finite mount up into Infinity: As the Soul and Body are united, and make one Perſon; yet the Soul is not changed into the perfections of the Body, nor the Body into the perfections of the Soul. There is a change made in the Humanity by being advanced to a more Excellent Union, but not in the Deity; as a change is made in the Air, when it is enlightned by the Sun, not in the Sun, which communicates that brightneſs to the Air. *Athanaſius* makes the *burning Buſh* to be a type of Chriſts Incarnation, *Exod.* 3. 2. The Fire ſignifying the Divine Nature, and the Buſh the human. The Buſh is a branch ſpringing up from the Earth, and the Fire deſcends from Heaven; as the Buſh was united to the Fire, yet was not hurt by the flame, nor converted into Fire, there remained a difference between the Buſh and the Fire, yet the proporties of the Fire ſhined in the Buſh, ſo that the whole Buſh ſeemed to be on Fire. So in the Incarnation of Chriſt, the Human Nature is not ſwallowed up by the Divine, nor changed into it, nor confounded with it; But ſo united, that the properties of both remain firm, *Two* are ſo become *one* that they remain *two* ſtill: One perſon in Two Natures, containing the glorious perfections of the Divine, and the weakneſſes of the Humane. *The fulneſs of the Deity dwells bodily in Chriſt*, *Col.* 2. 9.

2. *The Divine Nature is united to every part of the Humanity.* The whole Divinity to the whole Humanity; ſo that no part but may be ſaid to be the Member of God, as well as the Blood is ſaid to be the *Blood of God*, *Acts* 20. 28. By the ſame reaſon it may be ſaid, the Hand of God, the Eye of God, the Arm of God. As God is infinitely preſent every where, ſo as to be excluded from no place; ſo is the Deity hypoſtatically every where in the Humanity not excluded from any part of it; As the light of the Sun in every part of the Air; as a ſparkling ſplendor in every part of the Diamond. Therefore it is concluded by all that acknowledg the Deity of Chriſt, that when his Soul was ſeparated from the Body, the Deity remained united both to Soul and Body, as light doth in every part of a broken Chryſtal.

3. Therefore *perpetually united*, *Coloſſ.* 2. 9. The *fulneſs of the Godhead dwells in him bodily.* It *Dwells* in him, not lodges in him as a Traveller in an Inn, It reſides in him as a fixed habitation. As God deſcribes the perpetuity of his preſence in the Ark by his habitation or *dwelling* in it, *Exod.* 29. 44. ſo doth the *Apoſtle* the inſeparable duration of the Deity in the Humanity, and the indiſſoluble Union of the Humanity with the Deity. It was united on Earth, it remains united in Heaven. It was not an Image or an Apparition, as the Tongues wherein the Spirit came upon the *Apoſtles*, were a Temporary Repreſentation, not a thing united perpetually to the perſon of the Holy Ghoſt.

4. It was a *perſonal Union.* It was not an union of perſons, though it was a perſonal union; So *Davenant* expounds, *Col.* 2. 9. Chriſt did not take the Perſon of Man, but the Nature of Man into ſubſiſtance with himſelf. The body and Soul of Chriſt were not united in themſelves, and no ſubſiſtence in themſelves, till they were united to the Perſon of the Son of God. If the Perſon of a Man were united to him, the Human Nature would have been the Nature of the Perſon ſo united to him, and not the Nature of the Son of God, *Heb.* 2. 14, 16. *For aſmuch then as the Children are partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame, that through death he might deſtroy him, that had the power*

of death, that is, the Devil. For verily he took not on him the nature of Angels: but he took on him the ſeed of Abraham. He took fleſh and blood to be his own Nature, perpetually to ſubſiſt in the Perſon of the Λόγος, which muſt be by a Perſonal Union, or no way: The Deity united to the Humanity, and both Natures to be *one* Perſon. This is the myſterious and manifold Wiſdom of God.

3. *The end of this Union.*

1. *He was hereby fitted to be Mediator.* He hath ſomething like to Man, and ſomething like to God. If he were in all things only like to Man, he would be at a diſtance from God: If he were in all things only like to God, he would be at a diſtance from Man. He is a true Mediator between Mortal Sinners, and the Immortal Righteous One. He was near to us by the Infirmities of our Nature, and near to God by the Perfections of the Divine; as near to God in his Nature, as to us in ours; as near to us in our Nature as he is to God in the Divine. Nothing that belongs to the Deity, but he poſſeſſes; nothing that belongs to the Human Nature, but he is clothed with.

He had both the Nature which had offended, and that Nature which was offended; a Nature to pleaſe God, and a Nature to pleaſure us: A Nature whereby he experimentally knew the excellency of God, which was injured, and underſtood the Glory due to him, and conſequently the Greatneſs of the Offence, which was to be meaſur'd by the Dignity of his Perſon: And a Nature whereby, he might be ſenſible of the Miſeries contracted by, and endure the calamities due to the Offender, that he night both have Compaſſion on him, and make due Satisfaction for him. * He had *two diſtinct Natures*, capable of the Affections and Sentiments of the two Perſons he was to accord; he was a juſt Judge of the Rights of the one, and the demerit of the other. He could not have this full and perfect Underſtanding, if he did not poſſeſs the Perfections of the one, and the Qualities of the other: The one fitted him for *things appertaining to God*, *Heb.* 5. 1. and the other furniſht him with a ſenſe of the *Infirmities of man*, *Heb.* 4. 15.

* Gomb. *de relig.* p. 42.

2. *He was hereby fitted for the working out the happineſs of man.* A Divine Nature to communicate to man, and a Human Nature to carry up to God.

1. *He had a Nature whereby to ſuffer for us, and a Nature whereby to be meritorious in thoſe Sufferings.* A Nature to make him capable to bear the Penalty, and a Nature to make his Sufferings ſufficient for all that embraced him. A Nature capable to be expoſed to the flames of Divine Wrath, and another Nature uncapable to be cruſht by the weight, or conſum'd by the heat of it: A Human Nature to ſuffer, and ſtand a Sacrifice in the ſtead of Man; a Divine Nature to ſanctifie theſe ſufferings, and fill the Noſtrils of God with a ſweet ſaviour, and thereby atone his wrath: The one to bear the ſtroak due to us, and the other to add merit to his Sufferings for us. Had he not been Man, he could not have filled our place in ſuffering; and could be otherwiſe have ſuffered, his ſufferings had not been applicable to us; and had he not been God, his Sufferings had not been meritoriouſly and fruitfully applicable. Had not his Blood been the Blood of God, it had been of as little advantage as the Blood of an ordinary Man, or the Blood of the *Legal Sacrifices**. Nothings leſs than God, could have ſatisfied God for the injury done by Man. Nothing leſs than God, could have countervail'd the Torments due to the offending Creature: Nothing leſs than God, could have reſcued us out of the hands of the Jaylor, too powerful for us.

* Heb. 9. 12.

2. He had therefore *a Nature to be compaſſionate to us, and victorious for us.* A Nature ſenſibly to compaſſionate us, and another Nature to render thoſe Compaſſions effectual for our Relief; he had the Compaſſions of our Nature to pity us, and the Patience of the Divine Mature to bear with us. He hath the affections of a Man to us, and the power of a God for us: A Nature to diſcern the Devil for us, and another Nature to be ſenſible of the working of the Devil in us, and againſt us. If he had been only God, he would not have had an experimental ſenſe of our Miſery; and if he had been only Man, he could not have vanquiſh'd our Enemies: Had he been only God, he could not have died; and had he been only Man, he could not have conquered Death.

3. *A Nature efficaciouſly to inſtruct us.* As Man, he was to inſtruct us ſenſibly;

as God, he was to inſtruct us infallibly. A Nature whereby he might converſe with us, and a Nature whereby he might influence us in thoſe Converſes. A Human Mouth to miniſter Inſtructions to Man, and a Divine Power to imprint it with efficacy.

4. *A Nature to be a patern to us.* A Patern of Grace as Man, as *Adam* was to have been to his Poſterity. * A Divine Nature ſhining in the Human, the Image of the inviſible God in the glaſs of our Fleſh, that he might be a perfect Copy for our Imitation, *Col.* 1. 15. *The Image of the inviſible God, and the firſt-born of every Creature* in conjunction. The Vertues of the Deity are ſweetned and tempered by the Union with the Humanity, as the Beams of the Sun are by ſhining through a colour'd Glaſs, which condeſcends more to the weakneſs of our eye.

* Amyraut *moral. Tom.* 5. *p.* 468, 469.

Thus the Perfections of the inviſible God, breaking through the firſt-born of every Creature, glittering in Chriſt's created ſtate, became more ſenſible for Contemplation by our Mind; and more imitable for Conformity in our practiſe.

5. *A Nature to be a ground of confidence in our approach to God.* A Nature wherein we may behold him, and wherein we may approach to him. A Nature for our comfort, and a Nature for our confidence. Had he been only Man, he had been too feeble to aſſure us; and had he been only God, he had been too high to attract us: But now we are allured by his Human Nature, and aſſured by his Divine, in our drawing near to Heaven. Communion with God was deſired by us, but our Guilt ſtifled our hopes, and the Infinite Excellency of the Divine Nature, would have dampt our hopes of ſpeeding; but ſince theſe *two Natures*, ſo far diſtant, are met in a Marriage knot, we have a ground of hope, nay, an earneſt that the Creator and believing Creature ſhall meet and converſe together.

And ſince our ſins are expiated by the Death of the Human Nature in conjunction with the Divine, our Guilt, upon believing, ſhall not hinder us from this comfortable approach. Had he been only Man, he could not have aſſured us an approach to God, Had he been only God, his Juſtice would not have admitted us to approach to him; he had been too terrible for guilty Perſons, and too holy for polluted Perſons to come near to him: But by being made Man, his Juſtice is tempered, and by his being God and Man, his Mercy is enſured. A Human Nature he had, one with us, that we might be related to God, as one with him.

6. *A Nature to derive all good to us.* Had he not been Man, we had had no ſhare or part in him: A Satisfaction by him had not been imputed to us. If he were not God, he could not communicate to us Divine Graces and Eternal Happineſs; he could not have had power to convey ſo great a good to us, had he been only Man; and he could not have done it, according to the Rule of inflexible righteouſneſs, had he been only God. As Man, he is the way of Conveyance; as God, he is the ſpring of Conveyance. From this Grace of Union, and the Grace of Unction, we find *Rivers of Waters flowing, to make glad the City of God.* Believers are his Branches, and draw Sap from him as he is their Root in his Human Nature, and have an endleſs duration of it from his Divine. Had he not been Man, he had not been in a ſtate to obey the Law: Had he not been God as well as Man, his Obedience could not have been valuable to be imputed to us.

How ſhould this Myſtery be ſtudied by us, which would afford us both Admiration and Content! Admiration in the incomprehenſibleneſs of it; Contentment in the fitneſs of the Mediator. By this Wiſdom of God we receive the props of our Faith, and the fruits of Joy and Peace. Wiſdom conſiſts in chuſing fit means, and conducting them in ſuch a method, as may reach with good ſucceſs the variety of Marks which are aimed at. Thus hath the Wiſdom of God ſet forth a Mediator, ſuted to our wants, fitted for our ſupplies, and ordered ſo the whole Affair by the union of theſe *two Natures* in the Perſon of the Redeemer, that there could be no diſappointement, by all the buſtle Hell and helliſh Inſtruments could raiſe againſt it.

4. *The*

4. *The Wiſdom of God is ſeen in this way of Redemption, in vindicating the Honour and Righteouſneſs of the Law, both as to Precept and Penalty.* The firſt and irreverſible deſign of the Law, was Obedience. The Penalty of the Law had only entrance upon Trangreſſion. Obedience was the deſign, and the Penalty was added to enforce the obſervance of the Precept. *Gen.* 2. 17. *Thou ſhalt not eat*; there is the Precept: *In the day thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt dye*; There is the Penalty. Obedience was our Debt to the Law, as Creatures; Puniſhment was due from the Law to us, as Sinners: We were bound to endure the Penalty for our firſt Tranſgreſſion, but the Penalty did not Cancel the Bond of future Obedience: The Penalty had not been incurr'd without tranſgreſſing the Precept; yet the Precept was not abrogated by enduring the Penalty. Since Man ſo ſoon revolted, and by his Revolt fell under the threatning, the Juſtice of the Law had been honoured by Man's ſufferings, but the holineſſe, and equity of the Law had been honoured by mans Obedience. The Wiſdom of God finds out a *Medium* to ſatisfie both: The Juſtice of the Law is preſerved in the Execution of the Penalty; and the Holineſs of the Law is honoured in the obſervance of the Precept.

The Life of our Saviour is a Conformity to the Precept, and his Death is a Conformity to the Penalty; the Precepts are exactly performed, and the Curſe punctually executed, by a voluntary obſerving the one, and a voluntary undergoing the other. It is obeyed, as if it had not been tranſgreſt, and executed as if it had not been obeyed.

It *became* the Wiſdom, Juſtice, and Holineſs of God, as the Rector of the World, to exact it, *Heb.* 2. 10. and it *became* the holineſs of the Mediator to *fulfill all the righteouſneſs of the Law* *. And thus the Honour of the Law was vindicated in all the parts of it. The Tranſgreſſion of the Law was Condemned in the Fleſh of the Redeemer, and the Righteouſneſs of the Law was fulfilled in his Perſon: And both theſe acts of Obedience, being counted as one Righteouſneſs, and imputed to the Believing ſinner, render him a ſubject to the Law, both in its preceptive and minatory part. By *Adams* ſinful acting we were made ſinners, and by *Chriſt*'s righteous acting we are *made righteous. Rom.* 5. 10. *As by one mans diſobedience many were made ſinners, ſo by the obedience of one ſhall many be made righteous.* The Law was obeyed by him, that *the righteouſneſs* of it *might be fulfilled in us*, *Rom.* 8. 4. 'Tis not fulfilled in us, or in our actions, by inherency, but fulfilled in us by imputation of that righteouſneſs which was exactly fulfilled by another. As he died for us, and roſe again for us, ſo he lived for us. The Commands of the Law were as well obſerved for us, as the Threatnings of the Law were endured for us. This juſtification of a ſinner, with the preſervation of the holineſs of the Law in truth, in the inward parts, in ſincerity of intention, as well as the conformity in action, is the wiſdom of God, the Goſpel-wiſdom which *David* deſires to know, *Pſal.* 51. 6. *Thou deſireſt truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou ſhalt make me to know wiſdom*; or as ſome render it, *the hidden things of wiſdom.* Not an inherent wiſdom in the acknowledgments of his ſin, which he had confeſt before; but the wiſdom of God in providing a Medicine, ſo as to keep up the holineſs of the Law in the obſervance of it in Truth, and the averting the Judgment due to the ſinner. In and by this way methodiz'd by the wiſdom of God, all doubs and troubles are diſcharg'd. Naturally if we take a view of the Law to behold its Holineſs and Juſtice; and then of our hearts, to ſee the contrariety in them to the command, and the pollution repugnant to its holineſs; and after this caſt our eyes upward, and behold a flaming Sword, edg'd with Curſes and Wrath; Is there any matter, but that of terrour, afforded by any of theſe? But when we behold, in the life of Chriſt, a conformity to the Mandatory part of the Law, and in the Croſs of Chriſt, a ſuſtaining the minatory part of the Law; this wiſdom of God gives a well-grounded and rational diſmiſs to all the horrors that can ſeize upon us.

* Rom. 8. 3. Matth. 3. 15.

5. The wiſdom of God in Redemption is viſible *in manifeſting two contrary Affections at the ſame time, and in one act: The greateſt hatred of Sin, and the greateſt love to the Sinner.* In this way he puniſhes the ſin without ruining the ſinner, and repairs the ruins of the ſinner, without indulging the ſin. Here is eternal

love

love, and eternal hatred; a condemning the ſin to what it merited, and an advancing the ſinner to what he could not expect. Herein is the choiceſt love, and the deepeſt hatred manifeſt. An implacableneſs againſt the ſin, and a placableneſs to the ſinner. His hatred of ſin hath been diſcovered in other ways; in puniſhing the Devil without remedy; ſentencing Man to an expulſion from Paradiſe, though ſeduced by another; in accurſing the Serpent, an irrational Creature, though but a miſguided Inſtrument. The whole tenor of his Threatnings declare his loathing of ſin, and the ſprinklings of his Judgments in the World, and the horrible expectations of terrified Conſciences confirm it. But what are all theſe Teſtimonies to the higheſt evidence that can poſſibly be given in the ſheathing the Sword of his wrath in the heart of his Son? If a Father ſhould order his Son to take a mean Garb below his Dignity, order him to be dragg'd to Priſon, ſeem to throw off all Affection of a Father for the ſeverity of a Judge, condemn his Son to a horrible Death, be a Spectator of his bleeding Condition, withhold his hand from aſſwaging his Miſery, regard it rather with Joy than Sorrow, give him a better Cup to drink, and ſtand by to ſee him drink it off to the bottom, dregs and all, and flaſh frowns in his face all the while; and this not for any fault of his own, but the Rebellion of ſome Subjects he undertook for, and that the Offenders might have a pardon ſeal'd by the blood of the Son the ſufferer; all this would evidence his deteſtation of the Rebellion, and his affection to the Rebels; his hatred to their Crime, and his love to their Welfare. This did God do; *He delivered Chriſt up for our Offences*, *Rom.* 8. 32. *the Father gave him the Cup*, *John* 18. 18. the Lord *bruiſed him* with *pleaſure*, *Iſa.* 53. 10. and that for ſin: He transferr'd upon the ſhoulders of his Son the pain we had merited, that the Criminal might by reſtored to the place he had forfeited. He hates the ſin ſo, as to condemn it for ever, and wrap it up in the Curſe he had threatned; and loves the ſinner believing and repenting, ſo as to mount him to an expectation of a happineſs exceeding the firſt ſtate, both in glory and perpetuity. Inſtead of an Earthly Paradiſe, lays the Foundation of an Heavenly Manſion, brings forth a weight of Glory from a weight of Miſery, ſeparates the comfortable light of the Sun, from the ſcorching heat we had deſerved at his hands. Thus hath Gods hatred of ſin been manifeſted. He is at an eternal Defiance with ſin, yet nearer in alliance with the ſinner, than he was before the Revolt: As if Man's miſerable Fall had endeared him to the Judge. This is the wiſdom and prudence of *Grace wherein God hath abounded*, *Eph.* 1. 9. A wiſdom in twiſting the happy reſtoration of the broken Amity, with an everlaſting Curſe, upon that which made the breach, both upon ſin the Cauſe, and upon *Satan* the Seducer to it. Thus is hatred and love in their higheſt glory manifeſted together: Hatred to ſin, in the death of Chriſt, more than if the torments of Hell had been undergone by the ſinner; and love to the ſinner, more than if he had, by an abſolute and ſimple Bounty, beſtowed upon him the poſſeſſion of Heaven; becauſe the gift of his Son, for ſuch an end, is a greater token of his boundleſs Affections, than a reinſtating Man in Paradiſe. Thus is the wiſdom of God ſeen in Redemption; conſuming the ſin, and recovering the ſinner.

6. *The wiſdom of God is evident in overturning the Devil's Empire, by the Nature he had vanquiſh'd, and by ways quite contrary to what that malicious Spirit could imagine.* The Devil indeed read his own doom in the firſt Promiſe, and found his ruin reſolved upon, by the means of the *Seed of the Woman*, but by what Seed, was not ſo eaſily known to him*. And the methods whereby it was to be brought about, was a Myſtery kept ſecret from the malicious Devils, ſince it was not diſcovered to the obedient Angels. He might know from *Iſa.* 53. that the Redeemer was aſſured to divide the Spoil with the ſtrong, reſcue a part of the loſt Creation out of his hands; and that this was to be effected, by making his Soul an offering for ſin: But could he imagine which way his Soul was to be made ſuch an Offering? He ſhrewdly ſuſpected Chriſt juſt after his Inauguration into his Office by Baptiſm, to be the Son of God. But did he ever dream that the *Meſſiah*, by dying as a reputed Malefactor, ſhould be a Sacrifice for the expiation of the ſin, the *Devil* had introduced by his ſubtility? Did he ever imagine a Croſs ſhould diſpoſſeſs him of his Crown, and that dying groans ſhould wreſt the Victory out of his hands?

* *And indeed the Heathen Oracles, managed by the Devils, declared that they were not long to hold their Scepter in the World, but the* Hebrew *Child ſhould vanquiſh them.*

He

He was conquer'd by that Nature he had caſt headlong into ruin: A Woman, by his ſubtilty, was the occaſion of our death; and Woman, by the conduct of the only wiſe God, brings forth the Author of our Life, and the Conquerour of our Enemies. The Fleſh of the old *Adam* had infected us, and the Fleſh of the new *Adam* cures us. 1 *Cor.* 15. 21. *By man can death; by man alſo came the reſurrection from the dead.* We are killed by the old *Adam*, and raiſed by the new. As among the *Iſraelites*, a fiery Serpent gave the wound, and a brazen Serpent adminiſters the Cure. The Nature that was deceived bruiſeth the Deceiver, and razeth up the Foundations of his Kingdom. *Satan* is defeated by the Counſels he took to ſecure his Poſſeſſion, and loſes the Victory by the ſame means whereby he thought to preſerve it.

His tempting the *Jews* to the ſin of Crucifying the Son of God, had a contrary ſucceſs to his tempting *Adam* to eat of the Tree. The firſt death he brought upon *Adam*, ruined us, and the death he brought by his Inſtruments upon the *ſecond Adam*, reſtored us. By a Tree, if one may ſo ſay, he had Triumphed over the World, and by the fruit of a Tree, one hanging upon a Tree, he is diſcharged of his power over us, *Heb.* 2. 14. *Through death he deſtroyed him that had the power of death.* And thus the Devil ruins his own Kingdom while he thinks to confirm and inlarge it. And is defeated by his own policy, whereby he thought to continue the World under his chains, and deprive the Creator of the World of his purpoſed honour. What deeper Counſel could he reſolve upon for his own ſecurity, than to be inſtrumental in the death of him, who was God, the terror of the Devil himſelf, and to bring the Redeemer of the World to expire with diſgrace in the ſight of a multitude of men? Thus did the Wiſdom of God ſhine forth in reſtoring us by methods ſeemingly repugnant to the end he aimed at, and above the ſuſpition of a ſubtle Devil, whom he intended to Baffle.

Could he Imagine that we ſhould be healed by ſtripes, quickned by death, purified by blood, crowned by a croſs, advanced to the higheſt honour by the loweſt humility, comforted by ſorrows, glorified by diſgrace, abſolved by condemnation, and made rich by poverty? That the ſweeteſt hony ſhould at once ſpring out of the belly of a dead Lion, the Lion of the tribe of *Judah*, and out of the boſom of the living God? How wonderful is this Wiſdom of God! That the ſeed of the woman, born of a mean Virgin, brought forth in a ſtable, ſpending his days in affliction, miſery and poverty, without any pomp and ſplendor, paſſing ſome time in a *Carpenters* ſhop, with Carpenters tools and afterwards expoſed to a horrible and diſgraceful death, ſhould by this way pull down the gates of Hell, ſubvert the kingdom of the Devil, and be the hammer to break in pieces that power, which he had ſo long exerciſed over the World! Thus became he the Author of our life, by being bound for a while in the chains of death, and arrived to a principally over the moſt malicious powers by being a priſoner for us, and the anvil of their rage and fury.

* Mark 6. 6.

7. The Wiſdom of God appears, *In giving us this way the ſureſt ground of comfort and the ſtrongeſt incentive to obedience.* The Rebel is reconciled, and the rebellion ſhamed; God is propitiated and the ſinner ſanctified by the ſame blood. What can more contribute to our comfort and confidence, than Gods richeſt gift to us? What can more enflame our love to him, than our recovery from death by the oblation of his Son to miſery and death for us? It doth as much engage our duty as ſecure our happineſs. It preſents God glorious and gracious, and therefore every way fit to be truſted in regard of the intereſt of his own glory in it, and in regard of the effuſions of his grace by it. It renders the Creature obliged in the higheſt manner, and ſo awakens his induſtry to the ſtricteſt and nobleſt obedience. Nothing ſo effectual as a crucified Chriſt to wean us from ſin and ſtifle all motions of deſpair, a means, in regard of the Juſtice ſignaliz'd in it, to make man to hate the ſin which had ruined him; and a means, in regard of the love expreſt, to make him *delight in that Law* he had violated, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14, 15. *The love of Chriſt*, and therefore the love of God expreſt in it, *conſtrains us no longer to live to our ſelves.*

1. *It is a ground of the higheſt comfort and confidence in God.* Since he hath given ſuch an evidence of his impartial truth to his threatning for the honour of

his

his Juſtice, we need not queſtion but he will be as punctual to his promiſe for the honour of his mercy. 'Tis a ground of confidence in God, ſince he hath redeemed us in ſuch a way as glorifies the ſteadineſs of his veracity, as well as the ſeverity of his Juſtice; VVe may well truſt him for the performance of his promiſe, ſince we have experience of the execution of his threatning; his merciful truth will as much engage him to accompliſh the one, as his juſt truth did to inflict the other. The goodneſs which ſhone forth in weaker rays in the Creation, breaks out with ſtronger beams in redemption. And the mercy which before the appearance of Chriſt was manifeſted in ſome ſmall Rivulets, diffuſeth himſelf like a boundleſs Ocean. That God that was our Creator, is our Redeemer, the *Repayrer of our Breaches*, and the *Reſtorer of our Paths to dwell in*, and the plenteous Redemption from all Iniquity, manifeſted in the Incarnation and Paſſion of the Son of God, is much more a ground of hope in the Lord, than it was in the paſt Ages, when it could not be ſaid, *the Lord hath, but the Lord ſhall redeem Iſrael from all his iniquities*, *Pſal.* 130.8. It is a full Warrant to caſt our ſelves into his Arms.

2. *An incentive to obedience.*

1. The *Commands of the Goſpel require the obedience of the Creature.* There is not one precept in the Goſpel which interferes with any rule in the Law, but ſtrengthens it, and repreſents it in its true exactneſs: The heat to ſcorch us is allaied but the light to direct us is not extinguiſht. Not the leaſt allowance to any ſin is granted; not the leaſt affection to any ſin is indulg'd. The law is temper'd by the Goſpel, but not nuli'd and caſt out of doors by it; It enacts that none but thoſe that are ſanctified, ſhall be glorified; that there muſt be Grace here, if we expect glory hereafter; that we muſt not preſume to expect an admittance to the Viſion of Gods face, unleſs our Souls be cloathed with a robe of *Holineſs*, *Heb.* 12. 14. it requires an obedience to the whole Law in our intention and purpoſe, and an endeavour to obſerve it in our actions: It promotes the honour of God, and ordains an univerſal Charity among men; it reveals the whole Counſel of God, and furniſheth men with the holieſt Laws.

2. *It preſents to us the exacteſt pattern for our Obedience.* The redeeming Perſon is not only a propitiation for the ſin, but a pattern to the ſinner, 1 *Pet.* 2. 21. The conſcience of man, after the fall of *Adam*, approved of the reaſon of the Law, but by the corruption of nature, man had no ſtrength to perform the Law. The poſſibility of keeping the Law by Human Nature, is evidenced by the appearance and life of the Redeemer, and an aſſurance given that it ſhall be advanc'd to ſuch a ſtate, as to be able to obſerve it: VVe aſpire to it in this life, and have hopes to attain it in a future: And while we are here, the Actor of our Redemption is the copy for our imitation. The Pattern to imitate is greater than the Law to be ruled by. VVhat a luſtre did his Vertues caſt about the world? How attractive are his Graces? VVith what high examples, for all duties hath he furniſh'd us out of the copy of his Life?

3. *It preſents us with the ſtrongeſt motives to Obedience.* *Tit.* 2. 11, 12. *The Grace of God teaches us to deny ungodlineſs.* VVhat Chains bind faſter and cloſer than love? Here is love to our nature, in his Incarnation; love to us though Enemies, in his death and paſſion; encouragements to Obedience by the proffers of pardon for former Rebellions: By the diſobedience of man, God introduceth his redeeming Grace, and ingageth his Creature to more Ingenious and excellent returns than his Innocent ſtate could oblige him to. In his Created ſtate he had goodneſs to move him, he hath the ſame goodneſs now to oblige him as a Creature, and a greater love and mercy to oblige him as a repaired Creature; and the terror of Juſtice is taken off, which might invenom his Heart as a Criminal. In his revolted ſtate he had miſery to diſcourage him; in his redeemed ſtate he hath love to atract him. VVithout ſuch a way, black deſpair had ſeized upon the Creature expoſed to a remedileſs miſery: And God would have had no returns of love from the beſt of his earthly VVorks: But if any ſpark of ingenuity be left, they will be excited by the efficacy of this Argument.

This willingneſs of God to receive returning ſinners, is manifeſted in the high-

eſt degree; and the willingneſs of a ſinner to return to him in duty hath the ſtrongeſt engagements. He hath done as much to incourage our Obedience, as to illuſtrate his Glory. VVe cannot conceive what could be done greater for the ſalvation of our Souls, and conſequently what could have been done more to enforce our obſervance. VVe have a Redeemer, as man, to copy it to us, and as God to perfect us in it. It would make the heart of any to tremble to wound him that hath provided ſuch a ſalve for our Sores, and to make Grace a warrant for Rebellion: Motives, capable to form Rocks into a flexibleneſs. Thus is the VViſdom of God ſeen in giving us a ground of the ſureſt confidence, and furniſhing us with incentives to the greateſt Obedience by the horrors of wrath, death, and ſufferings of our Saviour.

8. The VViſdom of God is apparent *in the Condition he hath ſettled for the enjoying the fruits of Redemption, and this is Faith, a wiſe and reaſonable Condition:* And *the concomitants of it.*

1. *In that it is ſuted to mans lapſed ſtate and Gods Glory.* Innocence is not required here; that had been a Condition impoſſible in its own nature after the Fall: The rejecting of mercy is now only condemning, where mercy is propoſed: Had the Condition of Perfection in works been required, it had rather been a condemnation than redemption. VVorks are not demanded whereby the Creature might aſcribe any thing to himſelf; but a Condition which continues in man a ſenſe of his Apoſtacy, abates all aſpiring Pride, and makes the reward of Grace not of Debt: A Condition whereby Mercy is owned, and the Creature emptied: Fleſh ſilenc'd in the Duſt, and God ſet upon his Throne of Grace and Authority: The Creature brought to the loweſt debaſement, and Divine glory raiſed to the higheſt pitch. The Creature is brought to acknowledge mercy, and ſeal to Juſtice, to own the Holineſs of God in the hatred of ſin, the Juſtice of God in the Puniſhment of ſin, and the Mercy of God in the pardoning of ſin: A condition that deſpoils Nature of all its pretended excellency: Beats down the glory of man at the foot of God, 1 *Cor.* 1. 29, 31. It ſubjects the Reaſon and VVill of man to the VViſdom and Authority of God; it brings the Creature to an unreſerved ſubmiſſion and intire reſignation. God is made the Soveraign Cauſe of all; the Creature continued in his emptineſs, and reduced to a greater dependence upon God than by a Creation; depending upon him for a conſtant influx for an intire happineſs. A Condition that renders God glorious in the Creature, and the fallen creature happy in God: God glorious in his Condeſcenſion to Man, and Man happy in his emptineſs before God.

Faith is made the Condition of mans recovery, that the *lofty looks* of man might be humbled, and the *haughtineſs of man be pulled down*, *Iſa.* 2. 11. That every towring *imagination* might be levelled, 2 *Cor.* 10. 5. Man muſt have all from without doors; he muſt not live upon himſelf, but upon anothers allowance. He muſt ſtand to the proviſion of God, and be a perpetual Sutor at his Gates.

2. *A Condition oppoſite to that which was the cauſe of the Fall.* VVe fell from God by an unbelief of the threatning, he recovers us by a belief of the promiſe; by Unbelief we laid the Foundation of Gods diſhonour, by Faith therefore God exalts the Glory of his free Grace. VVe loſt our ſelves by a deſire of ſelf dependence, and our return is ordered by a way of ſelf-emptineſs. 'Tis reaſonable we ſhould be reſtored in a way contrary to that whereby we fell: VVe ſinned by a refuſal of cleaving to God, 'tis a part of divine VViſdom to reſtore us in a denial of our own righteouſneſs and ſtrength*. *Man having ſinned by Pride, the Wiſdom of God humbles him* (ſaith one) *at the very root of the Tree of Knowledg, and makes him deny his own Underſtanding, and ſubmit to Faith, or elſe, for ever to loſe his deſired Felicity.*

* Laud *againſt* Fiſher. *p.* 5.

3. It is a condition *ſuted to the Common Sentiment and cuſtome of the World.* There is more of belief than reaſon in the world. All inſtructers and Maſters in Sciences and Arts, require firſt a belief in their Diſciples, and a reſignation of their Underſtandings and wills to them. And it is the wiſdom of God to require that of man, which his own reaſon makes him ſubmit to another which is his fellow Creature,

Creature. He therefore that quarrels with the Condition of Faith, muſt quarrel with all the World, ſince Belief is the beginning of all Knowledg*; yea, and moſt of the Knowledg in the World, may rather come under the title of Belief, than of Knowledge: For what we think we know this day, we may find from others ſuch Arguments as may ſtagger our Knowledg, and make us doubt of that we thought our ſelves certain of before: Nay ſometimes we change our Opinions, our ſelves, without any Inſtructor; and ſee a reaſon to entertain an Opinion quite contrary to what we had before. And if we found a general Judgment of others to vote againſt what we think we know, it would make us give the leſs Credit to our ſelves, and our own Sentiments. All knowledg in the World, is only a belief depending upon the teſtimony or arguings of others; for indeed it may be ſaid of all men as in *Job*, Job 8. 9. *We are but of yeſterday, and know nothing*: Since therefore Belief is ſo univerſal a thing in the World, the Wiſdom of God requires that of us which every man muſt count reaſonable, or render himſelf utterly ignorant of any thing. It is a Condition that is common to all Religions. All Religions are founded upon a belief: Unleſs men did believe future things, they would not hope nor fear. A Belief and Reſignation was required in all the Idolatries in the World; ſo that God requires nothing but what an univerſal cuſtome of the World gives its ſuffrage to the reaſonableneſs of: Indeed juſtifying Faith is not ſuted to the Sentiments of men; but that Faith which muſt precede juſtifying, a belief of the Doctrine, though not comprehended by reaſon, is common to the cuſtom of the World*. 'Tis no leſs madneſs not to ſubmit our Reaſon to Faith, than not to regulate our Fancies by Reaſon.

* Bradward. 28.

* Janeway p. 88.

4. This Condition *of Faith and Repentance is ſuted to the Conſciences of Men.* The Law of Nature teaches us, that we are bound to believe every revelation from God, when it is made known to us: And not only to aſſent to it as true, but embrace it as good. This Nature dictates, that we are as much obliged to believe God, becauſe of his Truth, as to love him, becauſe of his Goodneſs. Every mans Reaſon tells him, he cannot obey a precept, nor depend upon a Promiſe, unleſs he Believes both the one and the other. No man's Conſcience, but will inform him upon hearing the revelation of God, concerning his excellent contritrivance of Redemption, and the way to enjoy it, that it is very reaſonable he ſhould ſtrip off all affections to ſin, lie down in Sorrow and bewail what he hath done amiſs againſt ſo tender a God. Can you expect that any man that promiſes you a great honour or a rich donative, ſhould demand leſs of you than to truſt his word, bear an affection to him, and return him kindneſs? Can any leſs be expected by a Prince than obedience from a pardoned Subject, and a redeemed Captive? If you have injured any man in his Body, Eſtate, Reputation, would you not count it a reaſonable Condition for the partaking of his Clemency and Forgiveneſs, to expreſs a hearty ſorrow for it, and a reſolution not to fall into the like Crime again? Such are the Conditions of the Goſpel, ſuted to the Conſciences of men.

5. The Wiſdom of God appears, in *that this condition was only likely to attain the end.* There are but *two Common Heads* appointed by God, *Adam* and *Chriſt*: By one we are made a *living Soul*, by the other a *quickning Spirit*: By the one we are made ſinners, by the other we are made righteous. *Adam* fell as a Head, and all his members, his whole Iſſue and Poſterity fell with him, becauſe they proceeded from him by natural Generation. But ſince the *ſecond Adam* cannot be our Head by natural Generation, there muſt be ſome other way of ingrafting us in him, and uniting us to him as our Head, which muſt be Moral and Spiritual; this cannot rationally be conceived to be by any other way than what is ſutable to a reaſonable Creature, and therefore muſt be by an act of the Will, Conſent and Acceptance, and owning the terms ſettled for an Admiſſion to that Union. And this is that we properly call Faith, and therefore called a *receiving of him*, *John* 1. 12.

1. Now this Condition of enjoying the Fruits of Redemption *could not be a bare Knowledg*; for that is but only an act of the Underſtanding, and doth not in it ſelf

include the act of the Will, and ſo would have united only one Faculty to him, not the whole Soul: But Faith is an act both of the Underſtanding and Will too; and principally of the Will, which doth preſuppoſe an act of the Underſtanding: For there cannot be a Perſwaſion in the Will, without a propoſition from the Underſtanding. The Underſtanding muſt be convinced of the Truth and goodneſs of a thing, before the Will can be perſwaded to make any motion towards it; and therefore all the Promiſes, Invitations and Proffers are ſuted to the Underſtanding and Will; To the Underſtanding in regard of Knowledge, to the Will in regard of Appetite; to the Underſtanding as true, to the Will as good; to the Underſtanding as practical and influencing the Will.

2. Nor could it be *an intire Obedience.* That, as was ſaid before, would have made the Creature have ſome matter of boaſting, and this was not ſutable to the Condition he was ſunk into by the fall. Beſides, mans Nature being corrupted, was rendered uncapable to obey, and unable to have one *thought* of a due Obedience, 2 *Cor.* 3. 5.

When man turned from God, and upon that was turned out of Paradiſe, his return was impoſſible by any ſtrength of his own; his Nature was as much corrupted as his re-entrance into *Paradiſe* was prohibited. That Covenant, whereby he ſtood in the Garden, required a perfection of action and intention in the obſervance of all the Commands of God: But his Fall had crack'd his Ability to recover happineſs by the terms and condition of an intire Obedience; yet man being a perſon governable by a Law, and capable of happineſs by a Covenant; if God would reſtore him, and enter into a Covenant with him, we muſt ſuppoſe it to have ſome Condition, as all Covenants have. That Condition could not be works, becauſe mans Nature was polluted. Indeed, had God reduced mans Body to the duſt, and his Soul to nothing, and framed another man, he might have govern'd him by a Covenant of Works: But that had not been the ſame man that had revolted, and upon his revolt was ſtain'd and diſabled. But ſuppoſe God had by any tranſcendent Grace, wholly purified him from the ſtain of his former Tranſgreſſion, and reſtored to him the ſtrength and ability he had loſt, might he not as eaſily have rebelled again? And ſo the Condition would never have been accompliſht, the Covenant never have been performed, and Happineſs never have been enjoyed. There muſt be ſome other Condition then in the Covenant God would make for mans Security.

Now Faith is the moſt proper for receiving the Promiſe of Pardon of Sin: Belief of thoſe promiſes is the firſt natural reflection that a Malefactor can make upon a pardon offered him, an acceptance of it is the firſt conſequent from that belief. Hence is Faith entitled a *perſwaſion of*, and *embracing the Promiſes*, *Heb.* 11. 13. and *a receiving the atonement*, *Rom.* 5. 11.

Thus the Wiſdom of God is apparent in annexing ſuch a Condition to the Covenant, whereby man is reſtored, as anſwers the end of God for his glory, the State, Conſcience, and neceſſity of Man, and had the greateſt congruity to his recovery.

9. This Wiſdom of God is manifeſt *in the manner of the publiſhing and propagating this Doctrine of Redemption.*

1. *In the gradual diſcoveries of it.* Flaſhing a great light in the face of a ſuddain, is amazing; ſhould the Sun glare in our Eye in all its brightneſs on a ſuddain, after we have been in a thick darkneſs, it would blind us, in ſtead of comforting us: So great a Work as this muſt have ſeveral digeſtions.

God *firſt* reveals of what Seed the Redeeming perſon ſhould be, *the Seed of the Woman.* *Gen.* 3. 15. Then of what Nation, *Gen.* 26. 4. then of what Tribe; *Gen.* 49. 12. of the Tribe of *Judah*; then of what Family, the family of *David*; then what works he was to do, what ſufferings to undergo. The firſt predictions of our Saviour were obſcure. *Adam* could not well ſee the Redemption in the promiſe, for the puniſhment of death which ſucceeded in the Threatning; the promiſe exerciſed his Faith, and the Obſcurity and bodily

bodily Death, his Humility. The promiſe made to *Abraham* was clearer than the Revelations made before, yet he could not tell how to reconcile his Redemption with his Exile. God ſupported his Faith by the promiſe, and exerciſed his Humility by making him a Pilgrim, and keeping him in a perpetual dependance upon him in all his motions.

The Declarations to *Moſes* are brighter than thoſe to *Abraham*. The delineations of *Chriſt* by *David* in the *Pſalms*, more illuſtrious than the former. And all thoſe exceeded by the Revelations made to the Prophet *Iſaiah*, and the other *Prophets*, according as the Age did approach, wherein the Redeemer was to enter into his Office,

God wrapt up this Goſpel in a multitude of Types and Ceremonies, fitted to the Infant ſtate of the Church; *Gal.* 4. 3. An Infant State is uſually affected with ſenſible things; yet thoſe Ceremonies were fitted to that great end of the Goſpel, which he would bring forth in time to the World. And the Wiſdom of God in them would be amazing, if we could underſtand the analogy between every Ceremony in the Law and the thing ſignified by it. As it cannot but affect a diligent Reader to obſerve that little account of them we have by the *Apoſtle Paul*, ſprinkled in his Epiſtles, and more largely in that to the *Hebrews*. As the political Laws of the *Jews* flowed from the depth of the Moral Law, ſo their Ceremonal did from the depth of Evangelical Counſels, and all of them had a ſpecial relation to the honour of God, and the debaſing the Creature.

Though God formed the Maſs and Matter of the World at the firſt creation at once, yet his Wiſdom took *ſix days* time for the diſpoſing and adorning it. The more Illuſtrious truths of God are not to be comprehended on a ſuddain by the weakneſs of men: Chriſt did not declare all Truths to his Diſciples in the time of his life, becauſe they were not able at that preſent to bear them, *John* 16. 12. *Ye cannot bear them now.* Some were reſerved for his Reſurrection, others for the coming of the Spirit; and the full diſcovery of all kept back for another World. This Doctrine God figured out in the Law, Oracled by the Prophets, and unvail'd by Chriſt and his Apoſtles:

2. The Wiſdom of God appeared, *in uſing all proper means to render the belief of it eaſie,*

1. *The moſt minute things that were to be tranſacted, were predicted in the ancient foregoing Age, long before the coming of the Redeemer*: The vinegar and gall offered to him upon the Croſs, the parting his Garments, the not breaking of his Bones, the piercing of his Hands and Feet, the betraying of him, the ſlighting of him by the multitude, all were exactly painted and repreſented in variety of Figures. There was Light enough to good men not to miſtake him; and yet not ſo plain, as to hinder bad men from being Serviceable to the Counſels of God in the crucifying of him when he came.

2. *The tranſlation of the Old Teſtament from the private Language of the Jews into the moſt publick Language of the World.* That Tranſlation which we call *Septuagint*, from *Hebrew* into *Greek*, ſome years before the coming of Chriſt, that Tongue being moſt diffuſed at that time, by reaſon of the *Macedonian* Empire raiſed by *Alexander*, and the Univerſity of *Athens*, to which other Nations reſorted for Learning and Education: This was a preparation for the Sons of *Japhet* to *dwell in the Tents of Shem.* By this was the entertainment of the Goſpel facilitated: When they compar'd the Prophecies of the *Old* Teſtament, with the Declarations of the *New*, and found things ſo long predicted before they were tranſacted in the publick view.

3. *By ordering concurrent Teſtimonies as to matter of Fact, that the matter of Fact was not deniable.* That there was ſuch a Perſon as Chriſt, that his Miracles were ſtupendous, that his Doctrine did not incline to Sedition, that he affected not Worldly Applauſe, that he did ſuffer at *Jeruſalem*, was acknowledged by all: Not a man among the greateſt Enemies of Chriſtians was found, that denied the matter of Fact. And this great truth, that Chriſt is the

Meſſiah

Meſſiah and Redeemer, hath been, with univerſal conſent, owned by all the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity throughout the World: Whatever Bickerings there have been among them about ſome particular Doctrines, they all centred in that Truth of Chriſt's being the Redeemer. The firſt publication of this Doctrine was ſealed by a thouſand Miracles, and ſo illuſtrious, that he was an utter ſtranger to the World that was ignorant of them.

3. *In keeping up ſome Principles and Opinions in the World to facilitate the belief of this, or render men inexcuſable for rejecting of it.* The Incarnation of the Son of God could not be ſo ſtrange to the World, if we conſider the general belief of the *Appearances* * of their Gods among them; that the *Epicureans*, and others that denied any ſuch Appearances, were counted *Atheiſts* *. And *Pythagoras* was eſteemed to be one, not of the inferior *Genij* and *Lunar Dæmons*, but one of the higher Gods, who appeared in a Human Body, for the curing and rectifying mortal Life *. And himſelf tells *Abaris* the *Scythian*, that he was ἀνθρωπόμορφος, that he *took the fleſh of man*, that men might not be aſtoniſhed at him, and in a fright fly from his Inſtructions. It was not therefore accounted an irrational thing among them, that God ſhould be Incarnate: But indeed the great ſtumbling block was a *crucified* God. But had they known the holy and righteous Nature of God, the Malice of ſin, the univerſal Corruption of Human Nature, the firſt threatning and the neceſſity of Vindicating the honour of the Law, and clearing the Juſtice of God; the Notion of his crucifixion would not have appeared ſo incredible, ſince they believed the poſſibility of an Incarnation.

* Ἐπιφάνειαι

* Dioniſ. Halicar. *Antiq. l.* 2. *p.* 128.
* Iamblych. *Vit. Pythag. l.* 1. *cap.* 6 *p.* 44. *& lib.* 2. *c.* 19. *p.* 94.

Another Principle was that univerſal One of *Sacrifices for Expiation*, and rendring God propitious to man, and was practiced among all Nations. I remember not any wherein this Cuſtom did not prevail; for it did even among thoſe People where the *Jews*, as being no trading Nation, had not any Commerce; and alſo in *America*, found out in theſe latter Ages. It was not a Law of Nature, no man can find any ſuch thing written in his own heart, but a Tradition from *Adam*. Now that among the loſs of ſo many other Doctrines, that were handed down from *Adam* to his immediate Poſterity, as in particular that of the *Seed of the Woman*, which one would think a neceſſary Appendix to that of Sacrificing; This latter ſhould be preſerved as a fragment of an ancient Tradition, ſeems to be an Act of Divine Wiſdom, to prepare men for the entertainment of the Doctrine of the *great Sacrifice* for the Expiation of the ſin of the World. And as the *Apoſtle* forms his Argument from the Jewiſh Sacrifices in the *Epiſtle* to the *Hebrews*, for the convincing them of the end of the death of Chriſt, ſo did the Ancient Fathers make uſe of this practiſe of the *Heathen*, to convince them of the ſame Doctrine.

5. The wiſdom of God appeared *in the time and circumſtances of the firſt ſolemn publication of the Goſpel by the Apoſtles at* Jeruſalem. The Relation you may read in *Acts* 2. from *verſe* 1. to the 12*th*. The *Spirit* was given to the *Apoſtles* on the day of *Pentecoſt*; a time wherein there were multitudes of *Jews* from all Nations, not only near, but remote, that heard the great things of God ſpoken in the ſeveral Languages of thoſe Nations, where their habitations were fixed; and that by *twelve illiterate men*. That two or three hours before knew no Language but that of their Native Country.

It was the cuſtom of the *Jews*, that dwelt among other Nations, at a diſtance from *Jeruſalem*, to aſſemble together at *Jeruſalem* at the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt*: And God-pitched upon this Seaſon, that there might be Witneſſes of this Miracle in many parts of the VVorld: There were ſome *of every Nation under Heaven*; verſe 5. That is, of that known part of the VVorld, ſo ſaith the Text. *Fourteen* ſeveral Nations are mentioned; and *Proſelytes* as well as *Jews* by Birth. They are called *devout men*, men of Conſcience, whoſe teſtimony would carry weight with it among their Neighbours at their return, becauſe of their Reputation by their Religious Carriage.

Again

Again, this was not heard and ſeen by ſome of them at one time, and ſome at another, by ſome one hour, by others the next *ſucceſſively* *, but *altogether* in a Solemn Aſſembly, that the teſtimony of ſo many witneſſes at a time, might be more valid, and the truth of the Doctrine appear more illuſtrious and undeniable. And it muſt needs be aſtoniſhing to them, to hear that Perſon magnified in ſo miraculous a manner, who had ſo lately been condemned by their Countrymen as a Malefactor.

* Faucheur *in loc. p.* 294, 295.

VViſdom conſiſts in the *timing* of things. And in this Circumſtance doth the wiſdom of God appear, in furniſhing the Apoſtles with the Spirit at ſuch a time, and bringing forth ſuch a Miracle, as the gift of Tongues, on a ſuddain, that every Nation might hear in their own Language, the wonder of Redemption, and as VVitneſſes at their returns into their own Countreys, report it to others; that the credit they had, in their ſeveral places, might facilitate the belief and entertainment of the Goſpel, when the *Apoſtles*, or others, ſhould arrive to thoſe ſeveral Charges and Dioceſſes appointed for them to preach the Goſpel in. Had this Miracle been wrought in the preſence only of the Inhabitants of *Judea*, that underſtood only their own Language, or one or two of the Neighbouring Tongues, it had been counted by them rather a Madneſs than a Miracle. Or had they underſtood all the Tongues which they ſpoke, the news of it had ſpread no further than the limits of their own Habitations, and had been confin'd within the narrow bounds of the Land of *Judea*. But now it is carried to ſeveral remote Nations, where any of thoſe Auditors then aſſembled had their Reſidence.

As God choſe the time of the *Paſſeover* for the Death of Chriſt, that there might be the greateſt Number of the Inhabitants of the Country, as Witneſſes of the Matter of fact, the Innocence and Sufferings of Chriſt, ſo he choſe the time of *Pentecoſt* for the firſt publiſhing the value and end of this Blood to the World.

Thus the *Evangelical Law* was given in a Confluence of People from all Parts and Nations, becauſe it was a *Covenant with all Nations*: And the variety of Languages ſpoken by a Company of poor *Galileans*, bred up at the Lake of *Tiberias*, and in poor corners of *Canaan*, without the Inſtructions of men for ſo great a Skill, might well evidence to the hearers, that God, that brought the *Confuſion of Languages* firſt at *Babel*, did only work that Cure of them, and combine all together at *Jeruſalem*.

3. The wiſdom of God is ſeen *in the Inſtruments he employed in the publiſhing the Goſpel*. He did not employ *Philoſophers*, but *Fiſhermen*, uſed not acquired Arts, but infus'd wiſdom and courage. This Treaſure was put into, and preſerved in Earthen Veſſels, that the Wiſdom, as well as the Power of God, might be magnified. The weaker the means are which attain the end, the greater is the skill of the Conductor of them.

Wiſe Princes chooſe men of moſt Credit, Intereſt, VViſdom, and Ability to be Miniſters of their Affairs and Ambaſſadors to others. But what were theſe that God choſe for ſo great a VVork, as the publiſhing a new Doctrine to the VVorld? VVhat was their quality but mean, what was their Authority, without Intereſt? VVhat was their Ability, without eminent Parts for ſo great a VVork, but what Divine Grace in a ſpecial manner endowed them with? Nay, what was their diſpoſition to it? As dull and unweildly. VVitneſs the frequent rebukes for their ſlow heartedneſs, from their Maſter, when he converſed in the Fleſh with them. And *One* of the greateſt of them, ſo fond of the *Jewiſh* Ceremonies and Phariſaical Principles, wherein he had been more than ordinarily principled, that he hated the Chriſtian Religion to extirpation, and the Profeſſors of it to death; by thoſe ways which were out of the Rode of Human wiſdom, and would be accompted the greateſt abſurdity to be practis'd by men that have a repute for diſcretion, did God advance his VViſdom. 1 *Cor.* 1. 25. *The fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than man.* By this means it was indiſputably evidenc'd to unbyaſſed Minds, that the Doctrine was Divine. It could not rationally be imagined, that Inſtruments deſtitute of all human Advantages, ſhould be able to vanquiſh the VVorld, confound *Judaiſm*, overturn *Heatheniſm*, chaſe away the

the *Devils*, ſtrip them of their Temples, alienate the minds of men from their ſeveral Religions, which had been rooted in them by Education, and eſtabliſhed by a long ſucceſſion. It could not, I ſay, reaſonably be imagined to be without a Supernatural Aſſiſtance, an heavenly and efficacious working: Whereas, had God taken a Courſe agreeable to the prudence of Man, and uſed thoſe that had been furniſhed with Learning, tip'd with Eloquence, and armed with Human Authority, the Doctrines would have been thought to have been of a Human Invention, and to be ſome ſubtle Contrivance for ſome unworthy and ambitious end: The *nothingneſs* and weakneſs of the Inſtruments manifeſt them to be conducted by a Divine Power, and declare the Doctrine it ſelf to be from Heaven.

When we ſee ſuch feeble inſtruments proclaiming a Doctrine repugnant to Fleſh and Blood, ſounding forth a crucified Chriſt to be believed in, and truſted on, and declaiming againſt the Religion and Worſhip, under which the *Roman* Empire had long flouriſhed; exhorting them to the Contempt of the World, preparation for Afflictions, denying themſelves, and their own Honours, by the hopes of an unſeen reward, things ſo repugnant to Fleſh and Blood And theſe Inſtruments concurring in the ſame Story, with an admirable Harmony in all parts, and ſealing this Doctrine with their Blood; can we upon all this aſcribe this Doctrine to a Human Contrivance, or fix any lower Author of it than the wiſdom of Heaven? 'Tis the wiſdom of God that carries on his own Deſigns in methods moſt ſutable to his own Greatneſs, and different from the Cuſtomes and modes of Men, that leſs of Humanity, and more of Divinity might appear.

4. The Wiſdom of God appears *in the ways and manner, as well as in the Inſtruments of its propagation.* By ways ſeemingly contrary. You know how God had ſent the *Jews* into Captivity in *Babylon*, and though he ſtruck off their Chains, and reſtored them to their Country, yet many of them had no mind to leave a Country wherein they had been born and bred. The diſtance from the place of the Original of their Anceſtors, and their affection to the Country wherein they were born, might have occaſioned their embracing the Idolatrous Worſhip of the place. Afterwards the Perſecutions of *Antiochus* ſcatter'd many of the *Jews* for their ſecurity into other Nations; yet a great part, and perhaps the greateſt, preſerved their Religion, and by that were obliged to come every year to *Jeruſalem* to Offer, and ſo were preſent at the effuſion of the Spirit on the day of *Pentecoſt*, and were witneſſes of the miraculous effects of it: Had they not been diſpers'd by Perſecution, had they not reſided in ſeveral Countries and been acquainted with their Languages, the Goſpel had not ſo eaſily been diffuſed into ſeveral Countrys of the World. The *firſt Perſecutions* alſo raiſed againſt the Church propagated the Goſpel; the *ſcattering of the Diſciples* enflamed their courage, and diſpers'd the Doctrine*, according to the Proptecy of *Daniel*, *Dan.* 12. 4. *Many ſhould run to and fro, and knowledge ſhould be increaſed.* The flights and hurryings of men ſhould enlarge the Territories of the Goſpel. There was not a Tribunal, but the primitive Chriſtians were cited to; not a horrible Puniſhment, but was inflicted upon them. Treated they were, as the dregs and offals of Mankind, as the common Enemies of the world; yet the Flames of the *Martyrs* brightned the Doctrine and the Captivity of its Profeſſors, made way for the Throne of its Empire. The impriſonment of the *Ark* was the downfal of *Dagon*. Religion grew ſtronger by Sufferings, and Chriſtianity taller by Injuries. VVhat can this be aſcribed to, but the conduct of a VViſdom ſuperior to that of Men and Devils, defeating the methods of human and helliſh policy; thereby making the *wiſdom of this World fooliſhneſs with God?* 1 *Cor.* 3. 19.

* Acts 8. 3.

Fifthly, The Uſe: I. *Of information.* If wiſdom be an excellency of the Divine Nature; then

1. *Chriſt's Deity may hence be aſſerted.* Wiſdom is the emphatical Title of Chriſt in *Scripture*, *Prov.* 8. 12, 13, 31. where *Wiſdom* is brought in ſpeaking as a *diſtinct Perſon*; aſcribing Counſel, and Underſtanding, and the Knowledg of witty Inventions to it ſelf. He is called alſo the *power of God*, and the *wiſdom*

of

Of God. * And the *Ancients* generally underſtood that place, *Col.* 2. 3. *In him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge*, as an aſſertion of the *Godhead* of Chriſt, in regard of the infiniteneſs of his knowledg; referring wiſdom to his knowledg of Divine things; and knowledg to his underſtanding of all Human things. But the natural ſenſe of the place ſeems to be this, that *all wiſdom* and knowledge is diſplayed by Chriſt in the Goſpel; and the words, ἐν αὐτῷ, refer either to *Chriſt*, or the *myſtery* of God ſpoken of, *verſ.* 2. But the Deity of Chriſt, in regard of infinite Wiſdom, may be deduc'd from his Creation of things, and his Government of things; both which are aſcribed to him in Scripture. The firſt aſcribed to him, *John* 1. 3. *All things were made by him*; and *verſe* 27. *Without him was not any thing made, that was made.* The ſecond *John* 5. 22. *The Father hath committed all Judgment to the Son*; and both put together, *Col.* 2. 16, 17. * 1 Cor. 1. 24.

Now ſince he hath the Government of the World, he hath the Perfections neceſſary to ſo great a Work. As the *Creation* of the World, which is aſcribed to him, requires an infinite power, ſo the *Government* of the World requires an infinite wiſdom. That he hath the knowledg of the hearts of men, was proved in handling the *Omniſcience* of God. That knowledg would be to little purpoſe without wiſdom to order the motions of mens hearts, and conduct all the qualities and actions of Creatures, to ſuch an end as is anſwerable to a wiſe Government; we cannot think ſo great an Imployment can be without an Ability neceſſary for it. The Government of Men and Angels is a great part of the glory of God; and if God ſhould intruſt the greateſt part of his Glory in hands unfit for ſo great a truſt, it would be an argument of weakneſs in God, as it is in men, to pitch upon unfit Inſtruments for particular Charges: Since God hath therefore committed to him his greateſt Glory, the Conduct of all things for the higheſt end, he hath a wiſdom requiſite for ſo great an end, which can be no leſs than infinite: If then Chriſt were a finite Perſon, he would not be capable of an infinite Communication; he could not be a Subject wherein infinite wiſdom could be lodged; for the terms finite and infinite are ſo diſtant, that they cannot commence one another; finite can never be changed into infinite, no more than infinite can into finite.

2. Hence we may aſſert, *The right and fitneſs of God for the Government of the World, as he is the wiſeſt Being.* Among men, thoſe who are excellent in Judgment, are accounted fitteſt to preſide over, and give orders to others; the wiſeſt in a City are moſt Capable to govern a City; or at leaſt, though ignorant men may bear the Title, yet the advice of the ſoundeſt and skilfulleſt Heads ſhould prevail in all publick Affairs: We ſee in Nature, that the eye guides the body, and the mind directs the eye.

* Power and Wiſdom are the two Arms of Authority: Wiſdom knows the end, and directs the means; Power executes the means deſign'd for ſuch an end. The more ſplendid and ſtrong thoſe are in any, the more Authority reſults from thence, for the conduct of others that are of an inferiour Orb: Now God being infinitely excellent in both, his ability and right to the management of the World, cannot be ſuſpected; the whole World is but one *Commonwealth*, whereof God is the *Monarch*. Did the Government of the World depend upon the Election of Men and Angels, where could they pitch, or where would they find perfections capable of ſo great a work, but in the Supream Wiſdom? His VViſdom hath already been apparent in thoſe Laws, whereby he formed the VVorld into a Civil Society, and the *Iſraelites* into a *Commonwealth*: The one ſuted to the Conſciences and Reaſons of all his Subjects, and the other ſuted to the *Genius* of that particular Nation, drawn out of the Righteouſneſs of the Moral Law, and applicable to all Caſes that might ariſe among them in their Government; ſo that *Moſes* aſſerts, that the wiſdom apparent in their Laws enacted by God, as their chief Magiſtrate, would render them famous among other Nations, in regard of their *Wiſdom*, as well as their *Righteouſneſs*, *Deut.* 4. 6, 7, 9. Alſo this perfection doth evidence, that God doth actually go- * Amyraut. *Moral. Tom.* 1. *p.* 258, 259.

vern the World. It would not be a commendable thing for a man, to make a curious Piece of *Clock-work*, and take no care for the orderly *motion* of it. Would God diſplay ſo much of his Skill in framing the Heaven and Earth, and none in actual guidence of them to their particular and univerſal ends? Did he lay the Foundation in order, and fit every Stone in the building, make all things in weight and meaſure, to let them afterwards run at hap hazard; Would he bring forth his Power to view in the Creation, and let a more glorious perfection lie idle, when it had ſo large a Field to move in? Infinite wiſdom is inconſiſtent with inactivity. All Prudence doth illuſtrate it ſelf in untying the hardeſt knots, and diſpoſing the moſt difficult Affairs to a happy and ſucceſsful Iſſue: All thoſe various Arts and Inventions among men, which lend their aſſiſting hand to one another, and thoſe various Employments, their ſeveral *Genius's* led them to, whereby they ſupport one anothers welfare, are Beams and inſtincts of Divine wiſdom in the Government of the World. He that *made all things in wiſdom*, * would not leave his works to act and move only according to their own folly, and idly behold them jumble together, and run counter to that end he deſigned them for; we muſt not fancy a Divine Wiſdom to be deſtitute of Activity.

* Pſal. 104. 24

3. Here we may ſee *a ground of Gods Patience.* The moſt impotent perſons are the moſt impatient, when un-foreſeen Emergencies ariſe, or at Events expected by them, when their feeble Prudence was not a ſufficient match to conteſt with them, or prevent them. But the wiſer any man is, the more he bears with thoſe things which ſeem to croſs his Intentions, becauſe he knows he graſps the whole Affair, and is ſure of attaining the *end* he propoſeth to himſelf; yet as a finite wiſdom can have but a finite patience, ſo an *infinite wiſdom* poſſeſſes an *infinite patience.*

The wiſe God intends to bring glory to himſelf, and good to ſome of his Creatures, out of the greateſt evils that can happen in the World: He beholds no exhorbitant Afflictions and monſtrous Actions, but what he can diſpoſe to a good and glorious end, even to *work together for good to them that love God**; and therefore doth not preſently fall foul upon the Actors, till he hath wrought out that temporary Glory to himſelf and Good to his People which he deſigns. *The times of Ignorance God winks at*, till he had brought his Son into the World, and manifeſted his wiſdom in Redemption, and when this was done, he preſſeth men to a *ſpeedy repentance**; that as, he forebore puniſhing their Crimes, in order to the diſplaying his wiſdom in the deſign'd Redemption; ſo when he had effected it, they muſt forbear any longer abuſing his *Patience.*

* Rom. 8. 28.

* Acts 17. 30.

4. Hence appears the *Immutability of God in his decrees.* He is not deſtitute of a Power and Strength to change his own purpoſes; but his Infinite perfection of *Wiſdom* is a bar to his laying aſide his Eternal Reſolves, and forming new ones; *Iſai.* 46. 10. He reſolves *the end from the beginning*, and *his counſel ſtands*; ſtands immovable, becauſe it is Counſel. 'Tis an impotent Counſel, that is ſubject to a dayly thwarting it ſelf. Inconſtant Perſons are accounted by Men, deſtitute of a due meaſure of prudence. If God change his Mind, 'tis either for the better or the worſe: if for the better, he was not wiſe in his former purpoſe; if for the worſe, he is not wiſe in his preſent Reſolve. No alteration can be without a reflection of weakneſs upon the former or preſent determination. God muſt either ceaſe to be as Wiſe as he was before, or begin to be wiſer than he was before the change; which to think or imagine is to deny a Deity. If any man change his Reſolution, he is apprehenſive of a flaw in his former Purpoſe, and finds an Inconvenience in it, which moves him to ſuch a change; which muſt be either for want of fore-ſight in himſelf, or want of a due conſideration of the object of his Counſel: Neither of which can be imagined of God without a denial of the Deity. No, there are no blots and blemiſhes in his purpoſes and Promiſes. Repentance indeed is an act of Wiſdom in the Creature; but it preſuppoſeth Folly in his former Actions, which is inconſiſtant with Infinite Perfection. Men are often too raſh in Promiſing; and therefore what they promiſe in haſt, they perform at leaſure,

leaſure, or not at all: They conſider not before they Vow, and make After-enquiries, whether they had beſt ſtand to it.

The *only wiſe God* needs not any After-game: As he is Soveraignly Wiſe, he ſees no cauſe of reverſing any thing, and wants not expedients for his own Purpoſe; and as he is Infinitely Powerful, he hath no Superiour to hinder him from executing his VVill, and making his People enjoy the effects of his *Wiſdom* If he had a recollectionof Thoughts (as Man hath) and ſaw a neceſſity to mend them, he were not Infinitely VViſe in his firſt Decrees. As in Creation, he looked back upon the ſeveral Pieces of that goodly Frame he had erected, and ſaw them ſo exact, that he did not take up his Penſil again to mend any Particle of the firſt Draught; ſo his Promiſes are made with ſuch Infinite VViſdom and Judgment, that what he writes is Irreverſible and for Ever, as the Decrees of the *Medes* and *Perſians*. All the words of God are Eternal, becauſe they are the Births of *Righteouſneſs* and *Judgment*, Hoſ. 2. 19. *I will betroth thee to me for ever, in Righteouſneſs and Judgment*. He is not of a wavering and flitting Diſcretion: If he *Threatens*, he wiſely conſiders what he Threatens, if he *Promiſes*, he wiſely conſiders what he Promiſes, and therefore is Immutable in both.

5. Hence it follows, that *God is a fit Object for our Truſt and Confidence*. For God being Infinitely VViſe, when he Promiſes any thing, he ſees every thing which may hinder, and every thing which may promote the execution of it; ſo that he cannot diſcover any thing afterwards, that may move him to take up After-thoughts, He hath more VViſdom than to promiſe any thing hand over head, or any thing wich he knows he cannot accompliſh. Though God, as *True*, be the Object of our Truſt; yet God, as *Wiſe*, is the Foundation of our Truſt. VVe truſt him in his Promiſe; the Promiſe was made by Mercy, and 'tis perform'd by Truth; but VViſdom conducts all Means to the accompliſhment of it. There are many Men, whoſe Honeſty we can confide in, but whoſe Diſcretion we are diffident of: But there is no defect either of the one or the other, which may ſcare us from a depending upon God in our concerns. The words of *Mans wiſdom* the *Apoſtle* entitles *Enticing*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 4. in oppoſition to the words of *Gods Wiſdom*, which are firm, ſtable, and undeniable demonſtrations. As the Power of God is an encouragement of Truſt, becauſe he is able to effect; ſo the VViſdom of God comes into the rank of thoſe Attributes which ſupport our Faith. To put a Confidence in him, we muſt be perſwaded, not only that he is Ignorant of nothing in the VVorld, but that he is VViſe to manage the whole courſe of Nature, and diſpoſe of all his Creatures, for the bringing his Purpoſes and his Promiſes to their deſigned perfection.

6. Hence appears *the neceſſity of a publick review of the Management of the World, and of a Day of Judgment*. As a *Day of Judgment* may be inferr'd from many Attributes of God; as his *Soveraignty, Juſtice, Omniſcience, &c.* ſo among the reſt from this of *Wiſdom*. How much of this Perfection will lie unvail'd and abſcure, if the Sins of Men be not brought to view, whereby the ordering the unrighteous Actions of Men, by his directing and over-ruling Hand of Providence, in ſubſerviency to his own Purpoſes and his Peoples good, may appear in all its glory? VVithout ſuch a publick Review, this part of *Wiſdom* will not be clearly viſible; how thoſe Actions, which had a vile foundation in the Hearts and deſigns of Men, and were formed there to gratifie ſome baſe Luſt, Ambition, and Covetouſneſs, &c. were by a ſecret *Wiſdom* preſiding over them, conducted to amazing Ends.

'Tis a part of *Divine Wiſdom* to right it ſelf, and convince Men of the reaſonableneſs of its Laws, and the unreaſonableneſs of their Contradictions to it. The execution of the Sentence, is an act of Juſtice; but the conviction of the reaſonableneſs of the Sentence, is an act of VViſdom, clearing up the *Righteouſneſs* of the proceeding; and this precedes, and the other follows, *Jude* 15. *To convince all that are ungodly, of all their ungodly deeds*. That *Wiſdom* which contrived ſatisfaction, as well as that *Juſtice* which required it, is concerned in righting the Law, which was enacted by it. The VViſdom of a Soveraign Law-giver is ingaged not to ſee his Law vilified and trampled on, and expoſed to the Luſts and

Affronts of Men, without being concerned in vindicating the Honour of it. It would appear a Folly to enact and publiſh it, if there were not a Reſolution to right and execute it.

The *Wiſdom* of God can no more aſſociate Iniquity and Happineſs together, than the *Juſtice* of God can ſeparate Iniquity from Puniſhment. It would be defective, if it did always tamely bear the Inſolences of Offenders, without a time of remark of their Crimes, and a Juſtification of the Precept rebelliouſly ſpurn'd at. He would be Unwiſe, if he were Unjuſt; Unrighteouſneſs hath no better a Title in Scripture, than that of *Folly*. 'Tis no part of Wiſdom, to give birth to thoſe Laws which he will always behold ineffectual, and neither vindicate his Law by a due execution of the Penalty, nor right his own Authority, contemn'd in the violation of his Law, by a juſt Revenge. Beſides, What *Wiſdom* would it be for the Soveraign Judg, to lodg ſuch a Spokeſman for himſelf, as *Conſcience* in the Soul of Man, if it ſhould be alway found ſpeaking, and at length be found falſe in all that it ſpeaks? There is therefore an apparent proſpect of the Day of Account, from the conſideration of this Perfecton of the Divine Nature.

7. Hence we have *a ground for a mighty Reverence and Veneration of the Divine Majeſty*. Who can contemplate the Sparklings of this Perfection in the variety of the Works of his hands, and the exact Government of all his Creatures, without a raiſed Admiration of the Excellency of his Being, and a falling flat before him, in a poſture of Reverence to ſo great a Being? Can we behold ſo great a maſs of Matter, digeſted into ſeveral Forms, ſo exact a Harmony and Temperament in all the Creatures, the proportions of Numbers and Meaſures, and one Creature anſwering the Ends and Deſigns of another, the diſtinct Beauties of all, the perpetual Motion of all things without checking one another; the variety of the Nature of things, and all acting according to their Nature with an admirable Agreement; and all together, like differing ſtrings upon an Inſtrument, omitting divers Sounds, but all reduc'd to order in one delightful Leſſon. I ſay, Can we behold all this without Admiring and Adoring the *Divine Wiſdom*, which appears in all?

And from the Conſideration of this, let us paſs to the Conſideration of his *Wiſdom* in Redemption; in reconciling divided Intereſts, untying Hard-knots, drawing one contrary out of another; and we muſt needs acknowledg that the Wiſdom of all the Men on Earth, and Angels in Heaven, is worſe than Nothing, and Vanity in compariſon of this vaſt *Ocean*. And as we have a greater eſteem for thoſe that invent ſome excellent Artificial Engines; what Reverence ought we to have for him that hath ſtampt an unimitable *Wiſdom* upon all his Works? Nature orders us to give Honour to our Superiours in Knowledg, and confide in their Counſels; but none ought to be Reverenc'd as much as God, ſince none equals him in *Wiſdom*.

8. If God be Infinitely Wiſe, *it ſhews us the neceſſity of our Addreſs to him, and Invocation of his Name*. We are ſubject to Miſtakes, and often overſeen; we are not able rightly to Counſel our ſelves. In ſome caſes all Creatures are too ſhort-ſighted to apprehend them, and too ignorant to give Advice proper for them, and to contrive Remedies for their eaſe; but with the Lord there is Counſel, *Jer.* 32. 19 *He is great in counſel, and mighty in working*; great in Counſel to adviſe us, mighty in Working to aſſiſt us. We know not how to effect a deſign, or prevent an expected Evil. We have an Infinite *Wiſdom* to go to, that is every way skilful to manage any buſineſs we deſire, to avert any Evil we fear, to accompliſh any thing we commit into his hands. When we know not what to reſolve, he hath a Counſel to *guide us*, *Pſal.* 73. 24. He is not more Powerful to effect what is needful, than Wiſe to direct what is fitting. All Men ſtand in need of the Help of God; as one Man ſtands in need of the aſſiſtance of other Men, and will not do any thing without Advice; and he that takes Advice, deſerves the Title of a *Wiſe man*, as well as he that gives Advice. But no Man needs ſo much the Advice of another Man, as all Men need the Counſel and Aſſiſtance of God: Neither is any mans Wit and Wiſdom ſo far inferiour to the Prudence and abi-

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lity of an Angel, as the Wiſdom of the wiſeſt man and the moſt ſharp-ſighted Angel, is inferiour to the Infinite *Wiſdom* of God. We ſee therefore, that it is beſt for us to go to the *Fountain*, and not content our ſelves with the Streams; to beg Advice from a *Wiſdom* that is Infinite and Infallible, rather than from that which is Finite and Fallible.

Uſe II. If *Wiſdom* be the Perfection of the Divine Majeſty, *How prodigious is the Contempt of it in the World?*

In General.

All Sin ſtrikes at this attribute, and is in one part or other a degrading of it: The firſt Sin directed its Venom againſt this. As the Devils endeavoured to equal their Creator in Power; ſo Man endeavoured to equal him in Wiſdom: Both indeed ſcorn'd to be rull'd by his Order; but Man evidently exalted himſelf againſt the *Wiſdom* of God, and aſpired to be a ſharer with him in his Infinite Knowledg: Would not let him be the *only wiſe God*, But cheriſhed an ambition to be his Partner. Juſt as if a Beam were able to imagine, it might be as bright as the Sun; or a Spark fancy, it could be as full fraught with Heat, as the whole Element of Fire. Man would not ſubmit to the Infinite *Wiſdom* of God in the prohibition of one ſingle *Fruit* in the *Garden*, when by the right of his Soveraign Authority, he might have granted him only the uſe of one. All Preſumptuous ſins are of this nature, they are therefore called *Reproaches of God*, Numb. 15. 30. *the Soul that doth ought preſumptuouſly, reproacheth the Lord.* All Reproaches are either for *Natural*, *Moral*, or *Intellectual* defects. All Reproaches of God, muſt imply either a Weakneſs or Unrighteouſneſs in God. If Unrighteouſneſs, his Holineſs is denied; if Weakneſs, his Wiſdom is blemiſhed.

In General, All *Sin* ſtrikes at this Perfection *two ways.*

1. *As it defaceth the wiſe workmanſhip of God.* Every Sin is a deforming and blemiſhing our own Souls, which, as they are the prime Creatures in the lower World, ſo they have greater Characters of *Divine Wiſdom* in the Fabrick of them: But this Image of God is ruin'd and broken by Sin. Though the ſpoiling of it be a ſcorn of his Holineſs, 'tis alſo an affront to his *Wiſdom*; for though his Power was the cauſe of the production of ſo fair a Piece, yet his Wiſdom was the guide of his Power, and his Holineſs the Patern whereby he wrought it: His Power effected it, and his Holineſs was exemplified in it, but his Wiſdom contrived it.

If a Man had a curious Clock or Watch, which had coſt him many years pains and the ſtrength of his Skill to frame it; for another, after he had ſeen and conſidered it, to trample upon it, and cruſh it in pieces, would argue a contempt of the *Artificers* Skill. God hath ſhewn infinite Art in the Creation of Man; but Sin unbeautifies Man, and raviſheth his Excellency. It cuts and ſlaſheth the Image of God ſtampt by Divine Wiſdom, as though it were an Object only of Scorn and Contempt. The Sinner in every Sin acts, as if he intended to put himſelf in a better poſture, and in a fairer dreſs, than the *Wiſdom* of God hath put him in by Creation.

2. *In the ſlighting his Laws.* The Laws of God are highly Rational; they are drawn from the depths of the Divine Underſtanding, wherein there is no unclearneſs, and no defect. As his Underſtanding apprehends all things in their true Reaſon; ſo his Will enjoyns all things for worthy and wiſe Ends: His Laws are contrived by his Wiſdom for the happineſs of Man, whoſe Happineſs, and the Methods to it, he underſtands better than Men or Angels can do. His Laws being the Orders of the Wiſeſt Underſtanding, every breach of his Law is a flying in the Face of his *Wiſdom.* All Human Laws, though they are enforced by Soveraign Authority; yet they are, or ought to be in the compoſing of them, founded upon Reaſon, and ſhould be particular applications of the Law of Nature, to this or that particular emergency. The Laws of God then, who is *ſumma ratio*, are the birth of the trueſt Reaſon; though the Reaſon of every one of them may not be ſo clear to us.

Every Law, though it conſiſts in an act of the Will, yet doth preſuppoſe an act of the Underſtanding. The act of the *Divine Underſtanding* in framing the Law,

Law, muſt be ſuppoſed to precede the act of his Will, in commanding the obſervance of that Law. So every Sin againſt the Law, is not only againſt the Will of God commanding, but the Reaſon of God contriving; and a cleaving to our own Reaſon, rather than the Underſtanding or Mind of God: As if God had miſtaken in making his Law, and we had more underſtanding to frame a better, and more conducing to our happineſs: As if God were not VViſe enough to govern us, and preſcribe what we ſhould do, and what we ſhould avoid; as if he deſigned not our welfare, but our misfortune.

VVhereas the Precepts of God are not tyrannical Edicts, or Acts of meer VVill, but the fruits of Counſel; and therefore every breach of them is a real declamation againſt his Diſcretion and Judgment, and preferring our own Imaginations, or the Suggeſtions of the *Devil*, as our Rule, before the Reſults of Divine Counſel: VVhile we acknowledg him VViſe in our Opinion, we ſpeak him Fooliſh by our Practice; when inſtead of being guided by him, we will guide our ſelves. No Man will queſtion, but it is a controuling *Divine Wiſdom*, to make Alterations in his Precepts; dogmatically, either to add ſome of their own, or expunge any of his: And is it not a Crime of the like reflection to alter them Practically? VVhen we will obſerve one part of the Law, and not another part; but pick and chooſe where we pleaſe our ſelves, as our Humors and Carnal Intereſt prompts us. It is to charge that part of the Law with Folly, which we refuſe to conform unto.

The more cunning any Man is in Sin, the more his ſin is againſt *Divine Wiſdom*, as if he thought to out-wit God. He that receives the Promiſes of God, and the *Teſtimony of Chriſt, ſets to his Seal, that God is true*, John 3. 33. By the like ſtrength of Argument it will undeniably follow, That he that refuſeth Obedience to his Precept, ſets to his Seal that God is fooliſh. VVere they not Rational, God would not enjoyn them; and if they are Rational, we are Enemies to Infinite VViſdom, by not complying with them. If Infinite Prudence hath made the Law, why is not every part of it obſerved; if it were not made with the beſt Wiſdom, why is any part of it obſerved? If the defacing his Image be any Sin, as being a defaming his *Wiſdom* in Creation; the breaking his Law is no leſs a Sin, as being a diſgracing his *Wiſdom* in his Adminiſtration. 'Tis upon this account, likely, that the *Scripture* ſo often counts Sinners *Fools*, ſince it is certainly inexcuſable Folly, to contradict undeniable and infallible *Wiſdom*; yet this is done in the leaſt Sin: And as *he that breaks one tittle of the Law*, is deſervedly accounted *guilty* of the breach of the *whole*, *James* 2. 10. ſo he that *deſpiſeth* the leaſt ſtamp of *Wiſdom* in the minuteſt part of the Law, is deſervedly counted as a Contemner of it, in the frame of the whole Statute-Book.

But in *Particular*, the *Wiſdom* of God is affronted and Invaded.

1. *By introducing new Rules and Modes of VVorſhip, different from Divine Inſtitutions.* Is not this a manifeſt reflection on this Perfection of God, as though he had not been Wiſe enough to provide for his own Honour, and model his own Service; but ſtood in need of our directions, and the *caprichio's* of our Brains? Some have obſerved, that it is a greater Sin in Worſhip to do what we ſhould not, than to omit what we ſhould perform *. The one ſeems to be out of weakneſs, becauſe of the high exactneſs of the Law; and the other out of impudence, accuſing the *Wiſdom* of God of Imperfection, and controuling it in its Inſtitutions. At beſt, it ſeems to be an Imputation of Human Baſhfulneſs to the Supream Soveraign; as if he had been aſhamed to preſcribe all that was neceſſary to his own Honour, but had left ſomething to the Ingenuity and Gratitude of Men.

* Strong of the Will.

Man has ever ſince the fooliſh Conceit of his old Anceſtor *Adam*, preſumed he could be as Wiſe as God; and if he who was created *upright* entertain'd ſuch Conceits, much more doth Man now, under a maſs of Corruption, ſo capable to foment them. This hath been the continual practice of Men; not ſo much to reject what once they had received as Divine, but to add ſomething of their own Inventions to it.

The *Heathens* renounced not the Sacrificing of Beaſts for the expiation of their

Offences

offences (which the Old World had received by Tradition from *Adam*, and the New World, after the Deluge, from *Noah.*) But they had blended that Tradition with Rites of their own, and offered Creatures unclean in themſelves, and not fit to be offered to an Infinitely pure being; for the diſtinction of *Clean* and *Unclean*, was as Ancient as *Noah*, *Gen.* 8. 20. yea before, *Gen.* 7. 2.

So the *Jews* did not diſcard what they had received from God, as *Circumciſion*, the *Paſſeover*, and *Sacrifices*; but they would mix a heap of *Heatheniſh* Rites with the Ceremonies of Divine Ordination, and practice things which he had not commanded, as well as things which he had enjoyned them. And therefore 'tis obſervable, that when God taxeth them with this Sin; he doth not ſay, They brought in thoſe things which he had forbidden into his Worſhip; but thoſe things which he had not commanded, and had given no order for, to intimate, that they were not to move a ſtep without his Rule; (*Jer.* 7. 31. *They have built the high places of* Tophet, *which I commanded them not, nor came it into my heart*; and *Levit.* 10. 1. *Nadabs* and *Abihu's* ſtrange *Fire* was *not commanded*;) ſo charging them with Impudence and Raſhneſs in adding ſomething of their own, after he had revealed to them the manner of his ſervice, as if they were as Wiſe as God. So loth is Man to acknowledg the Supremacy of Divine Underſtanding, and be ſenſible of his own Ignorance.

So after the divulging of the *Goſpel*, the Corrupters of Religion did not fling off, but preſerved the Inſtitutions of God, but painted and patch'd them up with *Pagan* Ceremonies; impoſed their own *Dreams* with as much force, as the *Revelations* of God. Thus hath the *Papacy* turn'd the Simplicity of the Goſpel into *Pagan Pomp*, and Religion into Politicks; and revived the Ceremonial Law, and raked ſome Limbs of it out of the Grave, after the *Wiſdom* of God had rung her Knell, and honorably Interr'd her; and ſhelter'd the *Heatheniſh* Superſtitions in *Chriſtian Temples*, after the Power of the Goſpel had chas'd the *Devils*, with all their Trumpery, from their ancient Habitations.

VVhence ſhould this proceed, but from a partial *Atheiſme*, and a mean conceit of the *Divine Wiſdom?* As though God had not Underſtanding enough to preſcribe the Form of his own VVorſhip; and not VViſdom enough to ſupport it, without the Crutches of *Human Prudence.*

Human Prudence is too low to parallel *Divine Wiſdom*; 'tis an incompotent Judge of what is fit for an Infinite Majeſty. 'Tis ſufficiently ſeen in the ridiculous and ſenſeleſs Rites among the *Heathens*; and the Cruel and Deviliſh ones, fetch'd from them by the *Jews*. VVhat work will Human VViſdom make with Divine VVorſhip, when it will preſume to be the Director of it, as a Mate with the *Wiſdom* of God? VVhence will it take its meaſures, but from Senſe, Humor, and Fancy? As though what is grateful and comely to a depraved Reaſon, were as beautiful to an unſpotted, and Infinite Mind. Do not ſuch tell the VVorld, that they were of Gods Cabinet Counſel, ſince they will take upon them to judge, *as well as God*, what is *well pleaſing to him?* VVhere will it have the humility to ſtop, if it hath the preſumption to add any one thing to Revealed Modes of VVorſhip; How did God tax the *Iſraelites* with making *Idols according to their own underſtanding?* *Hoſ.* 13. 2. imagining their own Underſtandings to be of a finer make, and a perfecter Mould than their Creators; and that they had fetched more light from the *Chaos* of their own Brains, than God had from Eternity in his own Nature? How ſlight will the Excuſe be, *God hath not forbidden this, or that*, when God ſhall ſilence Men with the Queſtion, *VVhere, or when did I command this, or that?* There was no Addition to be made under the Law to the meaneſt Inſtrument God had appointed in his Service. The *Sacred Perfume* was not to have one Ingredient more put into it, than what God had preſcribed in the Compoſition; nor was any Man upon pain of Death to imitate it; nor would God endure, that Sacrifices ſhould be conſum'd with any other *Fire*, than that which came down from Heaven. So tender is God of any Invaſions of his VViſdom and Authority. In all things of this Nature, whatſoever *voluntary humility* and reſpect to God they may be diſguiſed with, there is a ſwelling of the *fleſhly mind* againſt Infinite Underſtanding, which the *Apoſtle* nauſeates, *Coloſſ.* 2. 18.

Such

Such Mixtures have not been bleſt by God: As God never proſper'd the Mixtures of ſeveral kinds of Creatures, to form and multiply a new *Species*, as being a diſſatisfaction with his *Wiſdom*, as Creator; ſo he doth not proſper Mixtures in Worſhip, as being a Conſpiracy againſt his *Wiſdom*, as a Law-giver. * The Deſtruction of the *Jews*, was judged by ſome of their Doctors to be, for preferring Human Traditions before the Written Word; which they ground on *Iſa.* 29. 33. *Their fear of me was taught by the Precepts of Men.* The *Injunctions* of Men were the Rule of their Worſhip, and not the Preſcripts of my Law.

* Vaſin. *The* Talmud *takes notice, that the Court of* Bethany *was waſted three years before* Jeruſalem, *becauſe they preferred their own words before the words of the Law.*

To conclude, Such as make Alterations in Religion, different from the firſt Inſtitution, are intollerable Buſie-Bodies, that will not let God alone with his own Affairs. Vain Man would be wiſer than his Maker, and be dabbling in that which is his ſole Prerogative.

2. *In neglecting Means Inſtituted by God.* When Men have riſings of heart againſt God Ordinances, *They reject the counſel of the Lord againſt themſelves*, or *in themſelves*, *Luke* 7. 30. εἰς ἑαυτοὺς. They diſannull'd the *Wiſdom* of God, the Spring of his Ordinances: All neglects are diſregards of Divine Preſcriptions, as impertinent and unavailable to that End for which they were appointed, as not being ſuted to the common dictates of Reaſon; ſometimes out of a Voluntary humility, ſuch as *Peters* was, when he denied *Chriſts* condeſcenſion *to waſh his feet*, *John* 13. 8. and thereby judged of the comelineſs of his Maſters intention and action. Such as continually neglect the great Inſtitution of the *Lords Supper* out of a ſenſe of *Unworthineſs*, are in the ſame rank with *Peter*, and do, as well as he, fall under the blame and reproof of Chriſt.

Men would be ſaved, and uſe the Means; but either Means of their own Appointment, or not all the Means of Gods ordering *. They would have Gods Wiſdom and Will condeſcend to theirs, and not theirs conformed to God. As if our blind Judgments were fitteſt to make the election of the Paths to Happineſs. Like *Naaman*, who when he was ordered by the *Prophet*, for the cure of his *Leproſie*, to *waſh ſeven times in Jordan*, would be the *Prophets* Director, and have him touch him with his Hand: As if a Patient ſick of a deſperate Diſeaſe, ſhould Preſcribe to his Skilful Phyſician, what Remedies he ſhould order for his Cure, and make his own infirm Reaſon, or his Guſt and Palate the Rule, rather than the Phyſicians Skill.

* Pont. *Medit. part.* 3. *p.* 366.

Mens Inquiries are, *VVho will ſhew us any good?* They rather faſten upon any Means, than what God hath ordained. * We invert the Order *Divine Wiſdom* hath eſtableiſhed, when we would have God ſave us in our own way, not in his. 'Tis the ſame thing, as if we would have God nouriſh us without Bread, and cure our Diſeaſes without Medicines, and increaſe our Wealth without our Induſtry, and cheriſh our Souls without his Word and Ordinances. 'Tis to demand of him an alteration of his Methods, and a ſeparation of that which he hath by his Eternal Judgment joyned together. Therefore for a Man to pray to God to ſave him, when he will not uſe the Means he hath appointed for Salvation, when he ſlights the *Word*, which is the Inſtrument of Salvation, is a Contempt of the *VViſdom* of Divine Inſtitutions.

* Durant. *de Tent. p.* 403, 404.

Alſo in *Omiſſions* of Prayer; when we conſult not with God upon emergent Occaſions, we truſt more to our own wiſdom than Gods, and imply, that we ſtand not in need of his Conduct, but have ability to direct our ſelves, and accompliſh our Ends without his guidance. Not *ſeeking God*, is by the Prophet tax'd to be a reflection upon this Perfection of God, *Iſai.* 31. 1, 2. *They look not to the Holy One of Iſrael, neither ſeek the Lord, &c.* And the like Charge he brings againſt them, *Hoſ.* 8. 9. *They are gone up to Aſſyria, a wild Aſs alone by himſelf, not conſulting God.*

3. *In cenſuring Gods Revelations and Actions, if they be not according to our Schemes.* When we will not ſubmit to his plain Will, without penetrating into the unrevelated Reaſon of it, nor adore his Counſels without controuling them; as if we could correct both *Law* and *Goſpel*, and frame a better Method of Redemption than that of Gods contriving. Thus Men ſlighted the *VViſdom* of God in the Goſpel, becauſe it did not gree with that *Philoſophical* Wiſdom and Reaſon

Reaſon they had ſuckt in by Education from their Maſters*, contrary to their Practice in their Superſtitious Worſhip; where the Oracles they thought Divine, were entertained with Reverence, not with Diſpute; and though ambiguous, were not counted ridiculous by the Worſhipper. How fooliſh is man in this, wherein he would be accounted wiſe? *Adam* in Innocence was unfit to controul the Doctrine of God, when the Eye of his Reaſon was clear; and much more are we, ſince the depravation of our Nature. * 1 Cor. 1.21 22.

The Revelations of God tower above Reaſon in its Purity; much more above Reaſon in its Mud and Earthineſs. The Rays of *Divine Wiſdom* are too bright for our Human Underſtandings, much more for our Sinful Underſtandings. 'Tis baſe to ſet up Reaſon, a Finite principle, againſt an Infinite Wiſdom; much baſer to ſet up a depraved and purblind Reaſon, againſt an All-ſeeing and holy Wiſdom. If we would have a Reaſon for all that God ſpeaks, and all that God acts; our Wiſdom muſt become Infinite as his, or his Wiſdom become Finite as ours.

All the Cenſures of Gods Revelations ariſe from ſome prejudicate Opinions, or Traditional Maximes, that have enthroned themſelves in our Minds, which are made the Standard whereby to judge of the things of God, and receive or reject them, as they agree with, or diſſent from, thoſe *Principles**. Hence it was that the *Philoſophers* in the Primitive Times were the greateſt Enemies to the Goſpel: And the Contempt of *Divine Wiſdom*, in making Reaſon the Supream Judg of Divine Revelation, was the fruitful Mother of the *Hereſies* in all Ages ſpringing up in the Church, and eſpecially of that *Socinianiſm*, that daily inſinuates it ſelf into the minds of Men. * Coloſſ. 2. 8.

This is a wrong to the *Wiſdom* of God. He that cenſures the Words or Actions of another, implies, that he is in his Cenſure wiſer than the Perſon cenſured by him. 'Tis as inſupportable to determine the Truth of Gods plain Dictates by our Reaſon, as it is to meaſure the ſtableneſs or unſtableneſs of his Actions by the humour of our Will. We may ſooner think to ſpan the *Sun*, or graſp a *Star*, or ſee a *Gnat* ſwallow a *Leviathan*, than fully underſtand the Debates of Eternity.

To this we may refer too curious Enquiries into Divine Methods, and *intruding into thoſe things which are not revealed*, *Coloſſ.* 2. 18. It is to affect a Wiſdom equal with God, and an Ambition to be of his Cabinet-Counſel. We are not content to be Creatures, that is, to be every way below God; below him in Wiſdom, as well as Power

4. *In preſcribing God methods of Acting.* When we pray for a thing without a due ſubmiſſion to Gods Will; as if we were his Counſellors, yea his Tutors, and not his Subjects, and God were bound to follow our humors, and be ſwayed according to the Judgment of our Ignorance; when we would have ſuch a mercy which God thinks not fit to give, or have it in this method, which God deſigns to convey through another Chanel. Thus we would have the *only wiſe God* take his meaſures from our Paſſions: Such a controuling of God was *Jonahs* Anger about a *Gourd*, *Jonah* 3. 10. *It diſpleaſed* Jonah *exceedingly, and he was very angry.*

We would direct him how to diſpoſe of us; as though he that had Infinite *Wiſdom* to contrive, and rear the Excellent Fabrick of the World, had not *Wiſdom* enough, without our Diſcretion, to place us in a ſphere proper for his own Ends, and the uſe he intends us in the Univerſe. All the Speeches of Men, (*Would I had been in ſuch an Office, had ſuch Charge: Would I had ſuch a Mercy, in ſuch a method, or by ſuch inſtruments*) are Intrenchments upon Gods wiſe diſpoſal of Affairs.

This impoſing upon God is a Helliſh diſpoſition, and in Hell we find it. The *Rich man* in Hell, that pretends ſome Charity for his Brethren on Earth, would direct God a way to prevent their ruin, by ſending *one from the dead* to ſchool them, as a more effectual Means than *Moſes and the Prophets*, *Luke* 16. 29, 30. 'Tis a Temper alſo to be found on Earth; what elſe was the language of *Sauls* ſaving the *Amalekites Cattle* againſt the plain Command of God, 1 *Sam.* 15. 15. As if God in his Fury had overſhot himſelf, and overlooked his *Altar*, in depriving it of ſo great a Booty for its Service: As if it were an unwiſe thing in God,

to loſe the Prey of ſo many ſtately Cattle, that might make the Altar ſmoke with their Entrails, and ſerve to expiate the Sins of the People; and therefore he would rectifie that which he thought to be an overſight in God, and ſo magnifies his own Prudence and Diſcretion above the Divine.

We will not let God act as he thinks fit, but will be directing him, and *teaching him knowledg*, *Job* 21. 22. As if God were a Statue, an *Idol*, that had *Eyes* and ſaw not, *Hands*, but acted not; and could be turned as an Image may be, to what quarter of the Heaven we pleaſe out ſelves. The *Wiſdom* of God is unbyaſt; he orders nothing but what is fitteſt for his End, and we would have our ſhallow Brains the byaſs of Gods acting. And will not God reſent ſuch an Indignity, as a reflection upon his Wiſdom as well as Authority, when we intimate that we have better Heads than he, and that he comes ſhort of us in Underſtanding?

5. *In Murmuring and Impatience.* One demands a Reaſon, why he hath this or that Croſs? Why he hath been deprived of ſuch a Comfort, loſt ſuch a Venture, languiſheth under ſuch a Sickneſs, is tormented with ſuch Pains, oppreſt by Tyrannical Neighbours, is unſucceſsful in ſuch Deſigns? In theſe, and ſuch like the *Wiſdom* of God is queſtioned and defam'd. All Impatience, is a ſuſpicion, if not a condemnation of the Prudence of Gods Methods, and would make Human Feebleneſs and Folly the Rule of Gods dealing with his Creatures. This is a preſuming to inſtruct God, and a reproving him for Unreaſonableneſs in his Proceedings, when his dealings with us do not exactly anſwer our Fancies and Wiſhes; as if God, who made the World in Wiſdom, wanted Skill for the management of his Creatures in it. *Job* 40. 2. *Shall he that contends with the Almighty inſtruct him? he that reproveth God, let him anſwer it.* VVe that are not wiſe enough to know our ſelves, and what is needful for us; preſume to have VVit enough to guide God in his dealing with us. The *Wiſdom* of God rendred *Job* more uſeful to the VVorld by his Afflictions, in making him a Pattern of *Patience*, than if he had continued him in a confluence of all VVorldy Comforts, wherein he had been beneficial only in communicating his Morſels to his Poor Neighbours. All Murmuring is a faſtening Error upon unerring *Wiſdom*.

6. *In Pride and Haughtineſs of Spirit.* No Proud man, but ſets *his* Heart *as the heart of God*, *Ezek.* 28. 2, 3. The *Wiſdom* of God hath given to Men divers Offices, ſet them in divers places; ſome have more honourable Charges, ſome meaner. Not to give that reſpect their Offices and Places call for, is to quarrel with the *Wiſdom* of God, and overturn the Rank and Order wherein he hath placed things.

'Tis unfit we ſhould affront God in the diſpoſal of his Creatures, and intimate to him by our Carriage, that he had done more wiſely in placing another, and that he hath done fooliſhly in placing this or that Man in ſuch a Charge. Sometimes Men are unworthy the Place they fill; they may be ſet there in Judgment to themſelves and others: But the *Wiſdom* of God in his management of things, is to be honoured and regarded.

'Tis an infringing the *Wiſdom* of God, when we have a vain Opinion of our ſelves, and are blind to others. VVhen we think our ſelves Monarchs, and treat others as Worms or Flies in compariſon of us. He who would reduce all things to his own honour, perverts the Order of the VVorld, and would conſtitute another Order than what the *Wiſdom* of God hath eſtabliſhed; and move them to an End contrary to the intention of God, and charges God with want of Diſcretion and Skill.

7. *Diſtruſt of Gods Promiſe is an impeachment of his Wiſdom.* A ſecret Reviling of it, as if he had not taken due conſideration before he paſt his VVord; or a ſuſpition of his Power, as if he could not accompliſh his VVord. VVe truſt the *Phyſicians* Skill with our Bodies, and the *Lawyers* Counſel with our Eſtates; but are loath to rely upon God for the concerns of our Lives. If he be VViſe to diſpoſe of us, why do we diſtruſt him? If we diſtruſt him, why do we embrace an opinion of his VViſdom.

Unbelief alſo is a contradiction to the *Wiſdom* of God in the Goſpel, &c. but that I have already handled in a *Diſcourſe of the Nature of Unbelief*

III. Uſe

III. Uſe of *Comfort.* God hath an *Infinite VViſdom*, to conduct us in our Affairs, rectifie us in our Miſtakes, and aſſiſt us in our Straits. 'Tis an ineſtimable priviledg to have a God in Covenant with us; ſo VViſe, to communicate all Good to prevent all Evil; who hath Infinite ways to bring to paſs his gracious Intentions towards us. *How unſearchable are his Judgments, and his ways paſt finding out? Rom.* 11. 33. His Judgment or Decrees are incomprehenſibly VViſe, and the ways of effecting them, are as wiſe as his Reſolves effected by them. VVe can as little ſearch into his Methods of Acting, as we can into his VViſdom of Reſolving; both his Judgments and VVays are unſearchable.

1. *Comfort in all Straits and Afflictions.* There is a VViſdom in inflicting them, and a VViſdom in removing them. He is wiſe to ſute his Medicines to the humor of our Diſeaſe, though he doth not to the humor of our VVills: He cannot miſtake the nature of our Diſtemper, or the vertue of his own Phyſick. Like a skilful Phyſician, he ſometimes preſcribes bitter Potions, and ſometimes cheering Cordials, according to the ſtrength of the Malady, and neceſſity of the Patient to reduce him to health. As nothing comes from him, but what is for our good; ſo nothing is acted by him in a raſh and temerarious way. His VViſdom is as Infinite as his Goodneſs; and as exact in managing; as his Goodneſs in plentiful in ſtreaming out to us. He underſtands our Griefs, weighs our Neceſſities, and no Remedies are beyond the reach of his Contrivance. VVhen our feeble VVits are bewildred in a maze, and at the end of their Line for a reſcue; the Remedies unknown to us, are not unknown to God. VVhen we know not how to prevent a Danger, the VViſe God hath a *Thouſand Blocks* to lay in the way: VVhen we know not how to free our ſelves from an oppreſſive Evil, he hath a *Thouſand ways* of Relief.

He knows how to Time *our Croſſes*, and his *own Bleſſings.* The heart of a VViſe God, as well as the heart of *a* wiſe Man, *diſcerns both time and judgment*, *Eccleſ.* 8. 5. There is as much Judgment in ſending them, as Judgment in removing them. How comfortable is it to think, that our Diſtreſſes, as well as our Deliverances, are the fruits of *Infinite Wiſdom?* Nothing is done by him too ſoon or too ſlow; but in the true point of Time, with all its due circumſtances, moſt conveniently for his glory and our good. How VViſe is God, to bring the glory of our Salvation out of the depths of a ſeeming Ruin, and make the Evils of Affliction ſubſervient to the good of the Afflicted?

2. *In Temptations, his Wiſdom is no leſs employed in permitting them, than in bringing them to a good iſſue.* His *VViſdom* in leading our Saviour to be Tempted of the Devil, was to fit him for our ſuccour; and his *Wiſdom* in ſuffering us to be Tempted, is to fit us for his own Service, and our Salvation. He makes a *Thorn in the fleſh* to be an occaſion of a refreſhing Grace to the Spirit, and brings forth cordial Grapes from thoſe pricking Brambles, and magnifies his Grace by his *Wiſdom*, from the deepeſt ſubtilties of Hell. Let *Satans* Intentions be what they will, he can be for him at every turn, to out-wit him in his Stratagems, to baffle him in his Enterprizes; to make him inſtrumental for our good, where he deſigns nothing but our hurt. The Lord hath his methods of Deliverance from him, 2. *Pet.* 2. 9. *The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of Temptation.*

3. *In Denials, or delays of Anſwers of Prayer.* He is gracious to Hear; but he is wiſe to Anſwer in an *acceptable time*, and ſuccour us in a day proper for our *ſalvation*, 2 *Cor.* 6. 2. We have partial Affections to our ſelves, *Ignorance* is natural to us, *Rom.* 8. 26, *We ask we know not what*, becauſe we aſk out of Ignorance. God grants what he knows, what is fit for him to do, and fit for us to receive; and the exact ſeaſon wherein it is fitteſt for him to beſtow a Mercy. As God would have us bring forth our Fruit in ſeaſon, ſo he will ſend forth his Mercies in ſeaſon.

He is wiſe to ſute his Remedy to our Condition, to Time it ſo, as that we ſhall have an evident proſpect of his *Wiſdom* in it; that more of Divine Skill, and leſs of Human, may appear in the Iſſue. He is ready at our Call; but he will not Anſwer, till he ſee the Seaſon fit to reach out his hand. He is wiſe to prove our Faith, to humble us under the ſenſe of our own Unworthineſs, to whet our Affe-

ctions, to ſet a better eſtimate on the Bleſſings prayed for, and that he may double the Bleſſing, as we do our Devotion: But when his *Wiſdom* ſees us fit to receive his Goodneſs, he grants what we ſtand in need of. He is Wiſe to chuſe the fitteſt Time, and Faithful to give the beſt Covenant Mercy.

4. *In all Evils threatned to the Church by her Enemies.* He hath Knowledg to fore-ſee them, and Wiſdom to diſappoint them; *Job* 5. 13. *He taketh the wiſe in their own craftineſs, and the counſel of the froward is carried headlong.*

The Church hath the *Wiſdom* of God, to enter the Liſts with the Policy of Hell. He defeated the *Serpent* in the firſt Net he laid, and brought a glorious Salvation out of Hells Rubbiſh; and is yet as Skilful to diſappoint the Aftergame of the *Serpentine*-brood. The *Policy* of Hell, and the Subtilty of the World, are no better than *Folly with God*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 19. All Creatures are Fools, as Creatures, in compariſon with the Creator. The *Angels* he chargeth with *Folly*, much more us Sinners.

Depraved Underſtandings are not fit Mates for a pure and unblemiſh'd Mind. *Pharaoh*, with his wiſdom, finds a Grave in the Sea; and *Achitophels* Plots are finiſhed in his own murder: He breaks the Enemies by his Power, and orders them by his Skill to be a feaſt to his People. *Pſal.* 74. 14. *Thou brakeſh the Head of the Leviathan, and gaveſt him to be meat to the people in the Wilderneſs.* The Spoils of the *Egyptians* Carkaſſes caſt upon the ſhore ſerved the *Iſraelites* Neceſſities (or were as Meat to them;) as being a Deliverance the Church might feed upon in all Ages, in a *Wilderneſs* Condition, to maintain their *Faith*, the vital Principle of the Soul.

There is a *Wiſdom* ſuperiour to the ſubtilities of Men, which laughs at their Follies, and *hath them in deriſion*, *Pſal.* 2. 4. *There is no wiſdom or counſel againſt the Lord*, *Prov.* 21. 30. You never queſtion the wiſdom of an *Artiſt*, to uſe his File, when he takes it into his hand: Wicked Inſtruments are Gods Axes and Files; let him alone, he hath Skill enough to manage them: God hath too much Affection to deſtroy his People, and Wiſdom enough to beautifie them by the worſt Tools he uſes. He can make all things conſpire in a perfect harmony for his own Ends, and his Peoples good, when they ſee no way to eſcape a Danger feared, or attain a Bleſſing wanted.

Uſe IV.

I. For *Exhortation.*

1. *Meditate on the VViſdom of God in Creation and Government.* How little do we think of God when we behold his Works? Our Senſe dwells upon the ſurface of Plants and Animals, beholds the variety of their Colours, and the progreſs in their Motion: Our Reaſon ſtudies the qualities of them; our Spirits ſeldom take a flight to the *Divine VViſdom* which framed them. Our Senſes engroſs our Minds from God, that we ſcarce have a Thought free to beſtow upon the Maker of them, but only on the by. The conſtancy of ſeeing things that are common, ſtifles our admiration of God, due upon the ſight of them. How ſeldom do we raiſe our Souls as far as Heaven in our views of the Order of the World, the Revolutions of the Seaſons, the Natures of the Creatures that are common among us, and the mutual Aſſiſtances they give to each other? Since God hath manifeſted himſelf in them, to neglect the Conſideration of them, is to neglect the Manifeſtation of God, and the way whereby he hath tranſmitted ſomething of his Perfections to our Underſtanding. It renders Men *inexcuſably guilty* of not *glorifying of God*, *Rom.* 1. 19, 20. We can never neglect the meditation of the Creatures, without a blemiſh caſt upon the Creators Wiſdom. As every River can conduct us to the Sea; ſo every Creature points us to an Ocean of *Infinite VViſdom.* Not the minuteſt of them, but rich tracts of this may be obſerved in them, and a due ſenſe of God reſult from them. They are expoſed to our view, that ſomething of God may be lodged in our Minds; that as our Bodies extract their quinteſſence for our Nouriſhment, ſo our Minds may extract a quinteſſence for the Makers Praiſe.

Though God is principally to be praiſed in and for Chriſt; yet as Grace doth not raze out the Law of Nature, ſo the operations of Grace put not the dictates

ſtates of Nature to ſilence, nor ſuſpend the Homage due to God upon our inſpection of his Works. God hath given full Teſtimonies of this Perfection in the Heavenly Bodies, diſperſing their Light, and diſtributing their Influences to every part of the World: In framing Men into Societies, giving them various Diſpoſitions, for the preſervation of Governments; making ſome VViſe for Counſel, others Martial for Action; changing Old *Empires*, and raiſing New. VVhich way ſoever we caſt our Eyes, we ſhall find frequent occaſions to cry out, *Oh the depth of the Riches, both of the VViſdom and Knowledg of God*, Rom. 11. 33.

To this purpoſe, we muſt not only look upon the bulk and outſide of his Works, but conſider from what Principles they were raiſed, in what order diſpoſed, and the exact ſymmetry and proportion of their parts. VVhen a Man comes into a City or Temple, and only conſiders the ſurface of the Buildings, they will amaze his Senſe, but not better his Underſtanding; unleſs he conſiders the Methods of the Work, and the Art whereby it was erected.

1. *This was an End for which they were created.* God did not make the World for Mans uſe only, but chiefly for his own Glory; for Mans uſe to enjoy his Creatures, and for his own Glory to be acknowledged in his Creatures, that we may conſider his Art in framing them, and his Skill in diſpoſing them; and not only gaze upon the Glaſs without conſidering the Image it repreſents, and acquainting our ſelves whoſe Image it is. The Creatures were not made for themſelves, but for the ſervice of the Creator, and the ſervice of Man. Man was not made for himſelf, but for the Service of the Lord that created him. He his to conſider the beauty of the Creation, that he may thereby glorifie the Creator. He knows in part their excellency; the Creatures themſelves do not. If therefore Man be idle and unobſervant of them, he deprives God of the glory of his *VViſdom*, which he ſhould have by his Creatures.

The Inferiour Creatures themſelves cannot obſerve it. If Man regard it not, what becomes of it; his Glory can only be handed to him by Man. The other Creatures cannot be active Inſtruments of his Glory, becauſe they know not themſelves, and therefore cannot render him an active Praiſe. Man is therefore bound to praiſe God for himſelf, and for all his Creatures; becauſe he only knows himſelf, and the Perfections of the Creatures, and the Author both of himſelf and them.

God Created ſuch Variety, to make a Report of himſelf to us; we are to receive the Report, and to reflect it back to him. To what purpoſe did he make ſo many things, not neceſſary, for the ſupport and pleaſure of our Lives, but that we ſhould behold him in them, as well as in the other?

We cannot behold the *VViſdom* of God in his own Eſſence and Eternal *Idea's*, but by the reflection of it in the Creatures: As we cannot ſteadily behold the *Sun* with our Eye, but either through a Glaſs, or by reflection of the Image of it in the Water. God would have us meditate on his Perfections; he therefore choſe the ſame Day wherein he reviewed his Work, and reſted from it, to be celebrated by Man for the contemplation of him, *Gen.* 2. 2, 3. that we ſhould follow his Example, and rejoyce as himſelf did, in the frequent reviews of his Wiſdom and Goodneſs in them. In vain would the Creatures afford Matter for this ſtudy, if they were wholly neglected.

God offers ſomething to our Conſideration in every Creature: Shall the Beams of God ſhine round about us, and ſtrike our Eyes and not affect our Minds? Shall we be like Ignorant Children, that view the Pictures, or point to the Letters in a Book without any ſenſe and meaning? How ſhall God have the homage due to him from his Works, if Man hath no care to obſerve them? The 148. *Pſalm.* is an Exhortation to this, The view of them ſhould often extract from us a wonder of the like nature of that of *Davids*, Pſal. 104.24. *Oh Lord, how wonderful are the VVorks, in wiſdom haſt thou made them all.* The World was not Created to be forgotten, nor Man created to be unobſervant of it.

2. *If we obſerve not the VViſdom of God in the views of the Creatures, we do no more than Brutes.* To look upon the Works of God in the World, is no higher an act than meer Animals perform. The Glories of Heaven, and Beauties

of

of the Earth, are viſible to the ſenſe of Beaſts and Birds. A Brute beholds the motion of a Man, as it may ſee the Wheels of a Clock, but underſtands not the inward Springs of Motion; the End for which we move, or the Soul that acts us in our motion; much leſs that Inviſible Power which preſides over the Creatures, and conducts their motion. If a Man do no more than this, he goes not a ſtep beyond a Brutiſh Nature, and may very well acknowledg himſelf with *Aſaph*, a fooliſh and *ignorant Beaſt before God*, *Pſal.* 73. 22. The World is viewed by Beaſts, but the Author of it to be contemplated by Man. Since we are in a higher rank than Beaſts, we owe a greater Debt than Beaſts; not only to enjoy the Creatures, as they do, but behold God in the Creatures, which they cannot do.

The Contemplation of the Reaſon of God in his Works, is a noble and ſutable employment for a Rational Creature: We have not only Senſe to perceive them, but Souls to mind them. The Soul is not to be without its operation: Where the operation of ſenſe ends, the work of the Soul ought to begin. We travel over them by our Senſes, as Brutes; but we muſt pierce further by our Underſtandings, as men, and perceive and praiſe him that lies Inviſible, in his viſible Manufactures. Our Senſes are given us as Servants to the Soul, and our Souls, beſtowed upon us for the knowledg and praiſe of their and our Common Creator.

3. *This would be a means to increaſe our Humility.* We ſhould then flag our Wings, and vail our Sails, and acknowledg our own wiſdom to be as a drop to the Ocean, and a Shadow to the Sun. We ſhould have mean thoughts of the Nothingneſs of our Reaſon, when we conſider the ſublimity of the *Divine Wiſdom.* Who can ſeriouſly conſider the Sparks of Infinite Skill in the Creature, without falling down at the feet of the Divine Majeſty, and acknowledging himſelf a dark and fooliſh Creature, *Pſal.* 8. 4, 5. *VVhen* the Pſalmiſt *conſidered the Heavens*, the *Moon* and *Stars*, and Gods ordination and diſpoſal of them, the uſe that reſult from it, is, *VVhat is Man, that thou art mindful of him?* We ſhould no more think to mate him in Prudence, or ſet up the ſpark of our Reaſon to vie with the Sun. Our Reaſon would more willingly ſubmit to the Revelation, when the Characters of *Divine VViſdom* are ſtampt upon it, when we find his *VViſdom* in Creation incomprehenſible to us.

4. *It would help us in our acknowledgments of God, for his Goodneſs to us.* When we behold the *Wiſdom* of God in Creatures below us, and how ignorant they are of what they poſſeſs. It will cauſe us to reflect upon the deeper Impreſſions of Wiſdom in the frame of our own Bodies and Souls, an excellency far ſuperiour to theirs; this would make us admire the magnificence of his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and ſound forth his Praiſe for advancing us in dignity above other Works of his hands, and ſtamping on us by Infinite Art, a Nobler Image of himſelf.

And by ſuch a Compariſon of our ſelves with the Creatures below us, we ſhould be induced to act excellently, according to the nature of our Souls; not brutiſhly, according to the nature of the Creatures God hath put under our feet.

5. *By the Contemplation of the Creatures, we may receive ſome aſſiſtance in clearing our knowledg in the VViſdom of Redemption.* Though they cannot of themſelves inform us of it; yet ſince God hath revealed his Redeeming Grace, they can illuſtrate ſome particulars of it to us. Hence the Scripture makes uſe of the Creatures, to ſet forth things of a higher orb to us: Our *Saviour* is called a *Sun*, a *Vine*, and a *Lion*; the *Spirit* likened to a *Dove*, *Fire*, and *VVater*. The Union of *Chriſt* and his *Church*, is ſet forth by the Marriage Union of *Adam* and *Eve*.

God hath placed in Corporeal things the Images of Spiritual, and wrapped up in his Creating *VViſdom* the repreſentations of his Redeeming Grace: Whence ſome call the Creatures, *Natural Types* of what was to be tranſacted in a new formation of the World, and *Alluſions* to what God intended in and by Chriſt.

6. The Meditation of Gods VViſdom in the Creatures, *is in part a beginning of*

Heaven

Heaven upon Earth. No doubt but there will be a perfect opening of the Model of *Divine Wiſdom.* Heaven is for clearing what is now obſcure, and a full diſcovering of what ſeems at preſent intricate. *Pſal.* 36.9. *In his light ſhall we ſee light:* All the Light in Creation, Government, and Redemption. The *Wiſdom* of God in the *New Heavens*, and the *New Earth*, would be to little purpoſe if that alſo were not to be regarded by the Inhabitants of them. As the Saints are to be reſtored to the ſtate of *Adam* and higher; ſo they are to be reſtored to the employment of *Adam*, and higher: But his employment, was to *behold God in the Creatures.* The World was ſo ſoon depraved, that God had but little joy in, and Man but little knowledg of his Works.

And ſince the *Wiſdom* of God in Creation is ſo little ſeen by our Ignorance here, would not God loſe much of the glory of it, if the glorified Souls ſhould loſe the underſtanding of it above; When their Darkneſs ſhall be expelled, and their Advantages improved; when the Eye that *Adam* loſt, ſhall be fully reſtored, and with a greater clearneſs; when the Creature ſhall be reſtored to its true End, and Reaſon to its *true Perfection* *; when the Fountains of the depths of Nature and Government ſhall be opened, Knowledg ſhall increaſe, and according to the increaſe of our Knowledg, ſhall the admiration of *Divine Wiſdom* increaſe alſo.

* Rom. 8. 21. 22.

The *Wiſdom* of God in Creation, was not ſurely intended to lie wholly unobſerved in the greateſt part of it; but ſince there was ſo little time for the full obſervation of it, there will be a time wherein the *Wiſdom* of God ſhall enjoy a reſurrection, and be fully contemplated by his underſtanding and glorified Creature.

II. Exhortation. *Study and admire the Wiſdom of God in Redemption.* This is the Duty of all Chriſtians. We are not called to underſtand the great depth of *Phyloſophy*; we are not called to a skill in the Intricacies of Civil Government, or underſtand all the methods of Phyſick: but we are called to the Chriſtians, that is, Studiers of Divine *Evangelical Wiſdom.* There are firſt Principles to be learned; but not thoſe Principles to be reſted in, without a further progreſs. *Heb.* 6. 1. *Therefore leaving the principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt, let us go on to perfection.* Duties muſt be practiſed, but knowledg is not to be neglected. The ſtudy of Goſpel Myſteries, the harmony of Divine Truths, the ſparkling of Divine Wiſdom, in their mutual combination to the great ends of Gods Glory and Mans Salvation, is an Incentive to Duty, a *Spur* to Worſhip, and particularly to the greateſt and higheſt part of Worſhip, that part which ſhall remain in Heaven; the Admiration and Praiſe of God, and Delight in him. If we acquaint not our ſelves with the Impreſſions of the Glory of *Divine Wiſdom* in it, we ſhall not much regard it as worthy our obſervance in regard of that Duty.

The *Goſpel* is a Myſtery; and as a Myſtery hath ſomething Great and Magnificent in it, worthy of our daily inſpection; we ſhall find freſh *Springs* of New wonders, which we ſhall be invited to adore with a Religious Aſtoniſhment. It will both raiſe and ſatisfie our Longings. Who can come to the depths of *God manifeſted in the fleſh?* How amazing is it, and unworthy of a ſlight thought, that the Death of the *Son* of God ſhould purchaſe the happy Immortality of a *Sinful* Creature, and the glory of a Rebel be wrought by the Ignominy of ſo great a Perſon? That our Mediator, ſhould have a Nature whereby to Covenant with his Father, and a Nature whereby to be a *Surety* for the Creature? How admirable is it, that the Fallen Creature ſhould receive an advantage by the Forfeiture of his Happineſs? How Myſterious is it, that the Son of God ſhould bow down to Death upon a *Croſs*, for the ſatisfaction of Juſtice; and riſe Triumphantly out of the Grave, as a declaration, that Juſtice was contented and ſatisfied? That he ſhould be exalted to Heaven, to Intercede for us; and at laſt return into the World, to receive us, and inveſt us with a Glory for ever with himſelf?

Are theſe things worthy of a Careleſs regard, or a Blockiſh amazement? What Underſtanding can pierce into the depths of the Divine Doctrine of the Incarnation and Birth of Chriſt; the indiſſoluble Union of the *two* Natures? What Capacity

Capacity is able to meaſure the miracles of that *Wiſdom*, found in the whole Draught and Schem of the Goſpel? Doth it not merit then to be the Object of our daily Meditation? How comes it to paſs then, that we are ſo little curious to concern our thoughts in thoſe wonders, that we ſcarce taſte, or ſip of theſe Delicacies? That we buſie our ſelves in Trifles, and conſider what we ſhall eat, and in what faſhion we ſhall be dreſt; pleaſe our ſelves with the ingeniouſneſs of a Lace or Feather; admire a Moth-eaten Manuſcript, or ſome Half-worn piece of Antiquity; and think our time Ill-ſpent in the contemplating and celebrating that wherein God hath buſied himſelf, and Eternity is deſign'd for the perpetual expreſſions of?

How Inquiſitive are the Bleſſed *Angels?* with what vigour do they renew their daily Contemplations of it, and receive a freſh Contentment from it; ſtill learning, and ſtill *enquiring?* 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. their Eye is never off the *Mercy Seat*; they ſtrive to ſee the bottom of it, and employ all the Underſtanding they have to conceive the VVonders of it. Shall the *Angels* be raviſht with it, and bend, themſelves down to ſtudy it, who have but little intereſt in it in compariſon of us, for whom it was both contrived and diſpenſed? And ſhall not our Pains be greater for this *hidden Treaſure*? Is not that worthy the ſtudy of a Rational Creature, that is worthy the ſtudy of the Angelical? There muſt indeed be pains, 'tis expreſt by *Digging*, *Prov.* 2. 4, A lazy Arm will not ſink to the depth of a Mine The neglect of meditating on it is inexcuſable, ſince it hath the Title and Character of the *Wiſdom* of God,

* Pet. 1. 10. The Ancient *Prophets* ſearched into it, when it was folded up in *Shadows*, when they ſaw only the fringes of *Wiſdoms* Garment *; and ſhall not we, ſince the *Sun* hath mounted up in our Horizon, and ſenſibly ſcattered the light of the knowledg of this and the other Perfections of God? As the *Jewiſh Sabbath* was appointed to celebrate the Perfections of God, diſcovered in Creation; ſo is the *Chriſtian Sabbath* appointed to meditate on, and bleſs God for the diſcovery of his Perfections in *Redemption*. Let us therefore receive it according to its worth; let it be our only Rule to walk by. 'Tis worthy to be valued above all other Counſels; and we ſhould never think of it without the *Doxology* of the *Apoſtle*, *to the only wiſe God be glory through Jeſus Chriſt, for ever*; that our Speculations may end in affectionate Admirations, and Thankſgivings, for that which is ſo full of VVonders! VVhat a little proſpect ſhould we have had of *God*, and the Happineſs of Man had not his VViſdom and Goodneſs revealed things to us? The *Goſpel* is a marvellous Light, and ſhould not be regarded with a ſtupid Ignorance, and purſued with a duller Practice.

III. Exhortation, *Let none of us be proud of, or truſt in our own wiſdom.* Man by affecting VViſdom out of the way of God, got a crack in his Head, which hath continued *Five thouſand years* and upwards; and ever ſince our own Wiſdom and *knowledg hath perverted* us, *Iſai.* 47. 10. To be guided by this, is to be under the conduct of a blind Leader, and follow a Traytor and Enemy to God and our Selves. Mans Prudence often proves hurtful to him: He often accompliſheth his ruine, while he deſigns his eſtabliſhment; and finds his Fall, where he thought to ſettle his Fortune: Such bad Eyes hath Human Wiſdom often in its own Affairs. Thoſe that have been heightned with a conceit of their own Cunning, have at laſt proved the greateſt Fools. God delights to make *fooliſh the Wiſdom of this World*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 20.

Thus God writ Folly upon the crafty Brains of *Achitophel*, and Simplicity upon the ſubtil Projects of *Herod* againſt our Saviour; and the *Devil*, the Prince of Carnal Wiſdom, was befool'd into a furthering our Redemption by his own Projects to hinder it. Carnal Policy, againſt the Preſcripts of *Divine VViſdom*; never proſpers: 'Tis like an *Ignis fatuus*, which leads Men out of the way of Duty, and out of the way of Security, and perverts them into the Mire, and dangerous *Precipices*.

Then *Jeroboam* would coyn a religion to ſerve his intereſt of State, he tore up the Foundations both of his Kingdom and Family. The way the *Jews* took to prevent a freſh Invaſion of the *Romans*, by the Crucifying Chriſt, brought the

Judgment

Judgment more ſwift upon them *. There is no Man ruin'd here, or damn'd hereafter, but by his own wiſdom and will. *Prov.* 3. 5, 7. *The fear of the Lord* and *departure from evil*, are inconſiſtent with an overweening conceit of our own wiſdom; and *leaning to our own underſtanding*, is inconſiſtent with a *truſting in the Lord with all our hearts.* 'Tis as much a Deifying our ſelves, to truſt to our own wit, as it is a Deifying the Creature to affect or confide in it, ſuperior to God, or equally with him.

* Joh. 11. 48.

The true way to *Wiſdom* is to be ſenſible of our own folly, 1 *Cor.* 3. 18. *If any man be wiſe, let him become a fool.* He that diſtruſts his own guidance, will more ſecurely and ſucceſsfully follow the Counſel of another in whom he confides. The more water, or any other Liquor, is poured out of a Veſſel, the more Air enters. The more we diſtruſt our own VViſdom, the more capable we are of the conduct of Gods.

Had *Jehoſophat* relied upon his own policy, he might have found a Defeat when he met with a Deliverance; but he diſowned his own skill and ſtrength, in telling God, *We know not what to do, but our eyes are towards thee*, 2 *Chron.* 20. 12. Let us therefore with *Augur*, diſeſteem our own Underſtanding to eſteem Divine. Human Prudences is like a *Spiders*-web, eaſily blown away, and ſwept down by the Beſom of ſome unexpected Revolution. God by his infinite wiſdom can croſs the wiſdom of Man, and make a Mans own prudence hang in his own light. *Iſaiah* 29. 14. *The underſtanding of their Prudent Men ſhall be hid.*

IV. Exhortation. *Seek to God for Wiſdom.* The VViſdom we have by Nature is like the weeds the Earth brings forth without Tillage. Our VViſdom ſince the Fall, is the wiſdom of the *Serpent*, without the Innocency of the *Dove*: It flows from ſelf-love, runs into Self-intereſt. 'Tis the wiſdom of the Fleſh, and a prudence to manage means for the contenting our Luſts. Our beſt Wiſdom is imperfect, a meer nothing and Vanity, in compariſon of the Divine, as our Beings are in compariſon of his Eſſence. VVe muſt go to God for a Holy and Innocent VViſdom, and fill our Ciſterns from a pure Fountain. The VViſdom that was the glory of *Solomon*, was the *Donation of the moſt High.* *James* 1. 5. *If any man want Wiſdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it ſhall be given him.* The faculty of Underſtanding is from Gody by Nature; but a heavenly light to direct the Underſtanding is from God *by Grace.* Children have an Underſtanding, but ſtand in need of wiſe Maſters to rectifie it, and form Judicious Notions in it.

There is a Spirit in man, but the inſpiration of the Almighty gives him underſtanding, *Job* 32. 8. VVe muſt beg of God, *Wiſdom.* The *Goſpel* is the *Wiſdom of God*; the concerns of it great and Myſterious, not to be known without a *New underſtanding*, 1 *John* 5. 20. A new Underſtanding is not to be had but from the Creator of the firſt. The Spirit of God is the *Searcher of the deep things of God*; the Revealer of them to us, and the enlightner of our Minds to apprehend them; and therefore called, a *Spirit of Wiſdom and revolution*, *Eph.* 1. 17. Chriſt is made *Wiſdom* to us, as well as *Righteouſneſs*; not only by *Imputation*, but *Effuſion* *. Seek to God therefore for that wiſdom which is like the *Sun*, and not that worldly wiſdom which is like a *Shadow*: For that wiſdom whoſe effects are not ſo outwardly glorious, but inwardly ſweet, ſeek it from him, and ſeek it in his VVord, that is the Tranſcript of *Divine VViſdom*; through his *Precepts underſtanding is to be had* *. As the wiſdom of Men appears in their Laws; ſo doth the VViſdom of God in his Statutes.

* *Seamans Sermon before the Parliamen.*

* *Pſal.* 119. 104.

By this means we arrive to a heavenly ſagacity. If theſe be rejected, what wiſdom can be in us? A dream and conceit only; *Jer.* 8. *They have rejected the word of the Lord, and what VViſdom is in them?* VVho knows how to order any concerns as he ought, or any one faculty of his Soul? Therefore deſire Gods direction in outward concerns, in *perſonal*, *family*, *in Private and Publick*: He hath not only a wiſdom for our Salvation, but for our outward Direction. He doth not only guide us in the one, and leave *Satan* to manage us in the other. Thoſe that go with *Saul* to a VVitch of *Endor*, go to Hell for craft, and prefer the

Wiſdom of the hoſtile Serpent, before the holy Counſel of a Faithful Creator. If you want health in your Body, you adviſe with a *Phyſitian*; if directions for your Eſtate, you reſort to a *Lawyer*; If paſſage for a voyage, you addreſs to a *Pilot*; why not much more your *ſelves*, your *all*, to a Wiſe God. As *Pliny* ſaid concerning a wiſe man, *Oh, ſir, how many* Cato's *are there in that wiſe perſon?* how much more Wiſdom than men or Angels poſſeſs, is infinitely centred in the VViſe God?

5. *Submit to the Wiſdom of God in all caſes.* What elſe was inculcated in the firſt Precept forbidding man to eat of the Fruit of the *tree of Knowledge of good and evil*; but that he ſhould take heed of the ſwelling of his mind againſt the VViſdom of God? Tis a VViſdom Incomprehenſible to fleſh and blood: VVe ſhould adore it in our minds, and reſign up our ſelves to it in our practice: How unreaſonable are repinings againſt God, whereby a Creatures Ignorance endites and judges a Creators Prudence? VVere God weak in VViſdom, and only mighty in Power, we might ſuſpect his Conduct. Power without VViſdom and goodneſs is an unruly and ruinous thing in the world. But God being Infinite in one, as well as the other, we have no reaſon to be jealous of him, and repine againſt his methods; why ſhould we quarrel with him that we are not as high, or as wealthy as others; that we have not preſently the Mercy we want? If he be wiſe, we ought to ſtay his time, and wait his leaſure, becauſe *he is a God of Judgment. Eſa.* 30. 18. Preſume not to ſhorten the time which his diſcretion hath fixed, 'tis a folly to think to do it. By impatience we cannot haſten relief; we alienate him from us by debaſing him to ſtand at our bar, diſturb our ſelves, loſe the comfort of our lives and the ſweetneſs of his mercy. Submiſſion to God we are in no caſe exempted from, becauſe there is no caſe wherein God doth not direct all the acts of his VVill by Counſel. VVhatſoever is drawn by a *ſtrait rule* muſt be right and ſtrait; the rule that is right in it ſelf, is the meaſure of the ſtraitneſs of every thing elſe: VVhatſoever is wrought in the world by God, muſt be Wiſe, Good, Righteous; becauſe God is eſſentially Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Righteouſneſs.

Submit to God, (1.) *in his Revelations.*

1. *Meaſure them Not by Reaſon*: The truths of the Goſpel muſt be received with a ſelf emptineſs and annihilation of the Creature. If our *Reaſon* ſeems to lift up it ſelf againſt *Revelation*, becauſe it finds no teſtimony for it in its own light; Conſider how Crazy it is in natural and obvious things, and therefore ſure it is not ſtrong enough to enter into the depths of Divine Wiſdom: The Wiſdom of God in the Goſpel is too great an Ocean to be contained or laved out by a Cockleſhell. It were not infinite, if it were not beyond our finite reach; our Reaſon muſt as well ſtoop to his VViſdom, as our VVills to his Soveraignty. How great a vanity is it for a Glow-worm to boaſt, that it is as full of light as the Sun in the firmament? for reaſon to leave its proper ſphear, is to fall into confuſion, and thicken its own darkneſs. We ſhould ſettle our ſelves in the belief of the Scripture, and confirm our ſelves by a meditation on thoſe many undeniable arguments, for its divine authority. The fulfilling of its predictions, the *antiquity* of the writing, the *holineſs* of the precepts, the *heavenlineſs* of the Doctrine, the glorious *effects* it hath produced, and doth yet produce, different from human methods of ſucceſs; and ſubmit our reaſon to the voice of ſo high a Majeſty,

2. *Not to be too curiouſly inquiſitive into what is not Revealed.* There is ſomething hid in whatſoever is Revealed. VVe know the Son of God was begotten from Eternity, but how he was begotten, we are ignorant. *VVe* know there is a Union of the Divine Nature with the Human, and that the *Fulneſs of the Godhead dwells in him bodily*; but the manner of its inhabitation we are in a great part ignorant of. *We* know God hath choſen ſome and refuſed others, and that he did it with Counſel; but the reaſon why he choſe *this* man and not *that*, we know not; we can refer it to nothing but Gods Soveraign pleaſure. 'Tis revealed that there will be *a day wherein God ſhall Judge the World*; but the particular time is not revealed. We know that God Created the *World* in Time; but why he did not create the World millions of years before, we are ignorant of, and our reaſons would be bewildred

bewildred in their too much curioſity. If we ask why he did not create it before, we may as well ask why he did create it then? And may not the ſame queſtion be ask'd, if the World had been Created million of years before it was? That he Created it in *ſix days*, and not in an inſtant, is revealed; but why he did not do it in a moment, ſince we are ſure he was able to do it, is not revealed. Are the reaſons of a wiſe mans proceedings hid from us, and ſhall we preſume to dive into the reaſon of the proceedings of an *only wiſe God*, which he hath Judged not expedient to diſcover to us? Some ſparks of his Wiſdom he hath cauſed to iſſue out, to exerciſe and delight our minds; others he keeps within the center of his own breaſt: We muſt not go about to unlock his Cabinet. As we cannot reach to the utmoſt lines of his Power; ſo we cannot graſp the intimate reaſons of his Wiſdom. We muſt ſtill remember, that which is Finite can never be able to comprehend, the Reaſons, Motives, and Methods of that which is Infinite. It doth not become us to be reſty, becauſe God hath not admitted us into the debates of Eternity. We are as little to be curious at what God hath hid, as to be careleſs of what God hath manifeſted. Too great an inquiſitiveneſs beyond our line, is as much a provoking arrogance, as a blockiſh negligence of what is revealed, is a ſlighting ingratiude.

2. *Submit to God in his Precepts and Methods.* Since they are the reſults of Infinite Wiſdom, diſputes againſt them are not tolerable: What orders are given out by infallible VViſdom are to be entertained with reſpect and reverence, though the reaſon of them be not viſible to our purblind minds. Shall God have leſs reſpect from us than Earthly Princes, whoſe Laws we obſerve without being able to pierce into the exact reaſon of them all? Since we know he hath not a Will without an Underſtanding, our obſervance of him muſt be without Repining; we muſt not think to mend our Creators Laws, and preſume to judg and condemn his Righteous Statues: If the fleſh riſe up in oppoſition, we muſt croſs its motions, and Silence its murmurings; his Will ſhould be an acceptable VVill to us, becauſe it is a VViſe VVill in it ſelf. God hath no need to impoſe upon us and deceive us; he hath juſt and righteous wayes to attain his glory and his Creatures good. To deceive us, would be to diſhonour himſelf and contradict his own nature. He cannot impoſe falſe injurious Precepts or unavailable to his ſubjects happineſs; not falſe, becauſe of his Truth; not injurious becauſe of his Goodneſs; not vain, becauſe of his VViſdom. Submit therefore to him in his precepts, and in his Methods too. The honour of his VViſdom and the intereſt of our happineſs calls for it. Had *Noah* diſputed with God about building an Ark, and liſtned to the ſcoffs of the ſenſeleſs world, he had periſhed under the ſame fate and loſt the honour of a *Preacher and worker of righteouſneſs*. Had not the *Iſraelites* been their own enemies, if they had been permitted to be their own guides, and returned to the *Egyptian* bondage and furnaces, inſtead of a liberty and earthly felicity in *Canaan*? Had our Saviour gratified the *Jews* by deſcending from the Croſs and freeing himſelf from the power of his Adverſaries, he might have had that Faith from them which they promiſed him, but it had been a faith to no purpoſe, becauſe without ground; they might have believed him to be the *Son of God*, but he could not have been the Saviour of the world: His death the great ground and object of Faith, had been unaccompliſhed, they had believed a God pardoning without a content to his Juſtice, and ſuch a Faith could not have reſcued them from falling into eternal Miſery. The Precepts and Methods of divine VViſdom muſt be ſubmitted to.

3. *Submit to God in all Croſſes and Revolutions.* Infinite VViſdom cannot err in any of his *paths*, or ſtep the leaſt hairs breadth from the way of Righteouſneſs: There is the underſtanding of God in every motion; an Eye in every VVheel, the VVheel that goes over us and cruſheth us. VVe are led by fancy more than reaſon: VVe know no more what we ask or what is fit for us, than the Mother of *Zebedees children* did, when ſhe petitioned Chriſt for her ſons advancement, when he came into his temporal Kingdom *: The things we deſire might pleaſure our Fancy or appetite, but impair our health: One man complains for want of Children, but knows not whether they may prove Comforts or Croſſes: Another for want of Health, but knows not whether the health of his body may not prove the diſ-

* Mat. 20. 21.

eaſe of his Soul. We might loſe in Heavenly things, if we poſſeſs in Earthly things what we long for. God in regard of his infinite Wiſdom is fitter to carve out a condition than we our ſelves; our Shallow reaſon, and ſelf-love, would wiſh for thoſe things, that are injurious to God, to our ſelves, to the World; but God alwaies chooſes what is beſt for his Glory, and what is beſt for his Creatures, either in regard of themſelves, or as they ſtand in relation to him, or to others, as parts of the World.

We are in danger from our ſelf-love, in no danger in complying with Gods Wiſdom: When *Rachel* would die, if ſhe had no Children, ſhe had Children, * Gen. 30. 1. but *Death* with one of them *. Good men may conclude, that whatſoever is done by God in them or with them, is beſt and fitteſt for them; becauſe by the Covenant which makes over God to them, as their God, the conduct of his Wiſdom is aſſured to them as well as any other *Attribute*: And therefore, as God in every tranſaction appears as their God, ſo he appears as their wiſe Director, and by this Wiſdom he extracts good out of evil, makes the affliction which deſtroys our outward Comforts, conſume our inward Defilements; And the waves which threatned to ſwallow up the veſſel, to caſt it upon the ſhore: And when he hath occaſion to manifeſt his anger againſt his people, his Wiſdom directs his wrath. In Judgment he hath *a work to do upon Zion*, and when that * Iſai. 10. 12. work is done, he puniſhes the fruit of the *ſtout heart of the King of Aſſyria* *; As in the anſwers of Prayer he doth give oftentimes *above what we ask, or think*, *Eph.* 3. 20. ſo in outward concerns he doth above what we can expect, or by our ſhort-ſightedneſs conclude will be done; Let us therefore in all things frame our minds to the Divine Wiſdom, and ſay with the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* 47. 4. *The Lord ſhall chuſe our inheritance* and condition *for us.*

6. Exhortation. *Cenſure not God in any of his wayes.* Can we Underſtand the full ſcope of Divine Wiſdom in Creation, which is perfected before our Eyes? Can we by a rational knowledg walk over the whole Surface of the Earth, and wade through the Sea? Can we Underſtand the Nature of the Heavens? Are all, or moſt, or the thouſandth part of the particles of Divine Skill known by us, yea or any of them throughly known? How can we then Underſtand his deeper methods in things, that are but of yeſterday, that we have not had a time to View? We ſhould not be too quick or too raſh in our Judgments of him: The beſt that we attain to, is but feeble conjectures at the deſigns of God.

As there is ſomething hid in whatſoever is revealed in his VVord, ſo there is ſomething inacceſſible to us in his VVorks, as well as in his Nature and Majeſty. In our Saviours act in waſhing his Diſciples feet, he checkt *Peters* contradiction, *John* 13. 7. *What I do, thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhalt know hereafter.* God were not infinitely wiſe if the reaſon of all his acts were obvious to our Shallowneſs. He is no profound States-man, whoſe inward intention can be ſounded by vulgar Heads at the firſt act he ſtarts in his deſigned method. The wiſe God is in this like wiſemen, that have not breaſts like glaſſes of Chryſtal, to diſ- * Job 11. 6. cover all that they intend. There are *ſecrets of Wiſdom above our reach** ; nay when we ſee all his acts, we cannot ſee all the draughts of his skill in them. An unskilful hearer of a muſical leſſon may receive the melody with his Ear, and underſtand not the rarities of the compoſition as it was wrought by the Muſitians mind. Under the old Teſtament there was more of Divine Power, and leſs of his wiſdom apparent in his acts: As his Laws, ſo his acts were more fitted to their Senſe. Under the *new Teſtament* there is more of wiſdom and leſs of power; as his Laws ſo his acts are more fitted to a ſpiritual mind; wiſdom is leſs diſcernable than power. Our wiſdom therefore in this caſe, as it doth in other things, conſiſts in ſilence and expectation of the end and event of a work. VVe owe that honour to God that we do to men wiſer than our ſelves, to imagin he hath reaſon to do what he doth, though our ſhallowneſs cannot comprehend it. VVe muſt ſuffer God to be wiſer than our ſelves, and acknowledg that there is ſomething ſoveraign in his wayes not to be meaſured by the feeble reed of our weak underſtandings, And therefore we ſhould acquieſce in his proceedings; take heed we be not found ſlanderers of God, but be adorers inſtead of Cenſurers; and lift up our hands in admiration of him and his wayes, inſtead of citing him to anſwer

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it at our Bar. Many things in the *firſt* appearance may ſeem to be raſh and unjuſt, which in the *iſſue* appear comely and regular. If it had been plainly ſpoke before that the Son of God ſhould die, that a moſt holy perſon ſhould be crucified; it would have ſeemed cruel to expoſe a Son to miſery; unjuſt to inflict puniſhment upon one that was no Criminal; to joyn together exact goodneſs and *Phyſical evil*; that the Soveraign ſhould die for the Malefactor, and the Obſerver of the Law for the Idolators of it. But when the *whole deſign* is unravelled, what an admirable conjunction is there of Juſtice and Mercy, Love and Wiſdom, which before would have appeared abſurd to the muddied reaſon of man?

We ſee the Gardiner pulling up ſome delightful Flowers by the roots, digging up the Earth, overwhelming it with Dung; an ignorant perſon would imagine him wild, out of his wits, and charge him with ſpoiling his Garden: But when the Spring is arrived, the ſpectator will acknowledge his skill in his former Operations.

The truth is, the whole deſign and methods of God are not to be judged by us in this world; the full declaration of the whole contexture is reſerved for the other world, to make up a part of good mens happineſs in the amazing views of divine Wiſdom, as well as the other perfections of his nature. We can no more perfectly underſtand his Wiſdom, than we can his Mercy and Juſtice, till we ſee the laſt lines of all drawn, and the full expreſſions of them: we ſhould therefore be ſober and modeſt in the conſideration of Gods ways; *his Judgments are unſearchable, and his ways paſt finding out.* The riches of his wiſdom are paſt our counting, his depths not to be fathomed, yet they are depths of righteouſneſs and equity: Though the full manifeſtation of that equity, the grounds and methods of his proceedings are unknown to us. As we are too ſhort, fully to know God, ſo we are too ignorant fully to comprehend the acts of God: Since he is a *God of Judgment*, we ſhould *wait* till we ſee the iſſue of his works, *Eſa.* 30. 18. And in the mean time, with the *Apoſtle* in the *Text*, give him the Glory of all, in the ſame expreſſions; *To the only wiſe God be glory, through Jeſus Chriſt for ever Amen.*

A DISCOURSE UPON THE Power of GOD.

Job 26. 14.

Loe, theſe are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him? (but the thunder of his power who can underſtand?)

BILDAD had in the foregoing Chapter entertain'd *Job* with a Diſcourſe of the *Dominion* and *Power* of God, and the purity of his Righteouſneſs, whence he argues an impoſſibility of the juſtification of man in his preſence, who is no better than a VVorm. *Job* in this *Chapter* acknowledges the greatneſs of Gods power, and deſcants more largely upon it than *Bildad* had done; but doth Preface it with a kind of Ironical ſpeech, as if he had not acted a friendly part, or ſpake little to the purpoſe, or the matter in hand: the ſubject of *Job's* Diſcourſe was the worldly happineſs of the Wicked, and the Calamities of the Godly: And *Bildad* reads him a Lecture of the extent of Gods Dominion, the number of his Armies, and the unſpotted rectitude of his Nature, in compariſon of which the pureſt Creatures are foul and crooked. *Job* therefore from *verſe* 1. to *verſe* 4. taxeth him in a kind of ſcoffing manner, that he had not touched the Point, but rambled from the Subject in hand, and had not applyed a Salve proper to his Sore: *Verſe* 2. *How haſt thou helped him that is without power? How ſaveſt thou the arm of him that hath no ſtrength?* &c. your diſcourſe is ſo impertinent, that it will neither ſtrengthen a weak perſon, nor inſtruct a ſimple one*. But ſince *Bildad* would take up an Argument of Gods power and diſcourſe ſo ſhort of it, *Job* would ſhew that he wanted not his Inſtructions in that kind, and that he had more diſtinct Conceptions of it than his Antagoniſt had uttered: And therefore from *verſe* 5. to the end of the *Chapter*, he doth magnificently treat of the Power of God in ſeveral Branches. And *verſe* 5. he begins with the loweſt.

* *Munſter.*

Dead things are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof. You read me a lecture of the Power of God in the heavenly Hoſt: Indeed it is viſible there, yet of a larger extent; and Monuments of it are found in the lower parts. What do you think of thoſe dead things under the Earth and Waters, of the Corn that dies, and by the moyſtning influences of the Clouds ſprings up again with a numerous progeny and increaſe for the nouriſhment of man? What do you think of thoſe varieties of Metals and Minerals conceived in the bowels of the Earth; thoſe Pearls and riches in the depths of the Waters, midwifred by this Power of God? Add to theſe thoſe more prodigious Creatures in the Sea, the inhabitants of the Waters, with their vaſtneſs and variety, which are all the Births

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of Gods Power; both in their firſt Creation by his mighty Voice, and their propagation by his cheriſhing Providence.

Stop not here, but conſider alſo that his Power extends to Hell; either the Graves, the Repoſitories of all the crumbled duſt that hath yet been in the World (for ſo Hell is ſometimes taken in Scripture: *Verſe 6. Hell is naked before him, and deſtruction hath no covering*) The ſeveral lodgings of deceaſed men are known to him: No skreen can obſcure them from his ſight, nor their diſſolution be any bar to his power, when the time is come to compact thoſe mouldred Bodies to entertain again their departed Souls, either for weal or woe. The Grave, or *Hell*, the place of puniſhment, *is naked before him*; as diſtinctly diſcern'd by him, as a naked body in all its lineaments by us, or a diſſected Body is in all its parts by a skilful Eye. *Deſtruction hath no covering*; none can free himſelf from the Power of his Hand. Every perſon in the bowels of Hell; every perſon puniſhed there, is known to him, and feels the power of his Wrath.

From the lower parts of the World he aſcends to the conſideration of the power of God in the Creation of Heaven and Earth, *He ſtretches out the North over the empty places**. The North or the North-pole over the Air, which by the *Greeks* was called *void* or *empty*, becauſe of the tenuity and thinneſs of that Element; and he mentions here the North, or North-pole, for the whole Heaven, becauſe it is more known and apparent than the Southern-pole. *And hangs the Earth upon nothing*: The maſſie and weighty Earth hangs like a thick Globe in the midſt of a thin Air, that there is as much Air on the one ſide of it, as on the other. The Heavens have no prop to ſuſtain them in their height, and the Earth hath no baſis to ſupport it in its place. The Heavens are as if you ſaw a curtain ſtretched ſmooth in the Air without any hand to hold it; and the Earth is as if you ſaw a Ball hanging in the Air without any ſolid Body to under-prop it, or any Line to hinder it from falling; both ſtanding Monuments of the Omnipotence of God.

* Verſe. 7.

He then takes notice of his daily Power in the Clouds. *He binds up the waters in his thick Clouds, and the Cloud is not rent under them**. He compacts the Waters together in Clouds, and keeps them by his Power in the Air againſt the force of their natural gravity and heavineſs, till they are fit to flow down upon the Earth, and perform his pleaſure in the places for which he deſigns them. *The Clouds is not rent under them*; the thin Air is not ſplit aſunder by the weight of the Waters contain'd in the Cloud above it. He cauſes them to diſtil by drops, and ſtrains them as it were through a thin Lawn, for the refreſhment of the Earth; and ſuffers them not to fall in the whole lump, with a violent torrent, to waſte the induſtry of man, and bring famine upon the World, by deſtroying the Fruits of the Earth. What a wonder would it be to ſee but one intire drop of water hang it ſelf but one Inch above the ground, unleſs it be a bubble which is preſerved by the Air inclos'd within it? What a wonder would it be to ſee a Gallon of water contain'd in a thin Cobweb as ſtrongly as in a Veſſel or Braſs? Greater is the wonder of Divine power in thoſe thin Bottles of Heaven, as they are called *; and therefore called *his* Clouds here, as being daily Inſtances of his Omnipotence: That the Air ſhould ſuſtain thoſe rouling Veſſels, as it ſhould ſeem, weightier than it ſelf: That the force of this Maſs of waters ſhould not break ſo thin a Priſon, and haſten to its proper place which is below the Air: That they ſhould be daily confin'd againſt their natural inclination, and held by ſo ſlight a Chain: That there ſhould be ſuch a gradual and ſucceſſive falling of them, as if the Air were pierced with holes like a Gardiners watring-pot, and not fall in one intire body to drown or drench ſome parts of the Earth. Theſe are hourly Miracles of Divine Power, as little regarded as clearly viſible.

* Verſe. 8.

* Job 38. 37.

He proceeds, *Verſe 9. He holds back the face of his Throne, and ſpreads the Cloud upon it.* The Clouds are deſign'd as Curtains to cover the Heavens, as well as Veſſels to *water the Earth**. As a Tapeſtry Curtain between the Heavens, the *Throne* of God *Iſa.* 66. 1. and the Earth *his Footſtool*: The Heavens are called his Throne, becauſe his Power doth moſt ſhine forth there, and magnificently declare the glory of God; and the Clouds are as a skreen between the ſcorching heat of the Sun, and the tender plants of the Earth, and the weak Bodies of Men.

* Pſal. 147. 8.

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From hence he deſcends to the Sea, and conſiders the Divine Power apparent in the bounding of it: *Verſe* 10. *He hath compaſſed the Waters with bounds, till the day and night come to an end.* This is ſeveral times mention'd in Scripture, as a ſignal mark of Divine *ſtrength**. He hath meaſured a place for the Sea, and ſtruck the Limits of it as with a Compaſs, that it might not mount above the Surface of the Land, and ruine the ends of the Earths Creation; and this while day and night have their mutual turns, till he ſhall make an end of time by removing the meaſures of it. The bounds of the tumultuous Sea are in many places as weak as the Bottles of the upper Waters; the one is contain'd in thin Air, and the other reſtrain'd by weak Sands in many places, as well as by ſtubborn Rocks in others; that though it ſwells, foams, roars, and the waves encourag'd and egg'd on by ſtrong Winds, come like Mountains againſt the Shore, they overflow it not, but humble themſelves when they come near to thoſe Sands, which are ſet as their Liſts and Limits, and retire back to the Womb that brought them forth, as if they were aſhamed, and repented of their proud Invaſion: Or elſe it may be meant of the Tides of the Sea, and the ſtated time God hath ſet it for its ebbing and flowing, till night and day come to an end †; both that the fluid Waters ſhould contain themſelves within due bounds, and keep their perpetual orderly motion, are amazing Arguments of Divine Power.

* Job 38. 8. Prov. 8. 27.

† Coccei in loc.

He paſſes on to the Conſideration of the Commotions in the Air and Earth, raiſed and ſtill'd by the Power of God; *The Pillars of Heaven tremble, and are aſtoniſhed at his reproof.* By pillars of Heaven are not meant Angels, as ſome think; but either the Air called the Pillars of Heaven in regard of place, as it continues and knits together the parts of the World, as Pillars do the upper and nether parts of a Building. As the loweſt parts of the Earth are called the Foundations of the Earth; ſo the loweſt parts of the Heaven may be called the pillars of Heaven*. Or elſe by that phraſe may be meant Mountains, which ſeem at a diſtance to touch the Sky, as Pillars do the top of a Structure; and ſo it may be ſpoken according to vulgar Capacity, which imagines the Heavens to be ſuſtained by the two extream parts of the Earth, as a Convex Body, or to be arch'd by Pillars; whence the Scripture, according to common apprehenſions, mentions *the Ends of the Earth*, and the *utmoſt parts of the Heavens*, tho they have properly no end, as being round. The Power of God is ſeen in thoſe Commotions in the Air and Earth, by Thunders, Lightnings, Storms, Earth-quakes, which rack the Air, and make the Mountains and Hills tremble as Servants before a frowning and rebuking Maſter.

* Coccei.

And as he makes motions in the Earth and Air, ſo is his Power ſeen in their Influences upon the Sea; *He judges the Sea with his power, and by his underſtanding he ſmites through the proud* †. At the Creation he put the Waters into ſeveral Channels, and cauſed the dry Land to appear bare-fac'd for a Habitation for Man and Beaſts; or rather he ſplits the Sea by Storms, as though he would make the bottom of the deep viſible, and rakes up the Sands to the Surface of the Waters, and marſhals the Waves into Mountains and Valleys. After that, he *ſmites through the proud*, that is, humbles the proud Waves, and by allaying the ſtorm reduceth them to their former Level: The Power of God is viſible, as well in *rebuking*, as in *awakning the winds*; he makes them ſenſible of his Voice, and according to his Pleaſure exaſperates or calms them. The *ſtriking through the proud* here, is not probably meant of the deſtruction of the Egyptian Army; for ſome gueſs that *Job* died that year †, or about the time of the Iſraelites coming out of *Egypt*: So that this Diſcourſe here being in the time of his Affliction, could not point at that which was done after his reſtoration to his temporal Proſperity.

† Verſe 12.

† Druſius in loc.

And now at laſt he ſums up the Power of God in the chiefeſt of his Works above, and the greateſt wonder of his Works below: *Verſe* 13. *By his Spirit he hath garniſht the Heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked Serpent*, &c. The greater and leſſer Lights, Sun, Moon, and Stars, the Ornaments and Furniture of Heaven; and the Whale, a prodigious Monument of Gods Power often mention'd in Scripture to this purpoſe, and in particular in this Book of *Job**, and called by the ſame name of Crooked Serpent, *Iſa.* 27. 1. where it is applied by

* Job 41.

way of *Metaphor* to the King of *Assyria* or *Egypt*, or all Oppressors of the Church. Various Interpretations there are of this *crooked Serpent*: Some understanding that Constellation in Heaven, which *Astronomers* call the *Dragon*; some that Combination of weaker Stars, which they call the *Galaxia*, which winds about the Heavens: But it is most probable that *Job*, drawing near to a conclusion of his Discourse, joyns the two greatest Testimonies of Gods Power in the World, the highest Heavens, and the lowest *Leviathan*, which is here called a *bar* Serpent * in regard of his strength and hardness, as mighty Men are called bars in Scripture, *Jer.* 51. 30. *Her bars are broken things.* And in regard of this Power of God in the Creation of this Creature, 'tis particularly mention'd in the Catalogue of Gods Works. *Gen.* 1. 21. *And God created great Whales*; all the other Creatures being put into one sum, and not particularly expresst.

* *As the word signifies in the* Hebrew.

And now he makes the use of this Lecture in the *Text*, *Lo, these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his Power who can understand?* This is but a small Landskip of some of his Works of Power, the outsides and extremities of it; more glorious things are within his Palaces: Though those things argue a stupendous Power of the Creator in his Works of Creation and Providence, yet they are nothing to what may be declared of his Power. And what may be declared, is nothing to what may be conceived; and what may be conceived, is nothing to what is above the conceptions of any Creature. These are but little Crumbs and Fragments, of that infinite Power which is in his Nature, like a drop in comparison of the mighty Ocean; a hiss or whisper, in comparison of a mighty Voice of Thunder †. This which I have spoken is but like a spark to the fiery Region, a few lines by the by, a drop of speech.

† Oecolamp.

The thunder of his Power: Some understand it of Thunder literally, for material Thunder in the Air: *The Thunder of his Power*, that is according to the *Hebrew* Dialect, *his powerful Thunder*. This is not the sense; the nature of Thunder in the Air doth not so much exceed the capacity of humane understanding; 'tis therefore rather to be understood Metaphorically, *The Thunder of his Power*, that is, the greatness and immensity of his Power manifested in the magnificent miracles of Nature, in the consideration whereof men are astonished, as if they had heard an unusual Clap of Thunder. So Thunder is used, *Job* 39. 25. *The Thunder of the Captains*; that is, strength and force of the Captains of an Army. And *verse* 19. God speaking to *Job* of a Horse, saith, *Hast thou cloathed his neck with Thunder*? that is, strength. And Thunder being a mark of the Power of God, some of the Heathen have called God by the name of a Thunderer *. As Thunder pierceth the lowest places, and alters the state of things; so doth the Power of God penetrate into all things whatsoever; the Thunder of his Power; that is, the Greatness of his Power: as *the strength of Salvation*, Psal. 20. 6. that is, a mighty Salvation.

* *The antient* Gawls *worshiped him under the name of* Taranis. *The* Greeks *called* Jupiter Βροντάι & *and* Thor: *whence our Thursday is derived, signifieth* Thunderer, *a Title the* Germans *gave their god. And* Toran *in the* British *Language signifieth* Thunder. Voss. *Idolo. lib.* 2. *cap.* 33. Camb. *Britan. p.* 17.

Who can understand? Who is able to count all the Monuments of his Power? How doth this little, which I have spoken of, exceed the capacity of our Understanding, and is rather the matter of our astonishment, than the object of our comprehensive knowledge? The Power of the greatest Potentate or the mightiest Creature, is but of small extent: None but have their limits: It may be understood, how far they can act, in what sphere their activity is bounded: But when I have spoken all of Divine Power that I can; when you have thought all that you can think of it, your Souls will prompt you to conceive something more, beyond what I have spoken, and what you have thought. His Power shines in every thing, and is beyond every thing. There is infinitely more Power lodged in his Nature, not expresst to the World. The understanding of Men and Angels centred in one Creature, would fall short of the perception of the Immensness of it. All that can be comprehended of it, are but little Fringes of it, a small Portion. No man ever discours'd, or can, of Gods Power according to the magnificence of it. No Creature can conceive it; God himself only comprehends it; God himself is only able to express it. Mans Power being limited, his Line is too short to measure the Incomprehensible Omnipotence of God. *The thunder of his Power, who can understand*? that is, none can.

The Text is a lofty Declaration of the Divine Power, with a particular note of Attention, *Loe.*

1. *In the expreſſions of it, in the works of Creation and Providence*; [*Loe, theſe are his ways*; Ways and Works excelling any created ſtrength, referring to the little ſummary of them he had made before. 1.
2. *In the Inſufficiency of theſe ways to meaſure his Power*; [*but how little a portion is heard of him?* 2.
3. *In the Incomprehenſibleneſs of it*; [*The thunder of his Power who can underſtand?* 3.

Infinite and Incomprehenſible Power pertains to the Nature of God, and is expreſt in part in his Works: or, *Though there be a mighty expreſſion of Divine Power in his Works, yet an Incomprehenſible Power pertains to his Nature.* Doct.

The thunder of his Power, who can underſtand?

His Power glitters in all his Works, as well as his Wiſdom; *Pſal.* 62. 11. *Twice have I heard this, that Power belongs unto God.* In the Law and in the Prophets, ſay ſome: But why *Power* twice, and not *Mercy*, which he ſpeaks of in the following Verſe? He had heard of Power twice, from the voice of Creation, and from the voice of Government. *Mercy* was heard in Government after Man's Fall, not in Creation; Innocent man was an object of Gods goodneſs, not of his Mercy till he made himſelf miſerable: *Power* was expreſt in both; or *Twice have I heard that Power belongs to God*, that is, it is a certain and undoubted Truth, that Power is eſſential to the Divine Nature. 'Tis true, Mercy is eſſential, Juſtice is eſſential; but Power more apparently eſſential, becauſe no acts of Mercy, or Juſtice, or Wiſdom, can be exerciſed by him without Power: The repetition of a thing confirms the certainty of it. Some obſerve, that God is called *Almighty* Seventy times in Scripture*. Though his Power be evident in all his Works, yet he hath a Power beyond the expreſſion of it in his Works, which, as it is the glory of his Nature, ſo it is the comfort of a Believer. To which purpoſe the Apoſtle expreſſeth it by an excellent *Periphraſis* for the honour of the Divine Nature; *Eph.* 3. 20. *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, unto him be glory in the Churches.* We have reaſon to acknowledge him Almighty, who hath a Power of acting above our Power of underſtanding. Who could have imagin'd ſuch a powerful operation in the propagation of the *Goſpel*, and the Converſion of the *Gentiles*, which the Apoſtle ſeems to hint at in that place? His Power is expreſt by *Horns in his hands*, *Hab.* 3. 4. becauſe all the Works of his hands are wrought with Almighty ſtrength. Power is alſo uſed as a Name of of God, *Mark* 14. 62. *The Son of Man ſitting on the right hand of Power*, that is, at the right hand of God: *God* and *Power* are ſo inſeparable that they are reciprocated. As his Eſſence is Immenſe not to be confin'd in Place, as it is Eternal, not to be meaſur'd by Time; ſo it is Almighty, not to be limited in regard of Action.

*Leſſius, de perfect. Divin. lib. 5. cap. 1.

1. 'Tis Ingeniouſly illuſtrated by ſome by a *Unit*†; all Numbers depend upon it, it makes Numbers by Addition, Multiplies them unexpreſſibly; when one *Unit* is removed from a Number, how vaſtly doth it diminiſh it? It gives perfection to all other Numbers, it receives perfection from none. If you add a *Unit* before 100, how doth it multiply it to 1100? If you ſet a *Unite* before Twenty *Millions*, it preſently makes the Number ſwell up to an hundred and twenty *Millions*: and ſo powerful is a Unit by adding it to Numbers, that it will infinitely inlarge them to ſuch a vaſtneſs, that ſhall tranſcend the capacity of the beſt *Arithmetician* to count them. By ſuch a Meditation as this, you may have ſome proſpect of the Power of that God who is only Unity; the Beginning of all things, as a Unit is the beginning of all Numbers; and can perform as many things really, as a Unit can numerically, that is, can do as much in the making of Creatures, as a Unit can do in the multiplying of Numbers. The Omnipotence of God was ſcarce denied by any Heathen, that did not deny the Being of a God, and that was *Pliny*, and that upon weak Arguments. 1.

† Fotherby, *Atheomaſtic.* p. 306, 307.

2. Indeed we *cannot have a conception of God*, if we conceive him not moſt *Powerful*, as well as moſt Wiſe: He is not a God, that cannot do what he will, and perform all his pleaſure. If we imagine him reſtrain'd in his Power, we imagine 2.

him limited in his Essence. As he hath an infinite Knowledge to know what is possible, he cannot be without an infinite Power to do what is possible. As he hath a Will to resolve what he sees good, so he cannot want a Power to effect what he sees good to decree. As the Essence of a Creature cannot be conceiv'd without that activity that belongs to his nature; as when you conceive Fire, you cannot conceive it without a power of burning and warming; and when you conceive Water, you cannot conceive it without a power of moistning and cleansing: So you cannot conceive an infinite Essence without an Infinite Power of activity. And therefore a Heathen could say, *If you know God, you know he can do all things*; and therefore saith *Austin*, *Give me not only a Christian but a Jew, not only a Jew but a Heathen, that will deny God to be Almighty.* A Jew, a Heathen may deny Christ to be Omnipotent, but no Heathen will deny God to be Omnipotent, and no Devil will deny either to be so: God cannot be conceiv'd without some Power, for then he must be conceiv'd without Action: Whose then are those products and effects of Power which are visible to us in the World? to whom do they belong? who is the Father of them? God cannot be conceiv'd without a Power suitable to his Nature and Essence; if we imagine him to be of an Infinite Essence, we must imagine him to be of an Infinite Power and Strength.

In *particular*, I shall shew,

1. *The Nature of God's Power.*
2. *Reasons to prove that God must needs be Powerful.*
3. *How his Power appears; in Creation, in Government, in Redemption.*
4. *The Use.*

I. *What this Power is; or the Nature of it.*

1. 1. *Power sometimes signifies Authority*: And a Man is said to be Mighty and Powerful in regard of his Dominion, and the right he hath to Command multitudes of other persons to take his part; but Power taken for *Strength*, and Power taken for *Authority*, are distinct things, and may be separated from one another: Power may be without Authority, as in successful Invasions that have no just foundation: Authority may be without Power; as in a just Prince, expell'd by an unjust Rebellion, the Authority resides in him, though he be over-power'd, and is destitute of Strength to support and exercise that Authorty. The Power of God is not to be understood of his Authority and Dominion, but *his Strength to act*, and the word in the *Text* properly signifies *Strength*.

גבורתו
Sept. δύναμις.

2. *This Power is divided ordinarily into Absolute and Ordinate. Absolute*, is that Power whereby God is able to do that which he will not do, but is possible to be done: *Ordinate*, is that Power whereby God doth that which he hath decreed to do, that is, which he hath ordained or appointed to be exercised *. Which are not distinct Powers, but one and the same Power; his Ordinate Power is a part of his Absolute; for if he had not a Power to do every thing that he could will, he might not have a Power to do every thing that he doth will.

* *Scaliger*, Publ. exercit. 365. §. 8.

The Object of his *Absolute* Power is all things possible; such things that imply not a contradiction, such that are not repugnant in their own nature to be done: and such as are not contrary to the Nature and Perfections of God to be done: Those things that are repugnant in their own nature to be done are several, as to make a thing which is past not to be past. As for example, The World is created; God could have chose whether he would create the World, and after it is created he hath Power to dissolve it; but after it was created, and when it is dissolved, it will be eternally true, that the World was created, and that it was dissolved: for it is impossible, that that which was once true, should ever be false: If it be true that the World was created, it will for ever be true that it was created, and cannot be otherwise. And also, if it be once true that God hath decreed, 'tis impossible in its own nature to be true that God hath not decreed. Some things are repugnant to the Nature and Perfections of God: As it is impossible for his Nature to die and perish; impossible for him in regard of Truth, to lye and deceive. But of this hereafter; only at present to understand the Object of Gods Absolute Power to be things possible, that is, possible in Nature; not by any strength in themselves, or of themselves; for nothing hath no strength, and every thing is nothing before it comes into being †: So God by his Absolute Power might have prevented the Sin

† *Estius* in Sent. lib. 1. dist. 43. §. 2.

of the fallen Angels, and ſo have preſerved them in their firſt habitation. He might by his Abſolute Power have reſtrained the Devil from tempting of *Eve*, or reſtrained Her and *Adam* from ſwallowing the Bait, and joyning hands with the Temptation. By his Abſolute Power, God might have given the reins to *Peter* to betray his Maſter, as well as to deny him; and employed *Judas* in the ſame glorious and ſucceſsful Service, wherein he employed *Paul*. By his Abſolute Power he might have created the World Millions of years before he did create it, and can reduce it into its empty Nothing this moment. This the *Baptiſt* affirms, when he tells us, *That God is able of theſe Stones* (meaning the Stones in the Wilderneſs, and not the People which came out to him out of *Judea*, which were Children of *Abraham*) *to raiſe up Children to Abraham*, *Mat.* 3. 9. that is, there is a poſſibility of ſuch a thing, there is no contradiction in it, but that God is able to do it if he pleaſe.

But now the *Object* of his *Ordinate Power*, is all things ordained by him to be done, all things decreed by him; and becauſe of the Divine ordination of things this Power is called *Ordinate*; and what is thus ordained by him he cannot but do, becauſe of his Unchangeableneſs. Both thoſe Powers are expreſt, *Mat.* 26. 53, 54. *My Father can ſend twelve legions of Angels*, there is his Abſolute Power; *but how then ſhall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it muſt be?* there is his Ordinate Power. As his Power is free from any act of his Will, 'tis called *Abſolute*; as it is joyned with an act of his Will, it is called *Ordinate*. His Abſolute Power is neceſſary, and belongs to his Nature; his Ordinate Power is free, and belongs to his Will; a Power guided by his Will; not, as I ſaid before, that they are two diſtinct Powers, both belonging to his Nature, but the latter is the ſame with the former, only it is guided by his Will and Wiſdom.

3. It follows then, *That the Power of God is that ability and ſtrength, whereby he can bring to paſs whatſoever he pleaſe.* Whatſoever his infinite Wiſdom can direct, and whatſoever the infinite purity of his Will can reſolve. *Power*, in the primary notion of it, doth not ſignify an act, but an ability to bring a thing into act; 'tis Power, as able to act before it doth actually produce a thing: As God had an Ability to create before he did create, he had Power before he acted that Power without. *Power* notes the principle of the Action, and therefore is greater than the Act it ſelf. Power exercis'd and diffus'd, in bringing forth and nurſing up its particular Objects without, is unconceivably leſs than that Strength which is Infinite in himſelf, the ſame with his Eſſence, and is indeed Himſelf: By his Power exercis'd he doth whatſoever he actually Wills; but by the Power in his Nature, he is able to do whatſoever he is able to Will. The Will of Creatures may be, and is more extenſive than their Power; and their Power more contracted and ſhortened, than their Will: But, as the Prophet ſaith, *His Counſel ſhall ſtand, and he will do all his pleaſure*, *Iſai.* 46. 10. His Power is as great as his Will, that is, whatſoever can fall within the verge of his Will, falls within the compaſs of his Power. Though he will never actually Will this or that, yet ſuppoſing he ſhould Will it, he is able to perform it: So that you muſt in your notion of Divine Power, enlarge it further than to think, God can only do what he hath reſolved to do; but that he hath as Infinite a Capacity of Power to act, as he hath an Infinite Capacity of Will to reſolve. 3.

Beſides, this Power is of that nature, that he can do whatſoever he pleaſes without difficulty, without reſiſtance; it cannot be checked, reſtrained, fruſtrated *. As he can do all things poſſible in regard of the Object, he can do all things eaſily in regard of the manner of acting: What in humane Artificers is Knowledge, Labour, Induſtry, that in God is his Will; his Will works without labour, his Works ſtand forth as he Wills them. *Hands* and *Arms* are aſcribed to him for our Conceptions, becauſe our power of acting is diſtinct from our Will; but Gods Power of acting is not really diſtinct from his Will; 'tis ſufficient to the exiſtence of a thing, that God Wills it to exiſt; he can act what he will only by his Will, without any Inſtruments. He needs no Matter to work upon, becauſe he can make ſomething from nothing; all Matter owes it ſelf to his Creative Power: He needs no time to work in, for he can make Time, when he pleaſes to begin to work: He needs no Copy to work by, Himſelf is his own Pattern and Copy in his Works. All created

* *Cra.* Syntag. lib. 3. cap. 17. p. 611.

Agents

Agents want Matter to work upon, Inſtruments to work with, Copies to work by; Time to bring either the births of their Minds, or the works of their hands to perfection. But the Power of God needs none of theſe things, but is of a vaſt and Incomprehenſible nature, beyond all theſe. As nothing can be done without the compaſs of it, ſo it ſelf is without the compaſs of every created Underſtanding.

4. 4. *This Power is of a diſtinct conception from the Wiſdom and Will of God.* They are not really diſtinct, but according to our Conceptions. We cannot diſcourſe of Divine things, without obſerving ſome proportion of them with humane, aſcribing unto God the Perfections, ſifted from the Imperfections of our Nature. In Us there are *three* Orders, of *Underſtanding*, *Will*, *Power*; and accordingly *three* Acts, *Counſel*, *Reſolution*, *Execution*; which though they are diſtinct in Us, are not really diſtinct in God. In our Conceptions, the Apprehenſion of a thing belongs to the Underſtanding of God; Determination to the Will of God; Direction, to the Wiſdom of God; Execution, to the Power of God. The Knowledge of God regards a thing as poſſible, and as it may be done; the Wiſdom of God regards a thing as fit, and convenient to be done; the Will of God reſolves that it ſhall be done; the Power of God is the application of his Will, to effect what it hath reſolved. Wiſdom is a fixing the Being of things, the meaſures and Perfections of their ſeveral Beings; Power is a conferring thoſe Perfections and Beings upon them. His Power is his ability to act, and his Wiſdom is the Director of his action: His Will orders, his Wiſdom guides, and his Power effects. His Will as the ſpring, and his Power as the worker, are expreſt *Pſal.* 115. 3. *He hath done whatſoever he pleaſed. He commanded, and they were created,* Pſal. 140. 5. and all three expreſt, *Eph.* 1. 11. *Who works all things according to the counſel of his own Will:* So that the Power of God is a Perfection (as it were) ſubordinate to his Underſtanding and Will, to execute the reſults of his Wiſdom and the orders of his Will; to his Wiſdom, as directing, becauſe he works skilfully, to his Will as moving and applying, becauſe he works voluntarily and freely. The exerciſe of his Power depends upon his Will: His Will is the ſupream cauſe of every thing that ſtands up in Time, and all things receive a Being as he wills them. His Power is but Will perpetually working, and diffuſing it ſelf in the ſeaſon his Will hath fixed from Eternity; 'tis his Eternal Will in perpetual and ſucceſſive ſprings and ſtreams in the Creatures; 'tis nothing elſe but the conſtant efficacy of his Omnipotent Will. This muſt be underſtood of his Ordinate Power: But his Abſolute Power is larger than his Reſolving Will: for though the Scripture tells us, *He hath done whatſoever he will*; yet it tells us not, that he hath done whatſoever he could: He can do things that he will never do.

Again, his Power is diſtinguiſht from his Will, in regard of the exerciſe of it, which is after the act of his Will: His Will was converſant about Objects, when his Power was not exercis'd about them. Creatures were the objects of his Will from Eternity, but they were not from Eternity the effects of his Power. His purpoſe to Create was from Eternity, but the execution of his Purpoſe was in Time. Now this execution of his Will we call his *Ordinate Power*: His Wiſdom and his Will are ſuppoſed antecedent to his Power, as the Counſel and Reſolve, as the Cauſe precedes the performance of the Purpoſe, as the Effect.

* *Gamachæus.* * Some diſtinguiſh his Power from his Underſtanding and Will, in regard that his Underſtanding and Will are larger than his Abſolute Power; for God underſtands Sins, and wills to permit them, but he cannot himſelf do any Evil or unjuſt action, nor have a power of doing it. But this is not to diſtinguiſh that Divine Power, but Impotence; for to be unable to do Evil is the perfection of Power; and to be able to do things Unjuſt and Evil, is a weakneſs, imperfection, and inability. Man indeed wills many things that he is not able to perform, and underſtands many things that he is not able to effect; he underſtands much of the Creatures, ſomething of *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*; he can conceive many *Suns*, many *Moons*, yet is not able to create the leaſt Atom: But there is nothing that belongs to Power but God underſtands, and is able to effect. To ſum this up, The Will of God is the Root of all, the Wiſdom of God is the Copy of all, and the Power of God is the framer of all.

5. *The*

5. *The Power of God gives activity to all the other perfections of his Nature, and is of a larger extent and efficacy, in regard of its Objects, than some perfections of his Nature.* I put them both together. 5.

1. *It contributes Life and Activity to all the other perfections of his Nature.* 1.
How vain would be his Eternal Counsels, if Power did not step in to execute them? His Mercy would be a feeble pity, if he were destitute of Power to relieve; and his Justice a slighted scare-Crow, without Power to punish; his promises an empty sound, without Power to accomplish them. As Holiness is the Beauty, so Power is the Life of all his Attributes in their exercise; and as Holiness, so Power is an Adjunct belonging to All, a Term that may be given to All. God hath a powerful Wisdom to attain his Ends, without interruption: He hath a powerful Mercy to remove our Misery; a powerful Justice to lay all Misery upon Offenders: He hath a powerful Truth to perform his Promises; an Infinite Power to bestow Rewards and inflict Penalties. 'Tis to this purpose *Power* is first put in the *two things* which the *Psalmist* had heard, *Psal.* 62. 11, 12. *Twice have I heard*, or *Two things have I heard*; first *Power*, then *Mercy* and *Justice* included in that expression, *Thou rendrest to every man according to his work*: In every perfection of God he heard of Power. This is the Arm, the Hand of the Deity, which all his other Attributes lay hold on, when they would appear in their Glory; this hands them to the World; by this they act, in this they triumph. Power framed every stage for their appearance in Creation, Providence, Redemption.

2. *'Tis of a larger extent in regard of its Objects, than some other Attributes.* 2.
Power doth not alway suppose an Object, but constitutes an Object. It supposeth an Object in the act of Preservation, but it makes an Object in the act of Creation; but Mercy supposeth an Object miserable, yet doth not make it so. Justice supposeth an Object Criminal, but doth not constitute it so: Mercy supposeth him Miserable, to relieve him; Justice supposeth him Criminal, to punish him: but Power supposeth not a thing in real existence, but as possible; or rather, it is from Power that any thing hath a possibility, if there be no repugnancy in the nature of the thing.

Again, *Power* extends further than either *Mercy* or *Justice*. Mercy hath particular Objects, which Justice shall not at last be willing to punish; and Justice hath particular Objects, which Mercy at last shall not be willing to refresh: but Power doth, and alway will extend to the Objects of both Mercy and Justice. A Creature, as a Creature, is neither the object of Mercy nor Justice, nor of Rewarding Goodness: A Creature, as Innocent, is the Object of Rewarding Goodness; a Creature, as Miserable, is the Object of Compassionate Mercy; a Creature, as Criminal, is the Object of Revenging Justice: but all of them the Objects of Power, in conjunction with those Attributes of Goodness, Mercy, and Justice, to which they belong. All the Objects that Mercy, and Justice, and Truth, and Wisdom, exercise themselves about, have a possibility and an actual Being from this perfection of Divine Power. 'Tis Power first frames a Creature in a capacity of Nature for Mercy or Justice, though it doth not give an immediate qualification for the exercise of either. Power makes Man a rational Creature, and so confers upon him a Nature mutable, which may be Miserable by its own fault, and punishable by Gods Justice; or pityable by Gods Compassion, and relievable by Gods Mercy: but it doth not make him Sinful, whereby he becomes miserable and punishable.

Again, *Power* runs through all the degrees of the states of a Creature. As a thing is possible, or may be made, 'tis the Object of Absolute Power; as it is *facible*, or ordered to be made, 'tis the Object of Ordinate Power: As a thing is actually made, and brought into Being, it is the Object of preserving Power. So that Power doth stretch out its Arms to all the Works of God, in all their Circumstances, and at all times. When Mercy ceaseth to relieve a Creature, when Justice ceaseth to punish a Creature, Power ceaseth not to preserve a Creature. The Blessed in Heaven, that are out of the reach of punishing Justice, are for ever maintained by Power in that Blessed Condition: the Damned in Hell, that are cast out of the Bosom of Intreating Mercy, are for ever sustained in those remediless Torments by the Arm of Power.

6. *This*

6. 6. *This Power is Originally and Eſſentially in the Nature of God, and not diſtinct from his Eſſence.* 'Tis Originally and Eſſentially in God. The ſtrength and power of Great Kings is originally in their People, and managed and ordered by the Authority of the Prince for the common good. Though a Prince hath Authority in his perſon to Command, yet he hath not ſufficient Strength in his perſon, without the aſſiſtance of others, to make his Commands to be obeyed. He hath not a ſingle Strength in his own perſon to conquer Countries and Kingdoms, and increaſe the number of his Subjects: He muſt make uſe of the Arms of his own Subjects, to over-run other places, and yoke them under his Dominion: But the power of all things that ever were, are, or ſhall be, is Originally and Eſſentially in God. 'Tis not deriv'd from any thing without him, as the Power of the greateſt Potentates in the World is: Therefore *Pſal.* 62. 11. it is ſaid, *Power belongs unto God*, that is, ſolely, and to none elſe. He hath a power to make his Subjects, and as many as he pleaſes; to create Worlds, to enjoyn Precepts, to execute Penalties, without calling in the ſtrength of his Creatures to his Aid. The Strength that the Subjects of a mortal Prince have, is not deriv'd to them from the Prince, though the exerciſe of it for this or that end, is ordered and directed by the Authority of the Prince: But what ſtrength ſoever any thing hath to act as a Means, it hath from the power of God as Creator, as well as whatſoever Authority it hath to act is from God, as a Rector and Governour of the World. God hath a ſtrength to act without means, and no means can act any thing without his power and ſtrength communicated to them. As the *Clouds* in the 8*th* Verſe before the Text, are called Gods Clouds, *his Clouds*: So all the ſtrength of Creatures may be called, and truly is, Gods ſtrength and power in them; a drop of Power ſhot down from Heaven, originally only in God. Creatures have but a little mite of power; ſomewhat communicated to them, ſomewhat kept and reſerved from them, of what they are capable to poſſeſs. They have limited Natures, and therefore a limited Sphere of Activity. Cloaths can warm us, but not feed us; Bread can nouriſh us, but not cloath us. One Plant hath a Medicinal quality againſt one Diſeaſe, another againſt another; but God is the poſſeſſor of Univerſal Power, the common Exchequer of this Mighty Treaſure. He acts by Creatures, as not needing their power, but deriving power to them: What he acts by them, he could act himſelf without them: And what they act as from themſelves, is derived to them from Him through Inviſible Chanels. And hence it will follow, that becauſe Power is Eſſentially in God, more Operations of God are poſſible than are exerted.

† *Rationi ſummæ actualitatis eſſentiæ.* Suarez. *vol.* 1. *p.* 150, & 151.

And as *Power* is Eſſentially in God, ſo it is not diſtinct from his Eſſence. It belongs to God in regard of the unconceivable excellency and activity of his Eſſence. And *Omnipotence* is nothing but the Divine Eſſence efficacious *ad extra*, as his Eſſence as operative, and the immediate principle of Operation: As the power of Enlightning in the Sun, and the power of Heating in the Fire, are not things diſtinct from the Nature of them; but the Nature of the Sun bringing forth *Light*, and the Nature of the Fire bringing forth *Heat*. The power of Acting is the ſame with the Subſtance of God, though the Action from that power be terminated in the Creature. If the power of God were diſtinct from his Eſſence, he were then compounded of Subſtance and Power, and would not be the moſt Simple Being. As when the Underſtanding is inform'd in ſeveral parts of Knowledge; it is ſkill'd in the Government of Cities and Countreys, it knows this or that Art: It Learns *Mathematicks*, *Philoſophy*, this, or that Science. The Underſtanding hath a power to do this; but this power, whereby it learns thoſe excellent things, and brings forth excellent Births, is not a thing diſtinct from the Underſtanding it ſelf; we may rather call it the *Underſtanding powerful*, than the *Power of the Underſtanding*; and ſo we may rather ſay, *God powerful*, than ſay, *the Power of God*; Becauſe his power is not diſtinct from his Eſſence.

From both theſe it will follow, That this Omnipotence is incommunicable to any Creature; no Creature can inherit it, becauſe it is a contradiction for any Creature to have the Eſſence of God. This *Omnipotence* is a peculiar Right of God, wherein no Creature can ſhare with him. To be Omnipotent is to be Eſſen-

tially

tially God. And for a Creature to be Omnipotent, is for a Creature to be its own Creator. It being therefore the same with the Essence of the Godhead, it cannot be communicated to the Humanity of Christ, as the *Lutherans* say it is, without the communication of the Essenc of the Godhead *; for then the Humanity of Christ would not be Humanity, but Deity. If Omnipotence were communicated to the Humanity of Christ, the Essence of God were also communicated to his Humanity, and then Eternity would be communicated. His Humanity then was not given him in Time, his Humanity would be uncompounded, that is, his Body would be no Body, his Soul no Soul. Omnipotence is Essentially in God; 'tis not distinct from the Essence of God, 'tis his Essence, *Omnipotent*, able to do all things.

7. Hence it follows, *That this Power is infinite*; Eph. 1. 19. *What is the exceeding greatness of his Power*, &c. *According to the working of his mighty Power.* God were not Omnipotent, unless his Power were Infinite; for a Finite Power is a limited Power, and a limited Power cannot effect every thing that is possible. Nothing can be too difficult for the Divine Power to effect: He hath a fulness of Power, an exceeding Strength, above all Humane Capacities; 'tis a *Mighty Power* †, able to do above all that we can *ask* or *think* *: That which he acts, is above the power of any Creature to act. Infinite Power consists in the bringing things forth from nothing. No Creature can imitate God in this Prerogative of *Power*. Man indeed can carve various Forms, and erect various pieces of Art; but from pre-existent Matter. Every Artificer hath the Matter brought to his hand, he only brings it forth in a new Figure. *Chymists* separate one thing from another, but create nothing, but sever those things which were before compacted and crudled together: But when God speaks a powerful Word, Nothing begins to be Something: Things stand forth from the Womb of Nothing, and obey his mighty Command, and take what Forms he is pleased to give them. The Creating one thing, though never so small and minute, as the least Fly, cannot be but by an Infinite Power; much less can the producing of such Variety we see in the World. His power is Infinite, in regard it cannot be resisted by any thing that he hath made; nor can it be confin'd by any thing he can Will to make. *His Greatness is unsearchable* *. 'Tis a Greatness, not of quantity, but quality. The Greatness of his power hath no end: 'Tis a vanity to imagine any limits can be affixed to it, or that any Creature can say, *Hitherto it can go, and no further.* 'Tis above all Conception, all Inquisition of any Created Understanding. No Creature ever had, nor ever can have that strength of Wit and Understanding, to conceive the extent of his power, and how magnificently he can work.

† Eph. 1. 19.
* Eph. 3. 20.

Psal. 145. 3.

1. *His Essence is Infinite.* As in a Finite Subject there is a Finite Virtue: so in an Infinite Subject there must be an Infinite Virtue. Where the Essence is limited, the power is so †: Where the Essence is unlimited, the power knows no bounds *. Among Creatures, the more excellency of Being and Form any thing hath, the more activity, vigor and power it hath, to work according to its Nature. The *Sun* hath a mighty power to warm, enlighten and fructifie, above what the *Stars* have; because it hath a vaster Body, more intense degrees of light, heat, and vigour. Now, if you conceive the *Sun* made much greater than it is, it would proportionably have greater degrees of power to heat and enlighten than it hath now: and were it possible to have an Infinite Heat and Light, it would infinitely heat and enlighten other things; for every thing is able to act according to the Measures of its Being: Therefore, since the Essence of God is unquestionably Infinite, his power of acting must be so also. His power (as was said before) is one and the same with his Essence: And though the Knowledge of God extends to more Objects than his power, because he knows all Evils of Sin, which because of his Holiness he cannot commit; yet it is as Infinite as his Knowledge, because it is as much one with his Essence, as his Knowledge and Wisdom is: For as the Wisdom or Knowledge of God, is nothing but the Essence of God, Knowing; so the power of God is nothing but the Essence of God, Able.

† *Operationes sequuntur essentiam.*
* Aquin. *par.* 1. *Qu.* 25. *Artic.* 2.

2. *The Objects of Divine Power are innumerable.* The Objects of Divine power are not Essentially Infinite; and therefore we must not measure the Infiniteness of Divine power by an Ability to make an Infinite Being; because there

is an incapacity in any created thing to be Infinite; for to be a Creature and to be Infinite; to be Infinite and yet Made, is a contradiction. To be Infinite, and to be God, is one and the same thing. Nothing can be Infinite, but God; nothing but God is Infinite. But the power of God is Infinite, because it can produce Infinite effects, or Innumerable things, such as surpass the *Arithmetick* of a Creature; nor yet doth the Infiniteness consist simply in producing innumerable Effects; for that a Finite Cause can produce. Fire can by its finite and limited Heat, burn numberless combustible things and parcels; and the Understanding of Man hath an infinite number of thoughts and acts of Intellection, and Thoughts different from one another. Who can number the imaginations of his Fancy, and Thoughts of his Mind, the space of one Month or Year? much less of Forty or an Hundred years; yet all these Thoughts are about things that are in Being, or have a foundation in things that are in Being. But the Infiniteness of Gods power consists in an ability to produce Infinite Effects, formally distinct, and diverse from one another; such as never had Being, such as the Mind of Man cannot conceive: *Able to do above what we can think*, *Eph.* 3. 20. And whatsoevr God hath made, or is able to make, he is able to make in an Infinite manner, by calling them to stand forth from nothing. To produce innumerable Effects of distinct Natures, and from so distant a term as *Nothing*, is an argument of Infinite Power.

Eph. 3. 20.

Now, that the *Objects* of Divine Power, are *Innumerable* appears, because God can do Infinitely more than he hath done, or will do. Nothing that God hath done can enfeeble or dull his power; there still resides in him an Ability beyond all the setled Contrivances of his Understanding, and Resolves of his Will, which no Effects which he hath wrought can drain, and put to a stand. As he can raise *Stones* to be Children to *Abraham**; so with the same mighty Word whereby he made one World, he can make Infinite numbers of Worlds, to be the Monuments of his Glory. After the Prophet *Jeremy* 32. 17. had spoke of Gods power in Creation, he adds, *And nothing is too heard for thee.* For one World that he hath made, he can create Millions: For one Star which he hath beautified the Heavens with, he could have garnisht it with a Thousand, and multiplied, if he had pleased, every one of those into Millions, for *he can call things that are not*; not some things, but all things possible. The barren Womb of *Nothing* can no more resist his power now to educe a World from it, than it could at first: No doubt, but for one Angel which he hath made, he could make many Worlds of Angels. He that made one with so much ease, as by a Word, cannot want power to make many more, till he wants a Word. The Word that was not too weak to make One, cannot be too weak to make Multitudes. If from One Man he hath, in a way of Nature, multiplied so many in all Ages of the World, and covered with them the whole face of the Earth; he could in a Supernatural way, by One Word multiply as many more. 'Tis *the breath of the Almighty that gives life*, *Job* 33. 4. He can create infinite Species and kinds of Creatures more than he hath created, more variety of Forms: For since there is no searching of his Greatness, there is no conceiving the numberless possible effects of his power. The Understanding of Man can conceive numberless things possible to be, more than have been or shall be. And shall we imagine, that a Finite understanding of a Creature hath a greater Omnipotency to conceive things possible, than God hath to produce things possible? When the understanding of Man is tir'd in its Conceptions, it must still be concluded, That the power of God extends, not only to what can be conceiv'd, but infinitely beyond the measures of a Finite faculty, *Touching the Almighty we cannot find him out, he is excellent in power and in judgment*, *Job* 36. 23. For the understanding of Man, in its Conceptions of more kind of Creatures, is limited to those Creatures which are: It cannot, in its own Imagination conceive any thing, but what hath some foundation in and from something already in Being. It may frame a new kind of Creature, made up of a *Lion*, a *Horse*, an *Ox*; but all those parts whereof its conception is made, have distinct Beings in the World, though not in that composition as his Mind mixes and joyns them: But no question but God can create Creatures that have no resemblance with any kind of Creatures yet in Being. 'Tis certain, that if God only knows those things which he hath done, and will do, and not all things possible to be done

Rom. 4. 17.

* Mat. 3. 9.

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by him, his knowledge were Finite; ſo if he could do no more than what he hath done, his power would be Finite.

1. *Creatures have a power to act about more objects than they do.* The Underſtanding of man can frame from one principle of Truth many Concluſions and Inferences more than it doth. Why cannot then the power of God frame from one firſt Matter, an infinite number of Creatures more than have been created? The Almightineſs of God in producing real Effects, is not inferior to the Underſtanding of Man in drawing out real Truths. An Artificer that makes a Watch, ſuppoſing his Life and Health, can make many more of a different form and motion: And a Limner can draw many Draughts, and frame many Pictures with a new variety of Colours, according to the richneſs of his Fancy. If theſe can do ſo, that require a pre-exiſtent Matter fram'd to their hands, God can much more, who can raiſe beautiful Structures from nothing. As long as men have matter, they can diverſifie the matter, and make new Figures from it: So long as there is nothing, God can produce out of that nothing whatſoever he pleaſes.

We ſee the ſame in Inanimate Creatures. A ſpark of Fire hath a vaſt Power in it; it will kindle other things, increaſe and enlarge it ſelf: Nothing can be exempt from the active force of it. It will alter by conſuming or refining whatſoever you offer to it. It will reach all, and refuſe none; and by the efficacious power of it, all thoſe *new Figures* which we ſee in Metals, are brought forth: When you have expoſed to it a multitude of things, ſtill add more, it will exert the ſame ſtrength; yea, the vigour is increaſed rather than diminiſht. The more it catcheth, the more fiercely and irreſiſtibly it will act; you cannot ſuppoſe an end of its operation, or a decreaſe of its ſtrength, as long as you can conceive its duration and continuance: This muſt be but a weak ſhadow of that infinite Power which is in God. Take another Inſtance in the *Sun*: It hath power every year to produce Flowers and Plants from the Earth; and is as able to produce them now, as it was at the firſt lighting it and rearing it in the Sphere wherein it moves. And if there were no kind of Flowers and Plants now created, the Sun hath a power reſiding it it, ever ſince its firſt Creation, to afford the ſame warmth to them for the nouriſhing and bringing them forth. Whatſoever you can conceive the Sun to be able to do in regard of Plants, that can God do in regard of Worlds; produce more Worlds than the Sun doth Plants every year, without wearineſs, without languiſhment. The Sun is able to influence more things than it doth, and produce numberleſs effects; but it doth not do ſo much as it is able to do, becauſe it wants matter to work upon: God therefore who wants no matter, can do much more than he doth; He can either act by ſecond Cauſes if there were more, or make more ſecond Cauſes if he pleas'd.

2. *God is the moſt free Agent.* Every free Agent can do more than he will do. Man being a free Creature, can do more than ordinarily he doth will to do. God is moſt free, as being the Spring of Liberty in other Creatures: He acts not by a neceſſity of Nature; as the waves of the Sea, or the motions of the Wind; and therefore is not determin'd to thoſe things which he hath already called forth into the World. If God be infinitely wiſe in contrivance, he could contrive more than he hath, and therefore can effect more than he hath effected. He doth not act to the extent of his Power upon all occaſions. 'Tis according to his Will that he works, *Eph.* 1. 'Tis not according to his work that he wills; his work is an evidence of his Will, but not the Rule of his Will. His Power is not the Rule of his Will, but his Will is the diſpoſer of his Power, according to the light of his infinite Wiſdom, and other Attributes that direct his Will; and therefore his Power is not to be meaſur'd by his actual Will. No doubt but he could in a *moment* have produced that World which he took *ſix days* time to frame: He could have drown'd the old World at once, without prolonging the time till the revolution of *forty days*: He was not limited to ſuch a term of time by any weakneſs, but by the determination of his own Will. God doth not do the hundred thouſandth part of what he is able to do, but what is convenient to do, according to the end which he hath propoſed to himſelf. *Jeſus Chriſt*, as Man, could have ask'd *Legions of Angels*; and God, as a Sovereign, could have ſent them †. God could raiſe the dead every day if he pleaſed, but he doth not: He could heal every diſeaſed perſon in a moment,

† Matth. 26. 53.

moment, but he doth not: As God can Will more then he doth actually Will; so he can do more than he hath actually done: He can do whatsoever he can Will, he can Will more Worlds, and therefore can Create more Worlds. If God hath not ability to do more than he will do, he then can do no more than what he actually hath done; and then it will follow, that he is not a free, but a natural and necessary Agent, which cannot be supposed of God.

2. 2. *This Power is infinite in regard of action.* As he can produce numberless Objects above what he hath produced, so he could produce them more magnificently than he hath made them. As he never works to the extent of his power in regard of things, so neither in regard of the manner of acting; for he never acts so, but he could act in a higher and perfecter manner.

1. *His Power is infinite in regard of the independency of action*: He wants no Instrument to act. When there was nothing but God, there was no cause of action but God: When there was nothing in being but God, there could be no instrumental Cause of the Being of any thing. God can perfect his action without dependance on any thing *; And to be simply independent, is to be simply infinite. In this respect it is a Power incommunicable to any Creature, though you conceive a Creature in higher degrees of perfection than it is. A Creature cannot cease to be dependent, but it must cease to be a Creature; To be a Creature and independent, are terms repugnant to one another.

* Suarez. *vol.* 1 *de Deo.* p. 151.

2. *But the infiniteness of Divine power, consists in an ability to give higher degrees of perfection to every thing which he hath made.* * As his Power is infinite *extensivè*, in regard of the multitude of Objects he can bring into being; so it is infinite *intensivè*, in regard of the manner of operation, and the endowments he can bestow upon them. Some things indeed God doth so perfect, that higher degrees of perfection cannot be imagined to be added to them †. As the Humanity of Christ cannot be united more gloriously than to the Person of the Son of God; a greater degree of perfection cannot be conferred upon it. Nor can the Souls of the Blessed have a nobler Object of vision and fruition than God himself, the infinite Being: No higher than the enjoyment of himself can be conferred upon a Creature, *Respectu termini*. This is not want of power: He cannot be greater because he is greatest, nor better because he is best; nothing can be more than infinite. But as to the things which God hath made in the world, he could have given them other manner of Beings than they have. A human Understanding may improve a thought or conclusion; strengthen it with more and more force of reason, and adorn it with richer and richer elegancy of Language: Why then may not the Divine providence produce a world more perfect and excellent than this? he that makes a plain Vessel, can embellish it more, engrave more Figures upon it, according to the capacity of the subject: And cannot God do so much more with his Works? could not God have made this World of a larger quantity, and the Sun of a greater bulk and proportionable strength to influence a bigger World? so that this World would have been to another that God might have made, as a Ball or a Mount, this Sun as a Star to another Sun that he might have kindled. He could have made every Star a Sun, every spire of Grass a Star, every grain of Dust a Flower, every Soul an Angel. And though the Angels be perfect Creatures, and unexpressibly more glorious than a visible Creature; yet who can imagine God so confin'd, that he cannot create a more excellent kind, and endow those which he hath made with excellency of a higher rank than he invested them with at the first moment of their Creation? Without question God might have given the meaner Creatures more excellent endowments, put them into another order of nature for their own good, and more diffusive usefulness in the World. What is made use of by the *Prophet* * in another case, may be used in this, *Yet had he a residue of Spirit.* The capacity of every Creature might have been enlarg'd by God; for no Work of his in the World doth equal his Power, as nothing that he hath framed doth equal his Wisdom. The same matter which is the matter of the body of a Beast, is the matter of a Plant and Flower; is the matter of the Body of a Man; and so was capable of a higher form and higher perfections, than God hath been pleas'd to bestow upon it. And he had power to bestow that perfection on one part of matter which he denied to it, and bestowed on another

† Becan. *Sum. Theol* p. 84.

* Becan. *Sum. Theol.* p. 82.

* Mal. 2. 15.

ther part. If God cannot make things in a greater perfection, there muſt be ſome limitation of him: He cannot be limited by another, becauſe nothing is ſuperiour to God. If limited by himſelf, that limitation is not from a want of Power, but a want of Will. He can by his own Power *raiſe Stones* to be Children to *Abraham* *: He could alter the nature of the Stones, form them into Humane Bodies, dignifie them with rational Souls, inſpire thoſe Souls with ſuch Graces that may render them the Children of *Abraham*. But for the more fully underſtanding the nature of this Power, we may obſerve,

* Matth. 3. 9

1. *That though God can make every thing with a higher degree of perfection, yet ſtill within the limits of a finite Being.* No Creature can be made infinite, becauſe no Creature can be made God. No Creature can be ſo improved, as to equal the goodneſs and perfection of God †; yet there is no Creature, but we may conceive a poſſibility of its being made more perfect in that rank of a Creature than it is: As we may imagine a Flower or Plant to have greater beauty and richer qualities imparted to it by Divine Power, without rearing it ſo high as to the dignity of a rational or ſenſitive Creature. Whatſoever perfections may be added by God to a Creature, are ſtill finite perfections; and a multitude of finite excellencies can never amount to the value and honour of infinite: As if you add one number to another as high as you can, as much as a large piece of Paper can contain, you can never make the numbers really infinite, though they may be infinite in regard of the inability of any human Underſtanding to count them. The finite condition of the Creature ſuffers it not to be capable of an infinite perfection. God is ſo great, ſo excellent, that it is his perfection not to have any Equal; the defect is in the Creature, which cannot be elevated to ſuch a pitch; as you can never make a Gallon meaſure hold the quantity of a Butt, or a Butt the quantity of a River, or a River the fulneſs of the Sea.

† Gamachæ *Aquin. tom. 1. qu. 25.*

2. *Though God hath a Power to furniſh every Creature with greater and nobler perfections than he hath beſtowed upon it, yet he hath framed all things in the perfecteſt manner, and moſt convenient to that end for which he intended them.* Every thing is endowed with the beſt nature and quality ſutable to Gods end in Creation, though not in the beſt manner for it ſelf *. In regard of the Univerſal end, there cannot be a better; for God himſelf is the End of all things, who is the ſupream Goodneſs. Nothing can be better than God, who could not be God if he were not Superlatively beſt or *Optimus*; and he hath ordered all things for the declaration of his Goodneſs or Juſtice, according to the behaviours of his Creatures. Man doth not conſider what Strength or Power he can put forth in the means he uſeth to attain ſuch an end, but the ſutableneſs of them to his main deſign, and ſo fits and marſhals them to his grand purpoſe. Had God only created things that are moſt excellent, he had created only Angels and Men; how then would his Wiſdom have been conſpicuous in other works in the ſubordination and ſubſerviency of them to one another? God therefore determin'd his Power by his Wiſdom: * And though his abſolute Power could have made every Creature better, yet his ordinate Power, which in every ſtep was regulated by his Wiſdom, made every thing beſt for his deſign'd intention. A Muſitian hath a power to wind up a ſtring on a Lute to a higher and more perfect Note in it ſelf, but in Wiſdom he will not do it, becauſe the intended Melody ſhould be diſturb'd thereby, if it were not ſuted to the other ſtrings on the Inſtrument; a Diſcord would mar and taint the Harmony which the Luteniſt deſign'd. God in Creation obſerved the Proportions of Nature: He can make a Spider as ſtrong as a Lion; but according to the order of Nature which he hath ſetled, 'tis not convenient that a Creature of ſo ſmall a compaſs, ſhould be as ſtrong as one of a greater bulk. The abſolute Power of God could have prepared a Body for Chriſt as Glorious as that he had after his Reſurrection; but that had not been agreeable to the end deſign'd in his Humiliation: And therefore God acted moſt perfectly by his ordinate Power, in giving him a Body that wore the Livery of our Infirmities. Gods Power is alway regulated by his Wiſdom and Will; and though it produceth not what is moſt perfect in it ſelf, yet what is moſt perfect and decent in relation to the end he fixed. And ſo in his Providence, though he could rack the whole frame of Nature to bring about his ends in a more miraculous way and aſtoniſhment to Mortals; yet his Power is uſually

* *Beſt* ex parte facientis & modi, *but not* ex parte rei. Eſti. *in Senten. lib. 1. diſtin. 44. § 2.*

* Aquin. *part. 1. qu. 25. artic.*

and

and ordinarily confin'd by his Will to act in concurrence with the nature of the Creatures, and direct them according to the Laws of their being, to such ends which he aims at in their conduct, without violencing their Nature.

3. 3. *Though God hath an absolute Power to make more Worlds, and infinite numbers of other Creatures, and to render every Creature a higher mark of his Power, yet in regard of his decree to the contrary, he cannot do it.* He hath a Physical Power, but after his resolve to the contrary, not a Moral Power: *The exercise* of his Power is subordinate to his Decree, but not *the Essence* of his Power. † The Decree of God takes not away any Power from God, because the Power of God is his own Essence, and uncapable of change; and is as great physically and essentially after his Decree as it was before; only his Will hath put in a bar to the demonstration of all that Power which he is able to exercise. As a Prince that can raise a 100000 Men for an Invasion, raises only 20 or 30000; he here, by his order limits his power, but doth not devest himself of his Authority and power to raise the whole number of the Forces of his Dominions if he pleases: The power of God hath more Objects than his Decree hath; but since it is his perfection to be immutable, and not to change his Decree, he cannot morally put forth his power upon all those Objects, which as it is essentially in him, he hath Ability to do. * God hath Decreed to save those that believe in Christ, and to judge Unbelievers to everlasting perdition: He cannot morally damn the first, or save the latter; yet he hath not devested himself of his Absolute power to save all, or damn all. Or suppose God hath Decreed not to create more Worlds than this we are now in, doth his Decree weaken his strength to create more if he pleased: His not creating more is not a want of Strength, but a want of Will: 'Tis an act of Liberty, not an act of Impotency. As when a man solemnly resolves not to walk in such a way, or come at such a place, his Resolution deprives him not of his natural strength to walk thither; but fortifies his Will against using his strength in any such motion to that place. The Will of God hath set bounds to the exercise of his power, but doth not infringe that Absolute power which still resides in his Nature: He is *girded with more power* than he puts forth *.

† Gamach *in* Aquin. *tom.* 1. *quæst.* 25.

* Crell. *de Deo, cap.* 22.

* Psal. 65. 6.

4. 4. As the *Power of God is infinite*, in regard of his *Essence*, in regard of the *Objects*, in regard of *Action*, so Fourthly, *in regard of Duration.* The *Apostle* calls it an *Eternal Power* †. His Eternal Power is collected and concluded from the things that are made: They must needs be the product of some Being which contains truly in it self all Power, who wrought them without Engines, without Instruments; and therefore this Power must be infinite, and possessed of an unalterable virtue of acting. If it be Eternal, it must be infinite, and hath neither beginning nor end; what is Eternal hath no bounds. If it be Eternal, and not limited by time, it must be infinite, and not to be restrain'd by any finite Object: His Power never begun to be, nor ever ceaseth to be, it cannot languish; men are fain to unbend themselves, and must have some time to recruit their tired spirits: But the Power of God is perpetually vigorous, without any interrupting qualm. *Isai.* 40. 28. *Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard that the everlasting God the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the Earth fainteth not, neither is weary?* That Might which suffered no diminution from Eternity, but hatcht so great a World by brooding upon nothing, will not suffer any dimness or decrease to Eternity. This Power being the same with his Essence, is as durable as his Essence, and resides for ever in his Nature.

† Rom. 1. 20.

8. 8. The Eighth Consideration, for the right understanding of this Attribute, *The impossibility of Gods doing some things, is no infringing of his Almightiness, but rather a strengthning of it.* 'Tis granted that some things God cannot do; or rather, as *Aquinas* and others, 'tis better to say, such things cannot be done, than to say that God cannot do them; to remove all kind of imputation or reflection of weakness on God *, and because the reason of the impossibility of those things is in the nature of the things themselves.

* Robins. *observat. p.* 14.

1. First, *Some things are impossible in their own nature.* Such are all those things which imply a Contradiction; as for a thing to be, and not to be at the same time; for the Sun to shine, and not to shine at the same moment of time; for a Creature to act, and not to act at the same instant: One of those parts must be false;

falſe; for if it be true that the Sun ſhines this moment, it muſt be falſe to ſay it doth not ſhine. So it is impoſſible that a rational Creature can be without reaſon: 'Tis a contradiction to be a rational Creature, and yet want that which is eſſential to a rational Creature. So it is impoſſible that the Will of Man can be compelled, becauſe Liberty is the Eſſence of the Will; while it is Will it cannot be conſtrain'd; and if it be conſtrain'd it ceaſeth to be Will. * God cannot at one time act as the Author of the Will, and the Deſtroyer of the Will. 'Tis impoſſible that Vice and Virtue, Light and Darkneſs, Life and Death ſhould be the ſame thing. Thoſe things admit not of a Conception in any Underſtanding. Some things are impoſſible to be done, becauſe of the incapability of the ſubject; as for a Creature to be made infinite, independent, to preſerve it ſelf without the Divine concourſe and aſſiſtance. So a brute cannot be taken into communion with God, and to everlaſting ſpiritual Bleſſedneſs, becauſe the Nature of a Brute is uncapable of ſuch an Elevation: A rational Creature only can underſtand and reliſh ſpiritual delights, and is capable to enjoy God and have communion with him. Indeed God may change the nature of a Brute, and beſtow ſuch Faculties of Underſtanding and Will upon it, as to render it capable of ſuch a Bleſſedneſs; but then 'tis no more a Brute, but a rational Creature; but while it remains a Brute, the excellency of the Nature of God doth not admit of communion with ſuch a Subject: So that this is not for want of Power in God, but becauſe of a deficiency in the Creature: To ſuppoſe that God could make a contradiction true, is to make himſelf falſe, and to do juſt nothing.

* Magalano *de ſcientii Dei part.* 2. *c.* 6. § 3.

2. *Some things are impoſſible to the Nature and Being of God.* As to dye, implies a flat repugnance to the Nature of God: To be able to die, is to be able to be caſhier'd out of Being. If God were able to deprive himſelf of Life, he might then ceaſe to be: He were not then a neceſſary, but an unncertain contingent being, and could not be ſaid *only to have Immortality*, as he is †. He cannot dye who is life it ſelf, and neceſſarily Exiſtent: He cannot grow old or decay, becauſe he cannot be meaſur'd by Time. And this is no part of weakneſs, but the perfection of Power. His Power is that whereby he remains for ever fixed in his own everlaſting Being; that cannot be reckoned as neceſſary to the Omnipotence of God, which all Mankind count a part of weakneſs in themſelves. God is Omnipotent becauſe he is not Impotent; and if he could dye, he would be Impotent, not Omnipotent: Death is the feebleneſs of Nature. 'Tis undoubtedly the greateſt impotence to ceaſe to be: Who would count it a part of Omnipotency to diſenable himſelf, and ſink into nothing and not being? The impoſſibility for God to dye, is not a fit Article to impeach his Omnipotence; this would be a ſtrange way of arguing, a thing is not powerful, becauſe it is not feeble, and cannot ceaſe to be powerful; for Death is a ceſſation of all Power. * God is Almighty in doing what he will, not in ſuffering what he will not. To dye is not an active, but a paſſive Power; a defect of a Power: God is of too noble a Nature to periſh.

† 1 Tim. 6. 16.

* Auguſt.

Some things are impoſſible to that eminency of Nature which he hath above all Creatures; as to walk, ſleep, feed, theſe are Imperfections belonging to Bodies and compounded Natures. If he could walk, he were not every where preſent: Motion ſpeaks Succeſſion. If he could encreaſe, he would not have been perfect before.

3. *Some things are impoſſible to the glorious perfections of God.* God cannot do any thing unbecoming his Holineſs and Goodneſs; any thing unworthy of himſelf, and againſt the perfections of his Nature. God can Do whatſoever he can Will. As he doth actually Do whatſoever he doth actually Will; ſo it is poſſible for him to Do whatſoever it is poſſible for him to Will. He doth whatſoever he will, and can do whatſoever he can Will; but he cannot Do what he cannot Will: He cannot Will any unrighteous thing, and therefore cannot do any unrighteous thing. God cannot love Sin, this is contrary to his Holineſs; he cannot violate his Word, this is a denial of his Truth; he cannot puniſh an Innocent, this is contrary to his Goodneſs; he cannot cheriſh an impenitent Sinner, this is an injury to his Juſtice: He cannot forget what is done in the World, this is a diſgrace to his Omniſcience; he cannot deceive his Creature, this is contrary to his faithfulneſs: None of theſe things can be done by him, becauſe of the perfection of his Nature.

Would

Would it not be an imperfection in God to abſolve the Guilty, and condemn the Innocent? Is it congruous to the righteous and Holy Nature of God to command Murder and Adultery; to command Men not to worſhip him, but to be baſe and unthankful? Theſe things would be againſt the Rules of Righteouſneſs. As when we ſay of a good Man, he cannot Rob or fight a Duel; we do not mean that he wants a courage for ſuch an Act, or that he hath not a natural ſtrength and knowledge to manage his Weapon as well as another; but he hath a righteous Principle ſtrong in him which will not ſuffer him to do it; his Will is ſetled againſt it: No Power can paſs into Act unleſs applied by the Will. But the Will of God cannot Will any thing but what is worthy of him, and decent for his Goodneſs.

1. *The Scripture ſaith, 'tis impoſſible for God to lye* *; and God *cannot deny himſelf* becauſe of his faithfulneſs †. As he cannot dye, becauſe he is Life it ſelf; as he cannot deceive becauſe he is Goodneſs it ſelf; as he cannot do an unwiſe action, becauſe he is Wiſdom it ſelf; ſo he cannot ſpeak a falſe word, becauſe he is Truth it ſelf. If he ſhould ſpeak any thing as true, and not know it, where is his infinite Knowledge and Comprehenſiveneſs of Underſtanding? If he ſhould ſpeak any thing as true, which he knows to be falſe, where is his infinite Righteouſneſs? If he ſhould deceive any Creature, there is an end of his Perfection and Fidelity and Veracity. If he ſhould be deceiv'd himſelf, there is an end of his Omniſcience; we muſt then fancy him to be a deceitful God, an ignorant God, that is, no God at all. * If he ſhould lye, he would be God and no God; God upon ſuppoſition, and no God, becauſe not the firſt Truth. All Unrighteouſneſs is weakneſs, not Power; 'tis a Defection from Right Reaſon, a Deviation from Moral Principles, and the Rule of perfect Action, and ariſeth from a defect of Goodneſs and Power: 'Tis a Weakneſs, and not Omnipotence, to loſe Goodneſs: * God is Light, 'tis the perfection of Light not to become Darkneſs, and a want of Power in Light, if it ſhould become Darkneſs: His Power is infinitely ſtrong, ſo is his Wiſdom infinitely clear, and his Will infinitely pure. Would it not be a part of Weakneſs to have a diſorder in himſelf, and theſe Perfections ſhock one againſt another? Since all Perfections are in God in the moſt Sovereign height of Perfection, nothing can be done by the Infiniteneſs of one againſt the Infiniteneſs of the other. He would then be unſtable in his own Perfections, and depart from the infinite rectitude of his own Will, if he ſhould do an evil action. Again; † What is an Argument of greater ſtrength, then to be utterly ignorant of Infirmity? God is Omnipotent, becauſe he cannot do Evil, and would not be Omnipotent if he could: Thoſe things would be Marks of Weakneſs, and not Characters of Majeſty. Would you count a ſweet Fountain impotent, becauſe it cannot ſend forth bitter Streams? Or the Sun weak, becauſe it cannot diffuſe Darkneſs as well as Light in the Air? There is an inability ariſing from Weakneſs, and an ability ariſing from Perfection: 'Tis the Perfection of Angels and bleſſed Spirits, that they cannot ſin: And it would be the Imperfection of God, if he could do Evil.

* Heb. 6. 18.
† 2 Tim. 2. 13.
* *Becan. ſum. Theolog. p. 83.*
* Maximus Tyrius.
† Ambroſe.

2. *Hence it follows, that 'tis impoſſible that a thing paſt ſhould not be paſt.* If we aſcribe a Power to God, to make a thing that is paſt not to be paſt, we do not truly aſcribe Power to him, but a weakneſs: For it is to make God to lye: As though God might not have created Man, yet after he had created *Adam*, though he ſhould preſently have reduced *Adam* to his firſt nothing, yet it would be for ever true that *Adam* was created, and it would for ever be falſe that *Adam* never was created: So though God may prevent ſin, yet when ſin hath been committed, it will alway be true that ſin was committed: It will never be true to ſay ſuch a Creature that did ſin, did not ſin; his ſin cannot be recalled: Though God by pardon take off the Guilt of *Peter*'s denying our Saviour, yet it will be eternally true, that *Peter* did deny him. It is repugnant to the Righteouſneſs and Truth of God, to make that which was once true to become falſe, and not true; that is, to make a Truth to become a Lye, and a Lye to become a Truth.

This is well argued from *Heb.* 6. 18. *'Tis impoſſible for God to Lye.* * The *Apoſtle* argues, that what God had promiſed and ſworn will come to paſs, and cannot but come to paſs. Now if God could make a thing paſt not to be paſt, this conſequence would not be good, for then he might make himſelf not to have promiſed,

* Becan *ſum. Theol. p.* 84. *Crel. de Deo, cap.* 22.

not

not to have ſworn, after he hath promiſed and ſworn: And ſo if there were a power to undo that which is paſt, there would be no foundation for Faith, no certainty of Revelation. It cannot be aſſerted, that God hath created the World, that God hath ſent his Son to dye, that God hath accepted his death for Man: Theſe might not be true, if it were poſſible that, that which hath been done, might be ſaid never to have been done: So that what any may imagine to be a want of Power in God, is the higheſt perfection of God; and the greateſt ſecurity to a believing Creature that hath to do with God.

Fourthly, *Some things are impoſſible to be done, becauſe of God's Ordination.* Some things are impoſſible, not in their own nature, but in regard of the determin'd Will of God: So God might have deſtroy'd the World after *Adams* fall, but it was impoſſible; not that God wanted Power to do it, but becauſe he did not only decree from Eternity to create the World, but did alſo decree to redeem the World by *Jeſus Chriſt*, and erected the World in order to the manifeſtation of his *Glory in Chriſt*, *Eph.* 1. 4, 5. The choice of ſome in Chriſt was *before the foundation of the World*: Suppoſing that there was no hinderance in the Juſtice of God to pardon the ſin of *Adam* after his fall, and to execute no puniſhment on him; yet in regard of Gods threatning, that in the day he eat of the forbidden fruit, he ſhould dye, it was impoſſible. So though it was poſſible that the Cup ſhould paſs from our bleſſed Saviour, that is, poſſible in its own nature; yet it was not poſſible in regard of the determination of Gods Will; ſince he had both decreed and publiſht his Will to redeem Man by the Paſſion and Blood of his Son. Theſe things God by his abſolute Power might have done, but upon the account of his decree, they were impoſſible, becauſe it is repugnant to the Nature of God to be mutable: 'Tis to deny his own Wiſdom which contriv'd them, and his own Will which reſolv'd them, not to do that which he had decreed to do. This would be a diffidence in his Wiſdom, and a change of his Will. The impoſſibility of them is no reſult of a want of Power, no mark of an Imperfection, of Feebleneſs and Impotence; but the perfection of Immutability and Unchangeableneſs.

Thus have I endeavoured to give you a right Notion of this excellent Attribute of the Power of God, in as plain terms as I could; which may ſerve us for a matter of Meditation, Admiration, Fear of him, Truſt in him, which are the proper Uſes we ſhould make of this Doctrine of Divine Power. The want of a right underſtanding of this Doctrine of the Divine Power hath cauſed many to run into mighty Abſurdities; I have therefore taken the more pains to explain it.

II. The *Second* thing I propoſed, is the *Reaſons to prove God to be Omnipotent.* The Scripture deſcribes God by this Attribute of Power. *Pſal.* 115. 3. *He hath done whatſoever he pleaſed.* It ſometimes ſets forth his Power in a way of deriſion of thoſe that ſeem to doubt of it. When *Sarah* doubted of his ability to give her a Child in her old age, *Gen.* 18. 14. *Is any thing too hard for the Lord?* They deſerve to be ſcoff'd, that will deſpoil God of his ſtrength, and meaſure him by their ſhallow Models. And when *Moſes* uttered ſomething of unbelief of this Attribute, as if God were not able to feed 600000 *Iſraelites* beſides Women and Children, which he aggravates by a kind of imperious ſcoff; *Shall the flocks and the herds be ſlain for them to ſuffice them? Or ſhall all the fiſh of the Sea be gathered together for them?* &c. *Numb.* 11, 23. God takes him up ſhort, *verſ.* 23. *Is the Lords hand waxed ſhort?* What, can any weakneſs ſeize upon my Hand? Can I not draw out of my own Treaſures what is needful for a ſupply? The Hand of God is not at one time ſtrong, and another time feeble. Hence it is that we read of the Hand and Arm of God, an out-ſtretched Arm; becauſe the ſtrength of a man is exerted by his Hand and Arm; the Power of God is called the Arm of his Power, and the right Hand of his Strength. Sometimes according to the different manifeſtation of it, it is expreſt by Finger, when a leſs power is evidenc'd; by Hand, when ſomething greater; by Arm, when more mighty than the former. Since God is Eternal, without limits of time, he is alſo Almighty, without limits of ſtrength. As he cannot be ſaid to be more in Being now than he was before; ſo he is neither more nor leſs in ſtrength than he was before: As he cannot ceaſe to be, ſo he cannot ceaſe to be Powerful, becauſe he is Eternal. His *Eternity* and

Power are link'd together as equally demonstrable*; God is called the God of Gods, *El Elohim* †, the Mighty of Mighties, whence all mighty persons have their activity and vigor: He is called the Lord of Hosts, as being the Creator and Conductor of the Heavenly Militia.

* Rom. 1. 20.
† Dan. 11. 36.

Reason 1. *The Power that is in Creatures demonstrates a greater and an unconceivable Power in God.* Nothing in the world is without a power of Activity according to its Nature: No Creature but can act something: The Sun warms and enlightens every thing: It sends its Influences upon the Earth, into the bowels of the Earth, into the depths of the Sea: All Generations owe themselves to its instrumental Virtue: How powerful is a small Seed to rise into a mighty Tree with a lofty top, and extensive branches, and send forth other Seeds, which can still multiply into numberless Plants? How wonderful is the Power of the Creator, who hath endowed so small a Creature as a Seed with so fruitful an Activity? Yet this is but the virtue of a limited nature: God is both the producing and preserving cause of all the virtue in any Creature, in every Creature: The power of every Creature belongs to him as the Fountain, and is truly his Power in the Creature. As he is the first Being, he is the original of all Being; as he is the first Good, he is the Spring of all Goodness; as he is the first Truth, he is the source of all Truth; so as he is the first Power, he is the Fountain of all Power.

1. *He* therefore *that communicates to the Creature what power it hath, contains eminently much more power in himself.* Psal. 94. 10. *He that teaches man knowledge, shall not he know?* So he that gives created Beings power, shall not he be Powerful? The first Being must have as much Power as he hath given to others: He could not transfer that upon another, which he did not transcendently possess himself. The sole cause of created Power cannot be destitute of any Power in himself. We see that the Power of one Creature transcends the power of another. Beasts can do the things that Plants cannot do; besides the power of growth they have a power of Sense and progressive Motion: Men can do more than Beasts; they have rational Souls to measure the Earth and Heavens, and to be repositories of multitudes of things, Notions and Conclusions. We may well imagine Angels to be far superior to Man: The power of the Creator must far surmount the power of the Creature, and must needs be Infinite; for if it be limited, it is limited by himself or by some other; if by some other, he is no longer a Creator, but a Creature; for that which limits him in his Nature, did communicate that Nature to him; not by himself, for he would not deny himself any necessary Perfection: We must still conclude a reserve of Power in him, that he that made these can make many more of the same kind.

2. *All the Power which is distinct in the Creatures must be united in God.* One Creature hath a strength to do this, another to do that; every Creature is as a Cistern filled with a particular and limited power, according to the capacity of its nature, from this Fountain; all are distinct Streams from God: But the strength of every Creature, though distinct in the rank of Creatures, is united in God the Center, whence those lines were drawn, the Fountain whence those Streams were deriv'd: If the power of one Creature be admirable, as the power of an *Angel*, which the * *Psalmist* saith, *excelleth in strength*; how much greater must the power of a Legion of Angels be? How unconceivably superior the power of all those numbers of spiritual Natures, which are the excellent Works of God? Now if all this particular power which is in every Angel distinct, were compacted in one Angel, how would it exceed our Understanding, and be above our power to form a distinct Conception of it? What is thus divided in every Angel, must be thought united in the Creator of Angels, and far more excellent in him. Every thing is in a more noble manner in the Fountain, than in the Streams which distill and descend from it. He that is the Original of all those distinct Powers, must be the Seat of all Power without distinction: In him is the union of all without division; what is in them as a quality, is in him as his Essence. Again, if all the powers of several Creatures, with all their principal qualities and vigors, both of Beasts, Plants, and rational Creatures, were united in one Subject; As if one Lion had the strength of all the Lions that ever were; or if one Elephant had the strength of all the Elephants that ever were; nay, if one Bee had all the power of motion

* Psal. 103. 20.

and

and ſtinging that all Bees ever had, it would have a vaſt ſtrength; but if the ſtrength of all thoſe thus gathered into one of every kind ſhould be lodged in one ſole Creature, one Man, would it not be a ſtrength too big for our Conception? Or ſuppoſe one Canon had all the force of all the Canons that ever were in the World, what a battery would it make, and, as it were, ſhake the whole frame of Heaven and Earth? All this Strength muſt be much more incomprehenſible in God, all is united in him. If it were in one individual created Nature, it would ſtill be but a finite Power in a finite Nature: But in God it is Infinite and Immenſe.

Reaſ. 2. *If there were not an incomprehenſible Power in God, he would not be infinitely perfect.* God is the Firſt Being; It can only be ſaid of him, *Eſt*, he is. All other things are nothing to him, *Leſs than nothing, and vanity*, Iſai. 40. 17. and *reputed as nothing*, Dan. 4. 35. All the Inhabitants of the Earth, with all their Wit and Strength, are counted as if they were not; juſt in compariſon with Him and his Being, as a little Mote in the Sun-beams: God therefore is a pure Being. Any kind of Weakneſs whatſoever is a defect, a degree of not Being; ſo far as any thing wants this or that Power, it may be ſaid Not to be. Were there any thing of weakneſs in God, any want of ſtrength which belong'd to the perfection of a Nature, it might be ſaid of God, He is not this or that, he wants this or that perfection of Being, and ſo he would not be a pure Being, there would be ſomething of not Being in him. But God being the Firſt Being, the only Original Being, He is infinitely diſtant from not Being, and therefore infinitely diſtant from any thing of Weakneſs.

* Again, If God can know whatſoever is poſſible to be done by him and cannot do it, there would be ſomething more in his knowledge than in his Power. What would then follow? That the Eſſence of God would be in ſome regard greater than it ſelf, and leſs than it ſelf, becauſe his Knowledge and his Power are his Eſſence; his Power as much his Eſſence, as his Knowledge: And therefore, in regard of his Knowledge his Eſſence would be greater, in regard of his Power his Eſſence would be leſs, which is a thing impoſſible to be conceived in a moſt perfect Being. We muſt underſtand this of thoſe things, which are properly, and in their own Nature ſubjected to the Divine Knowledge; for otherwiſe God knows more than he can do; for he knows Sin, but he cannot act it, becauſe Sin belongs not to Power, but Weakneſs; and Sin comes under the Knowledge of God, not in it ſelf and its own Nature, but as it is a defect from God, and contrary to Good, which is the proper Object of Divine Knowledge. He knows it alſo not as poſſible to be done by himſelf, but as poſſible to be done by the Creature. † Again, If God were not Omnipotent, we might imagine ſomething more perfect than God: For if we bar God from any one thing which in its own nature is poſſible, we may imagine a Being that can do that thing, one that is able to effect it; and ſo imagine an Agent greater than God, a Being able to do more than God is able to do, and conſequently a Being more perfect than God: But no Being more perfect than God can be imagin'd by any Creature. Nothing can be called moſt Perfect, if any thing of Activity be wanting to it. Active Power follows the perfection of a thing, and all things are counted more noble, by how much more of Efficacy and Virtue they poſſeſs. We count thoſe the beſt and moſt perfect Plants, that have the greateſt Medicinal Virtue in them, and power of working upon the Body for the cure of Diſtempers. God is perfect of himſelf, and therefore moſt powerful of himſelf. If his Perfection in Wiſdom and Goodneſs be unſearchable, his Power, which belongs to Perfection, and without which all the other Excellencies of his Nature were inſignificant, and could not ſhew themſelves, (as was before evidenc'd muſt be unſearchable alſo. 'Tis by the Title of *Almighty* he is denominated, when declared to be unſearchable to Perfection. *Job* 11. 7. *Canſt thou by ſearching find out God, canſt thou find out the Almighty to perfection?* This would be limited and ſearched out, if he were deſtitute of an active Ability to do whatſoever he pleaſed to do, whatſoever was poſſible to be done. As he hath not a perfect liberty of Will, if he could not Will what he pleaſed; ſo he would not have a perfect Activity, if he could not do what he willed.

* Victorin. *in* Petar. *Tom.* 1. *p.* 333.

† Victorin. *in* Petar. *Tom.* 1. *p.* 233.

Reaſon 3. *The Simplicity of God manifeſts it.* Every Subſtance, the more Spiritual it is, the more Powerful it is. All Perfections are more united in a ſimple, than in a compounded Being. Angels being Spirits, are more powerful than Bodies. Where there is the greateſt Simplicity, there is the greateſt Unity; and where there is the greateſt Unity, there is the greateſt Power. Where there is a compoſition of a Faculty and a Member, the Member or Organ may be weaken'd and render'd unable to act, though the Power doth ſtill reſide in the Faculty. As a Man, when his Arm or Hand is cut off or broke, he hath the faculty of Motion ſtill; but he hath loſt that Inſtrument, that part whereby he did manifeſt and put forth that motion: But God being a pure Spiritual Nature, hath no Members, no Organs to be defac'd or impair'd. All impediments of Action ariſe either from the nature of the thing that acts, or from ſomething without it. There can be no hindrance to God to do whatſoever he pleaſes; not in himſelf, becauſe he is the moſt Simple Being, hath no contrariety in himſelf, is not compos'd of divers things: And it cannot be from any thing without himſelf, becauſe nothing is equal to him, much leſs Superiour. He is the Greateſt, the Supream. All things were made by him, depend upon him, nothing can diſappoint his Intentions.

Reaſ. 4. *The Miracles that have been in the World evidence the Power of God.* Extraordinary productions have awakened Men from their ſtupidity, to the acknowledgment of the Immenſity of Divine Power. Miracles are ſuch effects as have been wrought without the aſſiſtance and co-operation of Natural Cauſes, yea contray, and beſides the ordinary courſe of Nature, above the reach of any Created Power. Miracles have been; and ſaith *Bradwardine* *, *To deny that ever ſuch things were, is uncivil: 'Tis inhuman to deny all the Hiſtories of Jews and Chriſtians*; Whoſoever denies Miracles muſt deny all poſſibility of Miracles, and ſo muſt imagine himſelf fully skill'd in the extent of Divine Power. How was the *Sun* ſuſpended from its Motion for ſome hours; The *Dead raiſed* from the Grave; Thoſe reduc'd from the brink of it, that had been brought near to it by prevailing Diſeaſes; and this by a word ſpeaking? How were the famiſht *Lions* bridled from exerciſing their rage upon *Daniel*, expos'd to them for a Prey? The activity of the *Fire* curb'd for the preſervation of the *Three Children*? Which proves a Deity more powerful than all Creatures. No power upon Earth can hinder the operation of the Fire upon combuſtible Matter, when they are united, unleſs by quenching the Fire, or removing the Matter: But no created Power can reſtrain the Fire, ſo long as it remains ſo, from acting according to its Nature. This was done by God in the caſe of the *Three Children*, and that of the *Burning Buſh*. It was as much miraculous that the Buſh ſhould not conſume, as it was natural that it ſhould burn by the efficacy of the Fire upon it. No Element is ſo obſtinate and deaf, but it hears and obeys his Voice, and performs his Orders, though contrary to its own Nature: All the violence of the Creature is ſuſpended as ſoon as it receives his Command. † He that gave the Original to Nature, can take away the neceſſity of Nature: He preſides over Creatures, but is not confin'd to thoſe Laws he hath preſcrib'd to Creatures. He framed Nature, and can turn the Channels of Nature according to his own pleaſure. Men dig into the bowels of Nature, ſearch into all the Treaſures of it, to find Medicines to cure a Diſeaſe, and after all their attempts it may prove Labour in vain: But God, by one Act of his Will, one Word of his Mouth, overturns the Victory of Death, and reſcues from the moſt deſperate Diſeaſes*. All the Miracles which were wrought by the *Apoſtles*, either ſpeaking ſome Words, or Touching with the Hand, were not effected by any virtue inherent in their Words, or in their Touches. For ſuch Virtue inherent in any created finite Subject would be created and finite it ſelf, and conſequently were incapable to produce effects, which required an infinite Virtue, as Miracles do which are above the power of Nature. So when our *Saviour* wrought Miracles, it was not by any quality reſident in his humane Nature, but by the ſole *Power* of his *Divinity*. The Fleſh could only do what was proper to the Fleſh; but the Deity did what was proper to the Deity. *God alone doth wonders.* Excluding every other cauſe from producing ſuch things. He only doth thoſe things which are above the power of Nature, and cannot be wrought

* *Lib.* 1. *cap.* 1. *p.* 38.

Joſh. 10. 13.

Dan. 6. 22.
Dan. 3. 15.

Exod. 3. 2.

† Damianus *in Petar.*

* Fauch. *in Acts Vol.* 2. 556.

Pſal. 136. 4.

wrought by any Natural cauſes whatſoever. He doth not hereby put his Omnipotence to any ſtreſs: 'Tis as eaſie with him to turn Nature out of its ſetled courſe, as it was to place it in that ſtation it holds, and appoint it that courſe it runs. All the Works of Nature are indeed Miracles and Teſtimonies of the Power of God producing them; and ſuſtaining them: But Works above the Power of Nature, being Novelties and unuſual, ſtrike Men with a greater admiration upon their appearance, becauſe they are not the products of Nature, but the convulſions of it.

I might alſo add as an Argument, The *Power of the Mind* of Man to conceive more than hath been wrought by God in the World. And God can work whatſoever Perfection the Mind of Man can conceive: Otherwiſe the reaches of a created Imagination and Fancy, would be more extenſive than the Power of God. His Power therefore is far greater than the conception of any Intellectual Creature; elſe the Creature would be of a greater capacity to conceive, than God is to effect. The Creature would have a power of Conception, above Gods Power of Activity; and conſequently a Creature, in ſome reſpect greater than himſelf. Now whatſoever a Creature can conceive poſſible to be done, is but finite in its own nature; and if God could not produce what Being a created Underſtanding can conceive poſſible to be done, he would be leſs than Infinite in Power, nay, he could not go to the extent of what is Finite. But I have touched this before; That God can create more than he hath created, and in a more perfect way of Being, as conſidered ſimply in themſelves.

III. The third general thing, is to declare, *How the Power of God appears, in Creation, in Government, in Redemption.*

1. *In Creation*, With what Majeſtick Lines doth God ſet forth his *Power*, in the giving Being, and Endowments to all the Creatures in the World? All that is in *Heaven* and *Earth* is his, and ſhews the greatneſs of his *Power*, *Glory*, *Victory*, and *Majeſty*. The Heaven being ſo magnificent a piece of Work, is called emphatically, *The Firmament of his Power* *; his Power being more conſpicuous and unvail'd in that glorious Arch of the World. Indeed, *God exalts by his Power* †, that is, exalts himſelf by his Power in all the Works of his hands; in the ſmalleſt Shrub, as well the moſt glorious Sun. All his Works of Nature are truly Miracles, though we conſider them not, being blinded with too frequent and cuſtomary a ſight of them; yet in the neglect of all the reſt, the view of the Heavens doth more affect us with aſtoniſhment at the Might of Gods Arm: Theſe *declare* his *Glory*, and *the Firmament ſhews his handy-work*. And the *Pſalmiſt* peculiarly calls them *His Heavens*, and the work of *his Fingers*: Theſe were immediately created by God, whereas many other things in the World were brought into Being by the Power of God, yet by the means of the influence of the Heavens.

Job 38.
1 Chro. 29. 11.
* Pſal. 150. 1.
† Job. 36. 22.
Pſal. 19. 1.
Pſal. 8. 3.

1. *His Power is the firſt thing evident in the ſtory of the Creation. In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth*, Gen. 1. 1. There's no appearance of any thing in this declaratory Preface, but of Power: The Characters of Wiſdom march after in the diſtinct formation of things, and animating them with ſuitable qualities for an Univerſal good. By *Heaven*, and *Earth* is meant the whole maſs of the Creatures: By *Heaven*, all the Aery Region, with all the Hoſt of it; by the *Earth* is meant, all that which makes the intire inferiour Globe. The *Jews* obſerve, that in the *firſt of Geneſis*, in the whole Chapter unto the finiſhing the Work in ſix Days, God is called אלהים, which is a *Name of Power*, and that *Thirty two times* in that Chapter; but after the finiſhing the ſix days Work, he is called יהוה, which according to their notion is a Name of *Goodneſs* and *Kindneſs*: His Power is firſt viſible in framing the World, before his Goodneſs is viſible in the ſuſtaining and preſerving it. It was by this Name of *Power* and *Almighty* that he was known in the firſt Ages of the World, not by his Name *Jehovah*; Exod. 6. 3. *And I appeared unto* Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *by the Name of God Almighty; but by my Name Jehovah was I not known to them.* Not but that they were acquainted with the Name, but did not experience the intent of the Name, which ſignified his Truth in the performance of

* Mercer, p. 3. col. 1, 2.

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his Promiſes: They knew him by that name, as promiſing, but they knew him not by that Name, as performing. He would be known by his Name *Jehovah*, True to his Word, when he was about to effect the Deliverance from *Egypt*; a Type of the *Eternal Redemption*, wherein the Truth of God, in performing of his firſt Promiſe, is gloriouſly magnified. And hence it is that God is called *Almighty* more in the Book of *Job*, than in all the Scripture beſides, I think about *Thirty two times*, and *Jehovah* but once, which is *Job* 12. 9. unleſs in *Job* 38. when God is introduc'd ſpeaking himſelf; which is an Argument of *Jobs* living before the Deliverance from *Egypt*, when God was known more by his Works of Creation, than by the performance of his Promiſes, before the Name *Jehovah* was formally publiſh'd. Indeed, this Attribute of his *Eternal Power*, is the firſt thing viſible and intelligible upon the firſt glance of the Eye upon the Creatures†. Bring a man out of the Cave where he hath been Nurſt, without ſeeing any thing out of the confines of it, and let him lift up his eyes to the Heavens, and take a proſpect of that glorious Body the *Sun*, then caſt them down to the Earth, and behold the Surface of it with its Green cloathing; the firſt Notion which will ſtart up in his Mind from that ſpring of Wonders, is that of *Power*, which he will at firſt adore with a Religious aſtoniſhment. The Wiſdom of God in them is not ſo preſently apparent, till after a more exquiſite conſideration of his Works and Knowledge of the properties of their natures, the conveniency of their ſituations, and the uſefulneſs of their functions, and the order wherein they are linkt together for the good of the Univerſe.

† Rom. 1. 20.

2. *By this Creative Power God is often diſtinguiſht from all the Idols and Falſe gods in the World.* And by this *Title* he ſets forth himſelf when he would act any great and wonderful Work in the World. *He is great above all gods*, for *he hath done whatſoever he pleaſed in Heaven and in Earth.* Upon this is founded all the Worſhip he challengeth in the World, as his peculiar Glory. *Revel.* 4. 11. *Thou art worthy, oh Lord, to receive, glory, honour, and power, for thou haſt Created all things.* And *Rev.* 10. 6. *I have made the Earth, and created Man upon it. I, even my hands have ſtretched out the Heavens, and all their Hoſt have I commanded.* Iſai. 45. 12. What is the iſſue, *Verſe* 16. *They ſhall be aſhamed and confounded, all of them, that are makers of Idols.* And the weakneſs of Idols is expreſt by this Title, *The gods that have not made the Heavens and the Earth*, Jer. 10. 11. *The portion of* Jacob *is not like them, for he is the former of all things*, Verſe 16.

Pſal. 135. 5, 6.

What is not that God able to do, that hath created ſo great a World? How doth the Power of God appear in Creation?

1. *In making the World of Nothing.* When we ſay, the World was made of Nothing, we mean, that there was no Matter exiſtent for God to work upon, but what he rais'd himſelf in the firſt act of Creation. In this regard, the Power of God in Creation ſurmounts his Power in Providence. Creation ſuppoſeth nothing, Providence ſuppoſeth ſomething in Being. Creation intimates a Creature making, Providence ſpeaks a thing already made, and capable of Government, and in Government. God uſes ſecond Cauſes to bring about his Purpoſes.

1. *The World was made of nothing.* The Earth which is deſcrib'd as the firſt Matter, *without any form* or ornament, without any diſtinction of figures, was of Gods forming in the Bulk, before he did adorn it with his Penſil*. † God *in the beginning creating the Heaven and the Earth*, includes two things: Firſt, *That thoſe were created in the beginning of time, and before all other things.* Secondly, *That God begun the Creation of the World from thoſe things.* Therefore before the Heavens and the Earth there was nothing abſolutely created, and therefore no Matter in being before an act of Creation paſt upon it. It could not be Eternal, becauſe nothing can be Eternal but God; it muſt therefore have a beginning: If it had a beginning from it ſelf, then it was before it was. If it acted in the making it ſelf before it was made, then it had a Being before it had a Being; for that which is nothing, can act nothing: The action of any thing ſuppoſeth the exiſtence of the thing which acts. It being made, it was not before it was made; for to be made is to be brought into Being. It was made then by another, and that

Gen. 1. 1, 2. ℣ uarez. Zah. 3. p. 33.

Maker

Maker is God. 'Tis neceſſary that the *firſt Original* of things was from nothing: When we ſee one thing to ariſe from another, we muſt ſuppoſe an Original of the firſt of each kind: As when we ſee a Tree ſpring up from a Seed, we know that Seed came out of the bowels of another Tree; it had a Parent, and it had a Matter; we muſt come to ſome Firſt, or elſe we run into an endleſs Maze: We muſt come to ſome firſt Tree, ſome firſt Seed that had no cauſe of the ſame kind, no matter of it, but was meer nothing. * Creation doth ſuppoſe a production from nothing; becauſe if you ſuppoſe a thing without any real or actual Exiſtence, 'tis not capable of any other production then from nothing: Nothing muſt be ſuppoſed before the World, or we muſt ſuppoſe it Eternal, and that is to deny it to be a Creature, and make it God. The Creation of Spiritual Subſtances, ſuch as Angels and Souls evince this; thoſe things that are purely ſpiritual, and conſiſt not of matter, cannot pretend to any Original from Matter, and therefore they roſe up from nothing. If ſpiritual things aroſe from nothing, much more may corporeal, becauſe they are of a lower nature than ſpiritual. And he that can create a higher Nature of nothing, can create an inferior nature of nothing. As bodily things are more imperfect than ſpiritual, ſo their Creation may be ſuppoſed eaſier than that of ſpiritual. There was as little need of any matter to be wrought to his hands, to contrive into this viſible Fabrick, as there was to erect ſuch an excellent Order, as the glorious Cherubims.

* Suarez. *Vol.* 3. p. 6.

2. *This Creation of things from nothing, ſpeaks an infinite Power.* The diſtance between Nothing and Being, hath been alway counted ſo great, that nothing but an infinite Power can make ſuch diſtances meet together; either for Nothing to paſs into Being, or Being to return to nothing. To have a thing ariſe from nothing, was ſo difficult a Text to thoſe that were ignorant of the Scripture, that they knew not how to fathom it; and therefore laid it down as a certain Rule, That of nothing, nothing is made; which is true of a created Power, but not of an uncreated and Almighty Power. A greater diſtance cannot be imagin'd then that which is between Nothing and Something; that which hath no Being, and that which hath: And a greater Power cannot be imagin'd, then that which brings Something out of Nothing. * We know not how to conceive a Nothing, and afterwards a Being from that Nothing; but we muſt remain ſwallowed up in admiration of the Cauſe that gives it Being, and acknowledge it to be without any bounds and meaſures of Greatneſs and Power. The further any thing is from Being, the more immenſe muſt that Power be which brings it into Being: 'Tis not conceivable that the power of all the Angels in one, can give Being to the ſmalleſt ſpire of Graſs. To imagine therefore ſo ſmall a thing as a Bee, a Fly, a grain of Corn, or an Atome of Duſt to be made of nothing, would ſtupify any Creature in the conſideration of it: Much more to behold the Heavens with all the Troop of Stars, the Earth with all its Embroidery, and the Sea with all her Inhabitants of Fiſh; and Man, the nobleſt Creature of all, to ariſe out of the Womb of meer Emptineſs. Indeed God had not acted as an Almighty Creator if he had ſtood in need of any Materials, but of his own framing: It had been as much as his Deity was worth, if he had not had all within the compaſs of his own Power, that was neceſſary to Operation; if he muſt have been beholden to ſomething without himſelf; and above himſelf, for matter to work upon: Had there been ſuch a neceſſity, we could not have imagin'd him to be Omnipotent, and conſequently not God.

* Amyral *Morale, tom.* 1. p. 252.

3. *In this the power of God exceeds the power of all natural and rational Agents.* Nature, or the Order of ſecond Cauſes, hath a vaſt Power: The Sun generates Flies and other Inſects, but of ſome Matter, the Slime of the Earth or a Dunghill: The Sun and the Earth bring forth Harveſts of Corn, but from Seed firſt ſown in the Earth: Fruits are brought forth, but from the Sap of the Plant. Were there no Seed or Plants in the Earth, the power of the Earth would be idle, and the influence of the Sun inſignificant; whatſoever ſtrength either of them had in their Nature, muſt be uſeleſs without matter to work upon. All the united ſtrength of Nature cannot produce the leaſt thing out of nothing: It may multiply and increaſe things, by the powerful bleſſing God gave it at the firſt erecting of the World, but it cannot create. The *Word* which ſignifies *Creation*, uſed in *Gen.* 1. 1. is not aſcrib'd

aſcrib'd to any *ſecond Cauſe*, but only to God; a word in that ſenſe as incommunicable to any thing elſe, as the action it ſignifies.

Rational Creatures can produce admirable Pieces of Art from ſmall things, yet ſtill out of Matter created to their hands. Excellent Garments may be woven, but from the Entrails of a ſmall Silk-worm. Delightful and Medicinal Spirits and Eſſences may be extracted by ingenious Chymiſts; but out of the Bodies of Plants and Minerals. No Picture can be drawn without Colours; no Statue engraven without Stone, no Building erected without Timber, Stones, and other Materials. Nor can any man raiſe a thought, without ſome Matter framed to his hands, or caſt into him. Matter is by Nature formed to the hands of all Artificers; they beſtow a new Figure upon it, by the help of Inſtruments, and the product of their own Wit and Skill, but they create not the leaſt particle of Matter; when they want it, they muſt be ſupplied, or elſe ſtand ſtill, as well as Nature; for none of them, or all together, can make the leaſt Mite or Atome. And when they have wrought all that they can, they will not want ſome to find a flaw and defect in their work. God as a Creator hath the only Prerogative, to draw what he pleaſes from nothing, without any defect, without any imperfection: He can raiſe what Matter he pleaſe; enoble it with what form he pleaſes. Of nothing, nothing can be made by any created Agent: But the Omnipotent Architect of the World, is not under the ſame neceſſity, nor is limited to the ſame Rule, and tied by ſo ſhort a Tedder as created Nature, or an ingenious, yet feeble Artificer.

2. It appears, *In raiſing ſuch variety of Creatures from this barren Womb of Nothing*, or *from the Matter which he firſt commanded to appear out of Nothing*. Had there been any pre-exiſtent Matter, yet the bringing forth ſuch varieties and diverſities of excellent Creatures; ſome with Life, ſome with Senſe, and others with Reaſon ſuperadded to the reſt; and thoſe out of indiſpoſed and undigeſted Matter, would argue an infinite Power reſident in the firſt Author of this variegated Fabrick. From this Matter he formed that glorious *Sun*, which every day diſplays its Glory, ſcatters its Beams, clears the Air, ripens our Fruits, and maintains the propagation of Creatures in the World. From this Matter he lighted thoſe Torches which he ſet in the Heaven to qualifie the darkneſs of the Night: From this he compacted thoſe Bodies of Light, which though they ſeem to us as little ſparks, as if they were the Glow-worms of Heaven, yet ſome of them exceed in greatneſs this Globe of the Earth on which we live. And the higheſt of them hath ſo quick a motion, that ſome tell us, they run in the ſpace of every hour 42 *millions* of Leagues. From the ſame matter he drew the Earth, on which we walk; from thence he extracted the Flowers to adorn it, the Hills to ſecure the Valleys, and the Rocks to fortifie it againſt the Inundations of the Sea. And on this dull and ſluggiſh Element, he beſtowed ſo great a fruitfulneſs, to maintain, feed, and multiply ſo many Seeds of different kinds, and conferred upon thoſe little Bodies of Seeds a power to multiply their kinds in conjunction with the fruitfulneſs of the Earth to many thouſands. From this rude Matter, the Slime, or Duſt of the Earth, he kneaded the Body of Man, and wrought ſo curious a Fabrick, fit to entertain a Soul of a Heavenly extraction, form'd by the *breath of God* *. He brought Light out of thick Darkneſs, and living Creatures, Fiſh and Foul, out of *inanimate waters* †, and gave a power of ſpontaneous motion to things ariſing from that Matter which had no living motion. To convert one thing into another, is an evidence of infinite Power, as well as creating things of nothing; for the diſtance between life and not life, is next to that which is between being and not being. God firſt forms Matter out of Nothing, and then draws upon and from this indiſpoſed *Chaos*, many excellent Pourtraitures. Neither Earth nor Sea were capable of producing living Creatures, without an infinite Power working upon it, and bringing into it ſuch variety and multitude of Forms; and this is called by ſome *mediate* Creation; as the producing the *Chaos*, which was without form and void, is called *immediate* Creation. Is not the power of the Potter admirable in forming out of temper'd Clay, ſuch varieties of neat and curious Veſſels, that after they are faſhion'd, and paſt the Furnace, look as if they were not of any kin to the Matter they are formed of? And is it not the ſame with the Glaſs-maker, that from a little melted gel'y of Sand and Aſhes, or the Duſt of Flint, can blow up ſo pure a Bo-

* Gen. 2. 7.

† Gen. 1. 20.

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dy as Glaſs, and in ſuch varieties of ſhapes; and is not the Power of God more admirable, becauſe infinite in ſpeaking out ſo beautiful a World out of nothing; and ſuch varieties of living Creatures from Matter utterly indiſpos'd in its own nature for ſuch forms?

3. And this conducts to a *third thing*, wherein the power of God appears, in that *He did all this with the greateſt eaſe and facility.*

1. *Without Inſtruments.* As God made the World without the advice, ſo without the aſſiſtance of any other. *He ſtretched forth the Heavens alone, and ſpread abroad the Earth by himſelf, Iſai.* 44. 24. He had no Engine, but his Word; no pattern or model but himſelf. What need can he have of Inſtruments, that is able to create what Inſtruments he pleaſes? Where there is no reſiſtance in the Object, where no need of preparation or inſtrumental advantage in the Agent; there the actual determination of the Will is ſufficient to a production. What Inſtrument need we to the thinking of a Thought, or an act of our Will? Men indeed cannot act any thing without Tools; the beſt Artificer muſt be beholden to ſomething elſe for his nobleſt works of Art. The *Carpenter* cannot work without his Rule, and Ax, and Saw, and other Inſtruments. The *Watch-maker* cannot act without his File and Pliars: But in Creation, there is nothing neceſſary to Gods bringing forth a World, but a ſimple act of his Will, which is both the principal cauſe, and inſtrumental. He had no Scaffolds to rear it, no Engines to poliſh it, no Hammers or Mattocks to clod and work it together. 'Tis a miſerable Error to meaſure the actions of an *Infinite* Cauſe by the imperfect model of a *Finite*, ſince by his own *Power and Out-ſtretched Arm*, he *made the Heaven and the Earth**. * Jer. 32. 17.
† What excellency would God have in his work above others, if he needed Inſtruments, as feeble men do? Every Artificer is counted more admirable, that can frame curious Works with the leſs matter, fewer Tools and aſſiſtances: God uſes Inſtruments in his Works of Providence, not for neceſſity, but for the diſplay of his Wiſdom in the management of them; yet thoſe Inſtruments were originally framed by him without Inſtruments. Indeed ſome of the *Jews* thought the Angels were the Inſtruments of God in creating Man, and that thoſe words, *Let us make Man in our own image*, were ſpoken to Angels. But certainly the Scripture, which denies God any *Counſellor* in the model of Creation †, doth not joyn any Inſtrument with him in the operation, which is every where aſcribed to himſelf *without created aſſiſtance, Iſai*, 45. 18. It was not to Angels God ſpake in that Affair; if ſo, Man was made after the image of Angels, if they were Companions with God in that Work: But it is every where ſaid, that *Man was made after the Image of God.* Again, the image wherein Man was created, was that of *dominion* over the lower Creatures, as appears *Verſe* 26. which we find not conferr'd upon Angels; and it is not likely that *Moſes* ſhould introduce the Angels, as Gods Privy Counſel, of whoſe Creation he had not mention'd one ſyllable. *Let us make Man*, rather ſignifies the *Trinity*, and not ſpoken in a Royal ſtyle, as ſome think. Which of the *Jewiſh* Kings writ in the ſtyle, *We?* That was the cuſtom of later times; and we muſt not meaſure the language of Scripture by the ſtyle of *Europe*, of a far later date than the penning the Hiſtory of the Creation. If Angels were his Counſellors in the Creation of the material World, what Inſtrument had he in the Creation of Angels? If his own Wiſdom were the Director, and his own Will the producer of the one; why ſhould we not think, that he acted by his ſole Power in the other? 'Tis concluded by moſt, that the Power of Creation cannot be deriv'd to any Creature, it being a work of Omnipotency: The drawing Something out from Nothing, cannot be communicated without a communication of the Deity it ſelf. The educing things from Nothing exceeds the capacity of any Creature, and the Creature is of too feeble a Nature to be elevated to ſo high a degree. 'Tis very unreaſonable to think, that God needed any ſuch aid. If an Inſtrument were neceſſary for God to create the World, then he could not do it without that Inſtrument: If he could not, he were not then All-ſufficient in himſelf, if he depended upon any thing without himſelf, for the production or conſummation of his Works. And it might be enquired, how that Inſtrument came into Being: If it begun to be, and there was a time when it was not, it muſt have its Being from the Power of God; and then, why † Gaſſend.

Gen. 1. 26.

† Iſai. 40. 12, 13, 14.

Gen. 1. 27.

could not God as well create all things without an Inſtrument, as create that Inſtrument without an Inſtrument? For there was no more Power neceſſary to a producing the whole without Inſtruments, than to produce one Creature without an Inſtrument.

No Creature can in its own nature be an Inſtrument of Creation. If any ſuch Inſtrument were uſed by God, it muſt be elevated in a miraculous and ſupernatural way; and what is ſo an Inſtrument, is in effect no Inſtrument; for it works nothing by its own nature, but from an elevation of a Superior nature, and beyond its own nature. All the power in the Inſtrument is truly the Power of God, and not the power of the Inſtrument. And therefore what God doth by an Inſtrument, he could do as well without. If you ſhould ſee one apply a Straw to Iron, for the cutting of it, and effect it, you would not call the Straw an Inſtrument in that action, becauſe there was nothing in the nature of the Straw to do it. It was done wholly by ſome other force, which might have done it as well without the Straw as with it. The narrative of the Creation in *Geneſis* removes any Inſtrument from God. The Plants which are preſerved and propagated by the Influence of the *Sun*, were created the day before the *Sun*, *viz.* on the *Third day*, whereas the Light was collected into the body of the *Sun* on the *Fourth day* *; to ſhew, that though the *Plants* do inſtrumentally owe their yearly beauty and preſervation to the *Sun*, yet they did not in any manner owe their Creation to the Inſtrumental heat and vigor of it.

* Gen. 1. 11, 16.

2. *God created the World by a Word, by a ſimple Act of his Will.* The whole Creation is wrought by a Word; *God ſaid, Let there be Light*; and *God ſaid Let there be a Firmament*. Not that we ſhould underſtand it of a ſenſible Word, but to expreſs the eaſineſs of this operation to God, as eaſie as a word to Man. We muſt underſtand it of a Powerful order of his own Will, which is expreſt by the *Pſalmiſt* in the nature of a Command, *Pſal.* 33. 6. *He ſpake and it was done, he commanded and it ſtood faſt*; and *Pſal.* 148. 5. *He commanded and they were created*. At the ſame inſtant that he willed them to ſtand forth, they did ſtand forth. The efficacious Command of the Creator was the Orignal of All things; the inſenſibility of Nothing obeyed the act of his Will. Creation is therefore entituled a *Calling*, *Rom.* 4. 17. *He calls thoſe things which are not, as if they were.* To Create is no more with God, than to Call; and what he calls, preſents it ſelf before him in the ſame poſture that he calls it. He did with more eaſe make a World, than we can form a Thought. 'Tis the ſame eaſe to him to create Worlds, as to decree them: There needs no more than a Reſolve to have things wrought at ſuch a time, and they will be, according to his pleaſure. This Will is his Power: *Let there be light*, is the Precept of his Will; and *there was light*, is the effect of his Precept. By a Word was the Matter of the Heavens and the Earth framed: By a Word Things ſeparate themſelves from the rude Maſs into their proper Forms. By a Word, Light aſſociates it ſelf into one body, and forms a *Sun*: By a Word are the Heavens, as it were, beſpangled with Stars, and the Earth dreſt with Flowers: By a Word, is the World both ceil'd and floor'd. One act of his Will formed the World, and perfected its beauty. All the variety and ſeveral exploits of his Power were not cauſed by diſtinct Words or Acts of Power, God utter'd not diſtinct Words for diſtinct Species; as let there be an *Elephant*, and let there be a *Lion*; but as he produced thoſe various Creatures out of one Matter, ſo by one Word. By one ſingle Command, thoſe varieties of Creatures, with their Clothing, Ornaments, diſtinct Notes, Qualities, Functions, were brought forth. By one word, all the *Seeds* of the Earth, with their various Virtues. By one Word, all the *Fiſh* of the Sea, and *Fowls* of the Air in their diſtinct Natures, Inſtincts, Colours. By one Word, all the *Beaſts* of the Field, with their varieties. † *Heaven* and *Earth*, *Spiritual* and *Corporeal* Creatures, *Mortal* and *Immortal*, the Greater and the Leſs, Viſible and Inviſible, were formed with the ſame eaſe. A Word made the Leaſt, and a Word made the Greateſt. 'Tis as little difficulty to him to produce the higheſt Angel, as the lighteſt Atom. 'Tis enough for the exiſtence of the ſtatelieſt *Cherubim*, for God only to Will his Being. It was enough for the forming and fixing the *Sun*, to will the compacting of Light into one Body. The creation of the Soul of Man is expreſt by *Inſpiration*: To ſhew, that it

Gen. 1. 3, 5, &c. throughout the whole Chapter.

Gen. 1. 11.
Gen. 1. 20.
Gen. 1. 24.
† Auguſt.
Gen. 2. 7.

it is as easie with God to create a Rational Soul, as for Man to breath *. Breathing is natural to Man, by a communication of Gods goodness; and the creation of the Soul is as easie to God, by virtue of his Almighty Word. As there was no proportion between Nothing and Being; so there was as little proportion between a Word and such glorious Effects. A meer Voice, coming, from an Omnipotent Will, was capable to produce such varieties, which Angels and Men have seen in all Ages of the World; and this without weariness. What labour is there in Willing, what pain could there be in speaking a Word? *Isai.* 40. 28. *The Creator of the ends of the Earth is not weary.* And though he be said to *Rest* after the Creation, 'tis to be meant a Rest from work, not a repose from weariness. So great is the Power of God, that without any Matter, without any Instruments, he could create many Worlds, and with the same ease as he made this. * Theodoret.

4. I might add also, the appearance of this Power in the *Instantaneous production of things.* The ending of his Word was not only the beginning, but the perfection of every thing he spake into Being; not several Words to several parts and Members, but one Word, one breath of his Mouth, one act of his Will to the whole species of the Creatures, and to every Member of each individual. Heaven and Earth were created in a moment, *Six days* went to their dispose; and that comly Order we observe in the World was the work of a Week: The Matter was formed as soon as God had spoken the Word; and in every part of the Creation, as soon as God spake the Word, *Let it be so*, the answer immediately is, *It was so*; which notes the present standing up of the Creature according to the act of his Will: And therefore † *One* observes, that *Let there be light*, and *there was light*, in the *Hebrew* are the same words, without any alteration of Letter or Point, only the conjunctive Particle added יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי אוֹר *Let there be light*, and *let there be light*, to shew, that the same instant of the speaking the Divine word, was the appearance of the Creature: So great was the Authority of his Will. Gen. 1. † Peirs. p. 111.

2. We are to shew *Gods Power in the Government of the World.* As God decreed from Eternity the Creation of things in time, so he decreed from Eternity the particular ends of Creatures, and their operations respecting those ends. Now as there was need of his Power to execute his Decree of Creation, there is also need of his Power to execute his Decree about the manner of Government. * All Government is an act of the Understanding, Will and Power. Prudence to design belongs to the Understanding, the election of the means belongs to the Will, and the accomplishment of the whole is an act of Power. 'Tis a hard matter to determine which is most necessary: Wisdom stands in as much need of Power to perfect; as Power doth of Wisdom, to model and draw out a Scheme; though Wisdom directs, Power must effect. Wisdom and Power are distinct things among Men: A poor man in a Cottage may have more Prudence to Advise, than a Privy Counsellor; and a Prince more Power to act, than Wisdom to conduct. A Pilot may direct though he be lame, and cannot climb the Masts and spread the Sails: But God is wanting in nothing; neither in Wisdom to design, nor in Will to determine, nor in Power to accomplish. His Wisdom is not feeble, nor his Power foolish: A powerful Wisdom could not act what it would, and a foolish power would act more than it should. The Power expreſt in his Government, is shadow'd forth in the Living Creatures, which are Gods Instruments in it. 'Tis said, *Every one of them had four faces*; that of a *Man* to signify Wisdom; of a *Lion*, *Eagle*, the strongest among Birds, to signify their Courage and Strength to perform their Offices. * Suarez. *Vol.* 1. *lib.* 3. *cap.* 10. Ezek. 1. 10.

This Power is evident in the *Natural*, *Moral*, *Gracious* Government.

There is a *Natural* Providence, which consists in the preservation of all things, propagation of them by Corruptions and Generations, and in a Co-operation with them in their motions to attain their ends.

Moral Government is of the Hearts and Actions of Men.

Gracious Government, as respecting the Church.

I. *His Power is evident in Natural Government.*

1. *In Preservation.* God is the great *Father* of the World, to nourish it as well as create it *. Man and Beast would perish if there were not Herbs for their food; * Daillé, *In* 1 Cor. 10. p. 102.

food; and Herbs would wither and periſh, if the Earth were not watered with fruitful ſhowers. This ſome of the *Heathens* acknowledg'd, in their worſhiping God under the image of an *Ox*, a uſeful Creature, by reaſon of its ſtrength, to which we owe ſo much of our food in Corn. Hence God is ſtyled the *Preſerver of Man and Beaſt*. Hence the *Jews* called God * *Place*; becauſe he is the ſubſiſtence of all things. By the ſame Word whereby he gave Being to things, he gives to them continuance and duration in Being to ſuch a term of time. As they were *created by his word*, they are *ſupported* by his word, *Heb.* 1. 3. The ſame powerful *Fiat*, *Let the Earth bring forth Graſs*, when the Plants peep'd upon Man out of nothing, is expreſt every Spring, when they begin to lift up their heads from their naked Roots and Winter graves. The reſurrection of Light every Morning, the reviving the pleaſure of all things to the eye; the watering the Vallies from the Mountain Springs; the curbing the natural appetite of the Waters from covering the Earth; every draught that the Beaſts drink, every lodging the Fowls have, every bit of Food for the ſuſtenance of Man and Beaſt, is aſcrib'd to the *Opening of his hand*, the diffuſing of his Power. *Pſal.* 104. 27, *&c.* as much as the firſt Creation of things, and endowing them with their particular nature: Whence the Plants, which are ſo ſerviceable, are called the *Trees of the Lord*, of *Jehovah*, that hath only Being and Power in himſelf. The whole *Pſalm* is but the deſcription of his preſerving, as the firſt of *Geneſis* is of his creating Power. 'Tis by this Power Angels have ſo many thouſand years remained in the power of underſtanding and willing. By this Power things diſtant in their natures have been joyned together, a Spiritual Soul and a Duſty Body knit in a Marriage knot. By this Power the Heavenly Bodies have for ſo many Ages roul'd in their Spheres, and the tumultuous Elements have perſiſted in their order: By this hath the Matter of the World been to this day continued, and as capable of entertaining forms as it was at the firſt Creation. What an amazing ſight would it be to ſee a man hold a Pillar of the *Exchange* upon one of his Fingers? What is this to the Power of God, *who holds the waters in the hollow of his hands, metes out the Heaven with a ſpan, and weighs the Mountains in ſcales, and the Hills in a ballance?*

Pſal. 36. 6. * מָקוֹם

Gen. 1. 11.

Verſe 16.

Iſai. 40. 12.

* The preſerving the Earth from the violence of the Sea is a plain inſtance of this Power. How is that raging Element kept pent within thoſe liſts where he firſt lodged it; continuing its courſe in its Channel without overflowing the Earth, and daſhing in pieces the lower part of the Creation? The natural ſituation of the Water is to be above the Earth, becauſe it is lighter; and to be immediately under the Air, becauſe it is heavier than that thinner Element. Who reſtrains this natural quality of it, but that God that firſt formed it? The word of Command at firſt, *Hitherto ſhalt thou go, and no further*, keeps thoſe Waters linkt together in their Den, that they may not ravage the Earth, but be uſeful to the Inhabitants of it. And when once it finds a gap to enter, what power of Earth can hinder its paſſage? How fruitleſs ſometimes is all the Art of Man to ſend it to its proper Channel, when once it hath ſpread its mighty waves over ſome Countries, and trampled part of the inhabited Earth under its feet? It hath triumphed in its victory, and withſtood all the power of Man to conquer its force. 'Tis only the Power of God that doth bridle it from ſpreading it ſelf over the whole Earth. And that his Power might be more manifeſt, he hath ſet but a weak and ſmall bank againſt it. Though he hath bounded it in ſome places by mighty Rocks, which lift up their heads above it, yet in moſt places by feeble Sand. How often is it ſeen in every ſtormy motion, when the waves boil high, and roul furiouſly, as if they would ſwallow up all the neighbouring Houſes upon the Shoar; when they come to touch thoſe Sandy limits, they bow their Heads, fall flat, and ſink into the Lap whence they were raiſed; and ſeem to foam with Anger that they can march no further, but muſt ſpit themſelves at ſo weak an obſtacle? Can the Sand be thought to be the cauſe of this? The weakneſs of it gives no footing to ſuch a thought. Who can apprehend that an enraged Army ſhould retire upon the oppoſition of a Straw in an Infants hand? Is it the nature of the Water? Its retirement is againſt the natural quality of it; pour but a little upon the ground, and you always ſee it ſpread it ſelf. No cauſe can be rendred in

† Daillé. Melange. *Part* 2. *p.* 457. *&c.*

in nature; 'tis a ſtanding Monument of the Power of God in the preſervation of the World, and ought to be more taken notice of by us in this Iſland, ſurrounded with it, than by ſome other Countreys in the World.

1. *We find nothing hath power to preſerve it ſelf.* Doth not every Creature upon Earth require the aſſiſtance of ſome other for its maintenance? *Can theRuſh grow up without mire; can the Flag grow up without water? Job.* 8. 11. Can Man or Beaſt maintain it ſelf without grain from the bowels of the Earth? Would not every Man tumble into the grave, without the aid of other Creatures to nouriſh him? Whence do theſe Creatures receive that virtue of ſupplying him nouriſhment, but from the Sun and Earth; and whence do they derive that virtue, but from the *Creator of all things*? And ſhould he but ſlack his hand, how ſoon would they and all their qualities periſh, and the links of the World fall in pieces, and daſh one another into their firſt Chaos and confuſion? All Creatures indeed have an appetite to preſerve themſelves, they have ſome knowledge of the outward Means for their preſervation; ſo have irrational Animals a natural inſtinct, as well as Men have ſome skill to avoid things that are hurtful, and apply things that are helpful: But what thing in the World can preſerve it ſelf by an inward influx into its own Being? All things want ſuch a Power without Gods, *Fiat, Let it be ſo*: Nothing but is deſtitute of ſuch a power for its own preſervation, as much as it is of a power for its own creation. Were there any true Power for ſuch a work, what need of ſo many External helps from things of an inferior Nature to that which is preſerved by them?

No created thing hath a Power to preſerve any decayed Being. Who can lay claim to ſuch a virtue, as to recall a withering Flower to its former beauty, to raiſe the head of a dropping Plant, or put life into a gaſping Worm when it is expiring; or put impair'd Vitals into their former poſture? Not a Man upon Earth, nor an Angel in Heaven, can pretend to ſuch a Virtue; they may be ſpectators, but not Aſſiſters, and are in this caſe *Phyſicians of no value.*

2. 'Tis therefore *the ſame Power preſerves things which at firſt created them.* The Creature doth as much depend upon God in the firſt inſtant of its Being, for its preſervation; as it did when it was nothing, for its production and creation into Being. * As the continuance of a Thought of our Mind depends upon the power of our Mind, as well as the firſt framing of that Thought. There is as little difference between Creating and Preſerving Power, as there is between the power of mine Eye to begin an act of Viſion and continue that act of Viſion; as to caſt my Eye upon an Object, and continue it upon that Object: As the firſt act is cauſed by the Eye, ſo the duration of that act is preſerved by the Eye; ſhut the Eye and the act of Viſion periſhes, divert the Eye from that Object, and that act of Viſion is exchanged for another. And therefore the preſervation of things is commonly called a Continual creation: And certainly it is no leſs, if we underſtand it of a Preſervation by an inward influence into the Being of things. † 'Tis one and the ſame action invariably continued, and obtaining its force every moment: The ſame action whereby he created them of Nothing, and which every moment hath a virtue to produce a thing out of nothing, if it were not yet extant in the World: It remains the ſame without any diminution throughout the whole time wherein any thing doth remain in the World. For all things would return to Nothing, if God did not keep them up in the elevation and ſtate to which he at firſt raiſed them by his Creative Power. *Acts* 17. 28. *In him we live and have our Being.* By him, or by the ſame Power whence we deriv'd our Being, are our lives maintained: As it was his Almighty Power whereby we were after we had been nothing; ſo it is the ſame Power whereby we now are, after he hath made us ſomething.

* Leſſius *de Perfect. divin. p.* 69.

† Leſſius *de Sum bon. p.* 580, 581, 582.

Certainly all things have no leſs a dependance on God, than Light upon the Sun, which vaniſheth and hides its head upon the withdrawing of the Sun. And ſhould God ſuſpend that powerful Word, whereby he erected the frame of the World, it would ſink down to what it was, before he commanded it to ſtand up. There needs no new act of Power to reduce things to Nothing, but the ceſſation of that Omnipotent influx: When the appointed time ſet them for their Being comes to a period, they faint and bend down their heads to their diſſolution, they return

return to their elements and periſh, *Pſal.* 104. 29. *Thou hideſt thy face, and they are troubled; thou takeſt away their breath, they die and return to their duſt.* That which was Nothing cannot remain on this ſide Nothing, but by the ſame Power that firſt called it out of Nothing. As when God withdrew his concurring Power from the Fire, its quality ceas'd to act upon the *Three Children*: ſo if he withdraws his ſuſtaining Power from the Creature, its Nature will ceaſe to be.

Gen. 1 22. 23. 2. It appears in *Propagation.* That powerful word, *Increaſe and multiply*, pronounced at the firſt Creation, hath ſpread it ſelf over every part of the World; every Animal in the World, in the formation of every one of them. From *Two of a kind*, how great a number of individuals, and ſingle Creatures have been multiplied, to cover the face of the Earth in their continued ſucceſſions? What a world of Plants ſpring up from the womb of a dry Earth, moiſtned by the influence of a Cloud, and hacht by the beams of the Sun? How admirable an inſtance of his propagating Power is it, that from a little Seed a maſſy Root ſhould ſtrike into the bowels of the Earth, a tall body and thick branches, with Leaves and Flowers of various colours, ſhould break through the ſurface of the Earth, and mount up towards Heaven, when in the Seed you neither ſmell the ſcent, nor ſee any firmneſs of a Tree, nor behold any of thoſe Colours which you view in the Flowers that the years produce? A Power not to be imitated by any Creature. How aſtoniſhing is it, that a ſmall Seed, whereof many will not amount to the weight of a grain, ſhould ſpread it ſelf into Leaves, Bark, Fruit of a vaſt weight, and multiply it ſelf into Millions of Seeds? What Power is that, that from one Man and Woman hath multiplied Families, and from Families, ſtockt the World with People? Conſider the living Creatures, as formed in the womb of their ſeveral kinds; every one is a wonder of Power. The *Pſalmiſt* inſtanceth in the forming and propagation of Man, *Pſal.* 139. 14. *I am fearfully and wonderfully made, marvelous are thy works.* The forming of the parts diſtinctly in the Womb, the bringing forth into the World every particular Member, is a rowl of wonders, of Power. That ſo fine a ſtructure as the Body of Man ſhould be poliſht in *the lower parts of the Earth*, as he calls the *Womb*, Verſe 15. in ſo ſhort a time, with Members of a various form and uſefulneſs, each labouring in their ſeveral functions. Can any man give an exact account of the manner, *how the Bones do grow in the Womb*: 'Tis unknown to the Father, and no leſs hid from the Mother, and the wiſeſt Men cannot ſearch out the depths of it. 'Tis one of the Secret works of an Omnipotent Power, ſecret in the manner, though open in the effect. So that we muſt aſcribe it to God, as *Job* doth, *Thine hands have made me, and faſhioned me together round about.* Thy hands which formed Heaven, have formed every Part, every Member, and wrought me like a Mighty workman. The Heavens are ſaid to be the *work of Gods hands*, and Man is here ſaid to be no leſs. The forming and propagation of Man from that Earthly Matter, is no leſs a wonder of Power, than the ſtructure of the World from a rude and indiſpos'd Matter. * A *Heathen Philoſopher* deſcants elegantly upon it: *Doſt thou underſtand* (my Son) *the forming of Man in the womb; who erected that noble Fabrick; who carv'd the Eyes, the Chriſtal-windows of light, and the conductors of the Body; who bor'd the Noſtrils and Ears, thoſe Loop-holes of ſcents and ſounds; who ſtretched out and knit the Sinews and Ligaments for the faſtning of every Member; who caſt the hollow Veins, the Channels of Blood; ſet and ſtrengthned the Bones, the Pillars and Rafters of the Body; who digg'd the Pores, the ſinks to expel the filth; who made the Heart, the repoſitory of the Soul, and formed the Lungs like a Pipe? What Mother, what Father wrought theſe things? No, none but the Almighty God, who made all things according to his pleaſure; 'tis He who propagates this Noble piece from a pile of Duſt. Who is born by his own advice; who gives ſtature, features, ſence, wit, ſtrength, ſpeech, but God?*

Ecclef. 11. 5.

Job. 10. 8.

* Triſmegiſt. in Serm Greek, in the Temple. p. 57.

'Tis no leſs a wonder, that a little Infant can live ſo long in a dark Sink, in the midſt of filth without breathing: And the eduction of it out of the Womb is no leſs a wonder, than the forming, increaſe, nouriſhment of it in that Cell. A wonder that the life of the Infant is not the death of the Mother, or the life of the

Mother

Mother the death of the Infant. This little Creature, when it ſprings up from ſuch ſmall beginnings by the Power of God, grows up to be one of the Lords of the World, to have a Dominion over the Creatures, and propagates its kind in the ſame manner: All this is unaccountable without having recourſe to the Power of God in the government of the Creatures.

And to add to this wonder, Conſider alſo what multitudes of Formations and Births there are at one time all over the World, in every of which the Finger of God is at work; and it will ſpeak an unwearied Power. 'Tis admirable in one Man, more in a Town of Men, ſtill more in a greater and larger Kingdom, a vaſter world; there is a Birth for every hour in this City, were but 168 born in a week, though the *Weekly Bills* mention more: What is this City to Three Kingdoms; what Three Kingdoms to a populous World? *Eleven thouſand, and Eighty* will make *one* for every Minute in the Week; what is this to the weekly propagation in all the Nations of the Univerſe, beſides the generation of all the Living Creatures in that Space, which are the *works of Gods fingers* as well as Man? What will be the reſult of this, but the notion of an unconceivable, unwearied Almightineſs, alway active, alway operating?

3. It appears *in the Motions of all Creatures.* All things *live and move in him*; by the ſame Power that Creatures have their Beings, they have their Motions: They have not only a Being by his powerful Command, but they have their minutely Motion by his Powerful concurrence. Nothing can act without the Almighty influx of God, no more than it can exiſt without the Creative Word of God. 'Tis true indeed, the ordering of all Motions to his Holy ends, is an act of Wiſdom; but the Motion it ſelf whereby thoſe Ends are attained, is a work of his Power. Acts 17.28.

1. *God as the firſt Cauſe hath an influence into the motions of all ſecond Cauſes.* As all the wheels in a Clock are moved in their different motions, by the force and ſtrength of the principal and primary Wheel; if there be any defect in that, or if that ſtand ſtill, all the reſt languiſh and ſtand ſtill the ſame moment. All Creatures are his Inſtruments, his Engines, and have no Spirit, but what he gives, and what he aſſiſts. Whatſoever Nature works, God works in Nature; Nature is the Inſtrument, God is the Supporter, Director, Mover of Nature; that what the *Prophet* ſaith in another caſe, may be the language of univerſal Nature, *Lord, thou haſt wrought all our works in us, Iſai.* 26. 12. They are *our* works ſubjectivly, efficiently, as ſecond Cauſes; *Gods* works originally, concurrently. The *Sun* moved not in the Valley of *Ajalon* for the ſpace of many hours, in the time of *Joſhua* †; nor did the *Fire* exerciſe its conſuming quality upon the *Three Children*, in *Nebuchadnezzars* Furnace*: He withdrew not his ſupporting Power from their Being, for then they had vaniſhed, but his influencing Power from their qualities, whereby their motion ceas'd, till he return'd his influential concurrence to them; which evidenceth, that without a perpetual derivation of Divine Power, the *Sun* could not run one ſtride or inch of its race, nor the *Fire* devour one grain of light Chaff, or an inch of Straw. Nothing without his ſuſtaining Power can continue in Being; nothing without his co-working Power can exerciſe one mite of thoſe qualities it is poſſeſſed of. All Creatures are wound up by him, and his hand is conſtantly upon them, to keep them in perpetual motion. † Joſh. 10.13. * Dan. 3.25.

2. Conſider the *variety of motions in a ſingle Creature.* How many motions are there in the vital parts of a Man, or in any other Animal, which a Man knows not, and is unable to number? The renewed motion of the Lungs, the *Syſtoles* and *Diaſtoles* of the Heart; the Contractions and Dilatations of the Heart, whereby it ſpouts out and takes in Blood; the power of Concoction in the Stomach; the motion of the Blood in the Veins, *&c.* All which were not only ſetled by the Powerful hand of God, but are upheld by the ſame, preſerv'd and influenc'd in every diſtinct motion by that Power that ſtampt them with that Nature. To every one of thoſe there is not only the ſuſtaining Power of God holding up their Natures, but the motive Power of God concurring to every motion; for if we move in him as well as we live in him, then every particle of our motion is exerciſed by his concurring Power, as well as every moment of our Life ſupported by his preſerving Power. What an infinite variety of motions is there in the whole World in univerſal Nature,

ture, to all which God concurs, all which he conducts, even the motions of the meaneſt as well as the greateſt Creatures, which demonſtrate the indefatigable power of the Governour. 'Tis an infinite power which doth act in ſo many varieties, whereby the ſoul forms every Thought, the Tongue ſpeaks every Word, the Body exerts every action. What an Infinite power is that which preſides over the birth of all things, concurs with the motion of the Sap in the Tree, Rivers on the Earth, Clouds in the Air, every drop of Rain, fleece of Snow, crack of Thunder? Not the leaſt motion in the World, but is under an actual influence of this Almighty Mover.

And leſt any ſhould ſcruple the concurrence of God to ſo many Varieties of the Creatures motion, as a thing utterly unconceivable; let them conſider the *Sun*, a natural image and ſhadow of the perfections of God; doth not the power of that finite Creature extend it ſelf to various Objects at the ſame moment of time? How many *Inſects* doth it animate, as *Flies*, *&c.* at the ſame moment throughout the World? How many ſeveral *Plants* doth it erect at its appearance in the *Spring*, whoſe Roots lay mourning in the Earth all the foregoing Winter? What multitudes of Spires of *Graſs*, and nobler Flowers, doth it Midwife in the ſame hour? It warms the *Air*, melts the *Blood*, cheriſhes Living Creatures of various kinds, in diſtinct places, without tiring: And ſhall the God of this Sun be leſs than his Creature?

3. And ſince I ſpeak of the *Sun*, conſider *the Power of God in the Motion of it*. * The vaſtneſs of the *Sun* is computed to be at the leaſt *166 Times* bigger than the Earth, and its diſtance from the Earth, ſome tell us to be about *Four Millions of Miles*; whence it follows, that it is whirl'd about the World with that ſwiftneſs, that in the ſpace of an hour it runs a *Million* of Miles, which is as much as if it ſhould move round about the ſurface of the Earth *Fifty times* in one hour; which vaſtneſs exceeds the ſwiftneſs of a Bullet ſhot out of a Canon, which is computed to fly not above *Three mile* in a minute: So that the *Sun* runs further in one Hours ſpace, than a Bullet can in Five thouſand, if it were kept in motion; ſo that if it were near the Earth, the ſwiftneſs of its motion would ſhatter the whole frame of the World, and daſh it in pieces; ſo that the *Pſalmiſt* may well ſay, *It runs a race like a ſtrong Man*, *Pſal.* 19. 5. What an Incomprehenſible Power is that which hath communicated ſuch a ſtrength and ſwiftneſs to the *Sun*, and doth daily influence its Motion; eſpecially ſince after all thoſe years of its motion, wherein one would think it ſhould have ſpent it ſelf, we behold it every day, as vigorous as *Adam* did in *Paradiſe*, without limping, without ſhattering it ſelf, or loſing any thing of its natural Spirits in its unwearied motion. How great muſt that Power be, which hath kept this great Body ſo intire, and thus ſwiftly moves it every day?

* A Lapide, *in* 1 *cap.* Gen. 16. Leſſius, *de Perfect. divin.* p. 90. 91. * Leſſius, *de Providen.* p. 633. Voſſ *de Idol. lib.* 2. *cap.* 2.

Is it not now an Argument of Omnipotency, to keep all the ſtrings of Nature in tune; to wind them up to a due pitch for the harmony he intended by them; to keep things that are contrary from that Confuſion they would naturally fall into; to prevent thoſe jarrings which would naturally reſult from their various and ſnarling qualities; to preſerve every Being in its true nature; to propagate every kind of Creature; order all the Operations, even the meaneſt of them, when there are ſuch innumerable Varieties?

But let us conſider, that this Power of preſerving things in their ſtation and motion, and the renewing of them is more ſtupendous, than that which we commonly call *Miraculous*.

We call thoſe *Miracles*, which are wrought out of the track of Nature, and contrary to the uſual ſtream and current of it; which Men wonder at, becauſe they ſeldom ſee them, and hear of them as things rarely brought forth in the World; when the truth is, there is more of Power expreſt in the ordinary ſtation and motion of Natural cauſes, than in thoſe extraordinary exertings of Power. Is not more Power ſignaliz'd in that whirling motion of the *Sun* every hour for ſo many Ages, than in the ſuſpending of its motion one Day, as it was in the days of *Joſhua*? That Fire ſhould continually ravage and conſume, and greedily ſwallow up every thing that is offer'd to it, ſeems to be the effect of as admirable a Power, as the ſtopping of its appetite a few moments, as in the caſe of the *Three Children*?

Is

Is not the rising of some small Seeds from the ground, with a multiplication of their numerous posterity, an effect of as great a Power, as our Saviours feeding many Thousands with a *few Loaves*, by a secret augmentation of them? Is not the Chimical producing so pleasant and delicious a Fruit as the *Grape* from a dry Earth, insipid Rain, and a sower Vine, as admirable a token of Divine Power as our Saviours turning *Water* into *Wine*? Is not the cure of Diseases by the application of a simple inconsiderable Weed, or a slight Infusion, as wonderful in it self, as the Cure of it by a powerful word? What if it be naturally design'd to heal, what is that Nature, who gave that Nature, who maintains that Nature, who conducts it, co-operates with it? Doth it work of it self, and by its own strength; why not then equally in all, in one as well as another? Miracles indeed affect more, because they testify the immediate operation of God without the concurrence of *second Causes*; not that there is more of the Power of God shining in them, than in the other. Faucher, *sur Act. Vol.* 2. *p.* 47.

II. This *Power is evident in Moral Government.*

1. *In the restraint of the Malicious nature of the Devil.* Since *Satan* hath the Power of an Angel, and the Malice of a Devil, what safety would there be for our Persons from destruction, what security for our Goods from rifling, by this invisible, potent, and envious Spirit, if his Power were not restrain'd and his Malice curb'd, by one more Mighty than himself? How much doth he envy God, the glory of his Creation; and Man the use and benefit of it? How desirous would he be in regard of his passion, how able in regard of his strength and subtilty; to overthrow or infect all Worship, but what was directed to himself; to manage all things according to his lusts, turn all things topsie-turvy, plague the World, burn Cities, Houses, plunder us of the supports of Nature, waste Kingdoms, *&c.* if he were not held in a Chain, as a ravenous Lion, or a furious wild Horse, by the Creator and Governour of the World? What remedy could be used by Man against the activity of this unseen and swift Spirit? The World could not subsist under his Malice; he would practise the same things upon all, as he did upon *Job*, when he had got leave from his Governour; turn the Swords of Men into one anothers bowels; send Fire from Heaven upon the Fruits of the Earth and the Cattle, intended for the use of Man: Raise Winds, to shake and tear our Houses upon our Heads; daub our Bodies with scabs and boils, and let all the humours in our Blood loose upon us. He that envied *Adam* a *Paradise*, doth envy us the pleasure of enjoying its out-works: If we were not destroyed by him, we should live in a continued vexation by *Spectrums* and *Apparitions*, affrighting sounds and noise; as some think the *Egyptians* did in that *three days* Darkness: He would be alway *winnowing* us, as he desired to winnow *Peter*. But God over-masters his strength, that he cannot move a hairs breadth beyond his Tedder; not only he is unable to touch an upright *Job*, but to lay his fingers upon one of the Unbelieving *Gadarens* forbidden and filthy *Swine* without special licence. When he is cast out of one place, he walks *through dry places seeking rest*, new objects for his Malicious designs, *but finding none*, till God lets loose the reins upon him for a new employment. Though *Satans* power be great, yet God suffers him not to tempt as much as his Diabolical appetite would, but as much as Divine Wisdom thinks fit: And the Divine Power tempers the others active Malice, and gives the Creature victory, where the Enemy intended spoil and captivity. How much stronger is God, than all the Legions of Hell; as he that holds a *strong man* from effecting his purpose, testifies more ability than his Adversary? How doth he lock him up for a *thousand years* in a Pownd, which he cannot leap over? and this restraint is wrought partly by blinding the *Devil* in his designs, partly by denying him concourse to his motion: As he hindred the active quality of the Fire upon the *Three Children*, by withdrawing his Power, which was necessary to the motion of it; and his power is as necessary for the motion of the Devil, as for that of any other Creature. Sometimes he makes him to confess *him* against his own interest, as *Apollo*'s Oracle confest †. And though when the *Devil* was cast out of the possessed person, he publickly owned Christ to be the *Holy one of God*, *Mark* 1.24. to render him suspected by the People of having commerce with the Unclean Spirits; yet this he could not do without the leave and permission God, that Luke 22. 31. Mat. 8. 31. Luke 11. 24. Luke 11. 22. Rev. 20. 2. † *Cæteros deos a reos esse*, &c. Grot. *Verit. rel. lib.* 4.

the power of Chriſt in ſtopping his mouth and impoſing ſilence upon him might be evidenced; and that it reaches to the Gates of Hell, as well as to the quieting of Winds and Waves. This is a part of the Strength, as well as the Wiſdom of
Job 12. 16. God, that *the deceived and the deceiver are his.* Wiſdom to defeat, and Power to ove-rule his moſt Malicious deſigns to his own glory.

2. *In the reſtraint of the Natural Corruption of Men.* Since the *impetus* of Original Corruptions in the Blood, conveyed down from *Adam* to the Veins of all his Poſterity, and univerſally diffus'd in all Mankind, what wrack and havock would it make in the World, if it were not ſuppreſt by this Divine Power, which preſides over the hearts of Men? Man is ſo wretched by Nature, that nothing but what is vile and pernicious can drop from him. Man *drinks Iniquity like water,*
Job. 15. 16. being by Nature *abominable and filthy.* He greedily ſwallows all matter for Iniquity, every thing ſuitable to the mire and poyſon in his Nature, and would ſprout it out with all fierceneſs and inſolence. God himſelf gives us the deſcription of Mans Nature, *Gen,* 6. 5. that he hath not one good *imagination at any*
Rom. 3. 10. &c. *time.* And the *Apoſtle* from the *Pſalmiſt* dilates and comments upon it: *There is none righteous, no not one; their mouth is full of curſing and bitterneſs, their feet are ſwift to ſhed Blood, &c.* This Corruption is equal to all, natural to all; 'tis not more poyſonous or more fierce in one Man, than in another. The Root of all Men is the ſame; all the Branches therefore do equally poſſeſs the Villanous nature of the Root. No Child of *Adam* can by Natural deſcent be better than *Adam,* or have leſs of baſeneſs and vileneſs, and venom than *Adam.* How fruitful would this loathſom Lake be in all kind of ſteams? What unbridled Licenticuſneſs and head-ſtrong Fury would triumph in the World, if the Power of God did not interpoſe it ſelf to lock down the Flood-gates of it? What rooting up of Humane ſociety would there be; how would the World be drencht in Blood, the number of Malefactors be greater, than that of Apprehenders and Puniſhers? How would the prints of natural Laws be raz'd out of the heart, if God ſhould leave Humane nature to it ſelf? Who can read the *firſt Chapter* to the *Romans,* 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 *Verſes* without acknowledging this Truth; where there is a *Catalogue* of thoſe Villanies which followed upon Gods pulling up the Sluces, and letting the malignity of their inward Corruption have its natural courſe? If God did not hold back the fury of Man, his Garden would be over-run, his Vine rooted up; the Inclinations of Men would hurry them to the worſt of Wickedneſs. How great is that Power, that curbs, bridles, or changes, as many head-ſtrong Horſes at once and every minute, as there are Sons of *Adam* upon the Earth? The
Pſal. 93. 3, 4. *floods lift up their waves; the Lord on high is mightier than the noiſe of many Waters, yea than the mighty waves of the Sea*; that doth huſh and pen in the turbulent paſſions of Men.

3. *In the ordering and framing the hearts of men to his own ends.* That muſt be an Omnipotent hand that graſps and contains the Hearts of all Men; the Heart of the meaneſt perſon, as well as of the moſt towring Angel, and turns them as he pleaſes, and makes them ſometime ignorantly, ſometime knowingly concur to the accompliſhment of his own purpoſes: When the Hearts of Men are ſo numerous, their Thoughts ſo various and different from one another, yet he hath a Key to thoſe Millions of Hearts, and with Infinite Power guided by as Infinite Wiſdom, he draws them into what Chanels he pleaſes for the gaining his own ends. Though the *Jews* had embrued their hands in the Blood of our *Saviour,* and their Rage was yet reeking hot againſt his Followers, God bridled their Fury in the Churches Infancy, till it had got ſome ſtrength, and caſt a Terror upon them by the Wonders wrought by the *Apoſtles,* Acts 2. 43. *And fear came upon every Soul, and many wonders and ſigns were done by the Apoſtles.* Was there not the ſame reaſon in the nature of the Works our *Saviour* wrought to point them to the *Finger of God* and calm their rage? Yet did not the Power of God work upon their Paſſions in thoſe Miracles, nor ſtop the impetuouſneſs of the Corruption reſident in their hearts. Yet now thoſe who had the boldneſs to attack the Son of God, and nail him to the Croſs, are frighted at the appearance of *Twelve unarmed Apoſtles*; as the Sea ſeems to be afraid when it approacheth the bounds of the feeble Sand. How did God bend the Hearts of the *Egyptians* to the

Iſraelites,

Israelites, and turn them to that point; as to lend their most costly Vessels, their precious Jewels, and rich Garments, to supply those whom they had just before tyrannically loaded with their Chains*? When a great part of an Army came upon *Jehosaphat* to dispatch him into another World, how doth God in a trice touch their hearts, and move them by a secret instinct at once to *depart from him*? As if you should see a numerous sight of Birds in a moment turn wing another way, by a sudden and joynt consent. When he gave *Saul* a Kingdom, he gave him a Spirit fit for Government, *and gave him another heart*; and brought the People to submit to his yoke, who a little before wandred about the Land upon no nobler employment than the *seeking of Asses*. 'Tis no small remark of the Power of God, to make a number of strong and discontented Persons, and desirous enough of liberty, to bend their Necks under the yoke of Government, and submit to the Authority of One, and that of their own Nature, often weaker and unwiser than the most of them; and many times, an Oppressor and Invader of their Rights. Upon this account *David* calls God *his Fortress, Tower, Shield*; all terms of *Strength*, in subduing the People under him. 'Tis the Mighty hand of God, that links Princes and People together in the bands of Government. The same hand that asswageth the Waves of the Sea, suppresseth the Tumults of the People.

* Exod. 3. 21, 22.
1 Chro. 18. 31.
1 Sam. 10. 9.
Psal. 144. 2.

III. It appears *in his Gratious and Judicial Government.*

1. *In his Gracious Government.* In the Deliverance of his Church: He is the *strength of Israel*, and hath protected his little Flock in the midst of Wolves; and maintained their standing, when the strongest Kingdoms have sunk, and the best joynted States have been broken in pieces. When Judgments have ravaged Countreys and torn up the Mighty, as a tempestuous Wind hath often done the tallest Trees, which seem'd to threaten Heaven with their Tops, and dare the Storm with the depth of their Roots, when yet the Vine and Rose-bushes have stood firm, and been seen in their beauty next morning. The state of the *Church* hath out-lived the most flourishing *Monarchies*; when there hath been a mighty knot of Adversaries against her; when the *Bulls of Bashan* have pusht her, and the whole Tribe of the *Dragon* have sharpen'd their weapons, and edg'd their Malice; when the voice was strong, and the hopes high to raze her foundation even with the ground; when Hell hath roar'd; when the wit of the World hath contriv'd, and the strength of the World hath attempted her ruine; when Decrees have been past against her, and the powers of the World arm'd for the execution of them; when her friends have droop'd and skulk'd in corners; when there was no Eye to pity, and no Hand to assist, help hath come from Heaven; her Enemies have been defeated, Kings have brought gifts to her and rear'd her; Tears have been wip'd off her Cheeks, and her very Enemies, by an unseen Power, have been forc'd to court her, whom before they would have devour'd quick. The Devil and his Armies have sneakt into their Den, and the Church hath triumphed when she hath been upon the brink of the Grave. Thus did God send a *mighty Angel* to be the Executioner of *Senacheribs* Army, and the Protector of *Jerusalem*, who run his Sword into the hearts of *Eighty thousand*, when they were ready to swallow up his beloved City.

1 Sam. 15. 29.
2 King 19. 35.

When the Knife was at the Throats of the *Jews* in *Shushan*, by a powerful hand it was turned into the hearts of *their Enemies*. With what *Out-stretched Arm* were the *Israelites* freed from the *Egyptian* yoke? When *Pharaoh* had muster'd a great Army to pursue them, assisted with *Six hundred Chariots* of War, the *Red Sea* obstructed their passage before, and an enraged Enemy trod on their rear; when the fearful *Israelites* despair'd of Deliverance, and the insolent *Egyptian* assured himself of his Revenge; God stretches out his irresistible Arm, to defeat the Enemy and assist his People; he strikes down the Wolves, and preserves the Flock. God restrain'd the *Egyptian* Enmity against the *Israelites* till they were at the brink of the *Red Sea*, and then lets them follow their humor and pursue the Fugitives, that his Power might more gloriously shine forth in the Deliverance of the one, and the Destruction of the other. God might have brought *Israel* out of *Egypt* in the time of those Kings, that had remembred the good Service of *Joseph* to their Countrey; but he leaves them till the Reign of

Esther 8.
Deut. 4. 34.

a cruel Tyrant, ſuffers them to be Slaves, that they might by his ſole Power be Conquerours; which had had no appearance, had there been a willing diſmiſſion of them at the firſt ſummons. *Exod.* 9. 16. *In very deed, for this cauſe have I raiſed thee up, for to ſhew my Power, and that my Name might be declared throughout all the Earth.* I have permitted thee to riſe up againſt my People, and keep them in Captivity, that thou might'ſt be an occaſion for the manifeſtation of my Power in their reſcue; and whilſt thou art obſtinate to enſlave them, I will ſtretch out my Arm to deliver them, and make my Name famous among the *Gentiles*, in the wrack of thee and thy Hoſt in the *Red Sea*. The Deliverance of the Church hath not been in one Age or in one part of the World, but God hath ſignaliz'd his Power in all Kingdoms where ſhe hath had a footing: As he hath guided her in all places by one Rule, animated her by one Spirit; ſo he hath protected her by the ſame Arm of Power.

When the *Roman Emperors* bandied all their Force againſt Her for about *Three hundred years*, they were further from effecting her ruine at the end, than when they firſt attempted it; The Church grew under their Sword, and was hatcht under the Wings of the *Roman Eagle*, which were ſpread to deſtroy her. The *Ark* was elevated by the Deluge; and the Waters the Devil poured out to drown Her, did but ſlime the Earth for a new increaſe of her. She hath ſometime been beaten down, and, like *Lazarus*, hath ſeemed to lie in the Grave for ſome days, that the Power of God might be more viſible in her ſudden reſurrection, and lifting up her head above the Throne of her Perſecutors.

2. *In his Judicial Proceedings.* The Deluge was no ſmall teſtimony of his Power, in opening the Ciſterns of Heaven, and pulling up the Sluces of the Sea. He doth but call for the *waters of the Sea*, and they *pour themſelves upon the face of the Earth*, *Amos* 9. 6. In *Forty days* time, the Waters overtopt the higheſt Mountains *Fifteen Cubits*; and by the ſame Power he afterwards reduc'd the Sea to its proper Channel, as a roaring Lion into his Den. A ſhower of Fire from Heaven upon *Sodom* and the Cities of the Plain, was a ſignal diſplay of his Power, either in creating it on the ſudden for the execution of his Righteous ſentence, or ſending down the Element of Fire, contrary to its nature (which affects aſcent) for the puniſhment of Rebels againſt the light of Nature.

Gen. 7. 17, 19, 20.

How often hath he ruin'd the moſt flouriſhing Monarchies, led Princes away ſpoil'd, and overthrown the Mighty? Which *Job* makes an argument of his Strength, *Job* 12. 13, 14. Troops of unknown People, the *Goths* and *Vandals*, broke the *Romans*, a warlike people, and hurl'd down all before them. They could not have had the thought to ſucceed in ſuch an attempt, unleſs God had given them ſtrength and motion, for the executing his Judicial Vengeance upon the People of his Wrath.

Exod. 8. 3. Exod. 7. 20.

How did he evidence his power by dawbing the Throne of *Pharaoh*, and his *Chamber* of preſence, as well as the Houſes of his Subjects, with the ſlime of *Frogs*; turning their *Waters* into *Blood*, and their *Duſt* into *biting Lice*; raiſing his Militia of *Locuſts* againſt them; cauſing a *Three days Darkneſs* without ſtopping the motion of the *Sun*: Taking off their *Firſt-born*, the excellency of their ſtrength, in a Night by the ſtroke of the *Angels* Sword? He takes off the Chariot Wheels of *Pharaoh*, and preſents him with a Deſtruction, where he expected a Victory: brings thoſe Waves over the heads of him and his Hoſt, which ſtood firm as Marble Walls for the ſafety of his people: The Sea is made to ſwallow them up, that durſt not by the order of their Governour touch the *Iſraelites*. It only ſprinkled the one as a type of Baptiſm, and drowned the other as an image of Hell. Thus he made it both a Deliverer and a Revenger, the Inſtrument of an offenſive and defenſive War. *He brings Princes to nothing, and makes the Judges of the Earth as Vanity.* Great *Monarchs* have by his power been hurl'd from their Thrones, and their Scepters (like *Venice*-Glaſſes) broken before their faces, and They been advanced, that have had the leaſt hopes of Grandure. He hath pluckt up *Cedars* by the Roots, lopt off the Branches, and ſet a Shrub to grow up in the place; diſſolv'd Rocks, and eſtabliſht Bubbles. *Luke* 1. 52. *He hath ſhewed ſtrength with his arm, he hath ſcattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts: he hath put down the mighty from their ſeat, and exalted them of low degree.*

Iſai. 40. 23, 24.

And

And these things he doth magnify his Power in.

1. *By ordering the nature of Creatures as he pleases.* By restraining their force, or guiding their motions. The restraint of the destructive qualities of the Creatures argues as great a Power, as the change of their Natures, yea and a greater. The qualities of Creatures may by chang'd by Art and Composition; as in the preparing of Medicines; but what but a Divine Power could restrain the operation of the Fire from the *Three Children*, while it retain'd its heat and burning quality in *Nebuchadnezzars* Furnace? The operation was curb'd while its nature was preserved. All Creatures are called his *Host*, because he Marshals and ranks them as an Army to serve his purposes: The whole Scheme of Nature is ready to favour Men when God orders it, and ready to punish Men when God commissions it. He gave the *Red Sea* but a check, and it obeyed his Voice; *Psal.* 106. 9. *He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up*; the motion of it ceased, and the Waters of it were rang'd as defensive Walls, to secure the march of his People: And at the motion of the hand of *Moses*, the Servant of the Lord, the Sea recovered its violence, and the Walls that were framed came tumbling down upon the *Egyptians* heads*. The Creator of Nature is not led by the necessity of Nature: He that setled the order of Nature, can change or restrain the order of Nature according to his Sovereign pleasure. The most necessary and useful Creatures he can use as Instruments of his Vengeance: *Water* is necessary to cleanse, and by that he can deface a World; *Fire* is necessary to warm, and by that he can burn a *Sodom*: From the Water he form'd the *Fowl* †; and by that he dissolves them in the Deluge; Fire or Heat is necessary to the Generation of Creatures, and by that he ruines the *Cities of the Plain*. He orders all as he pleases, to perform every tittle and *punctilio* of his purpose. The *Sea* observ'd him so exactly, that it drowned not one *Israelite*, nor saved one *Egyptian*. *Psal.* 106. 11. *There was not* One *of them left*. And to perfect the *Israelites* Deliverance, he followed them with Testimonies of his Power above the strength of Nature. When they wanted Drink, he orders *Moses* to strike a Rock, and the Rock spouts a River, and a Channel is formed for it to attend them in their Journey. When they wanted Bread, he dress't *Manna* for them in the Heavens, and sent it to their Tables in the *Desart*. When he would declare his Strength, he calls to the *Heavens* to pour down *Righteousness*, and to the *Earth* to bring forth *Salvation*, *Isai.* 45. 8. Though God had created Righteousness or Deliverance for the *Jews* in *Babylon*, yet he calls to the Heavens and the Earth to be assistant to the design of *Cyrus*, whom he had *raised* for that purpose, as he speaks in the beginning of the Chapter, *Vers* 1, 2, 3, 4. As God created Man for a supernatural end, and all Creatures for Man as their immediate end; so he makes them, according to opportunities, subservient to that supernatural end of Man, for which he created him. He that spans the Heavens with his Fist, can shoot all Creatures, like an Arrow, to hit what mark he pleases. He that spread the Heavens and the Earth by a Word, and can by a Word *fold them* up more easily than a Man can a *garment**, can order the streams of Nature; Cannot he work without Nature as well as with it, beyond Nature, contrary to Nature, that can (as it were) *fillip* Nature with his Finger into that Nothing whence he drew it? Who can cast down the *Sun* from his Throne, clap the distinguisht parts of the World together, and make them march in the same order to their Confusion, as they did in their Creation: Who can jumble the whole Frame together, and by a Word dissolve the Pillars of the World, and make the Fabrick lie in a ruinous heap.

* Exod. 14. 27.

† Gen. 1. 21.

* Heb. 1. 12.

2. *In effecting his Purposes by small Means*: In making use of the Meanest Creatures. As the Power of God is seen in the creation of the smallest Creatures, and assembling so many perfections in the little body of an Insect, as an *Ant*, or *Spider*: So his Power is not less magnified in the use he makes of them. As he magnifies his Wisdom, by using ignorant Instruments; so he exalts his Power, by employing weak Instruments in his service: The Meanness and Imperfection of the Matter sets off the Excellency of the Workman; so the weakness of the Instruments is a foyl to the Power of the principal Agent. When God hath effected things by Means in the Scripture, he hath usually brought about his Purposes by weak Instruments.

Moses

Moses, a Fugitive from *Egypt*, and *Aaron* a Captive in it, are the Instruments of the *Israelites* Deliverance. By the motion of *Moses* his *Rod*, he works Wonders in the Court of *Phtraoh*, and summons up his Judgments against him. He brought down *Pharaohs* stomack for a while by a squadron of *Lice* and *Locusts*, wherein Divine Power was more seen, than if *Moses* had brought him to his own Articles by a multitude of Warlike Troops. The fall of the *Walls of Jericho* by the sound of *Rams horns*, was a more glorious Character of Gods Power, than if
Josh. 6. 20. *Joshuah* had batter'd it down with an hundred of Warlike Engines. Thus the great Army of the *Midianites*, which lay as *Grashoppers* upon the ground, were routed by *Gideon* in the head of *Three hundred Men*; and *Goliah* a Giant, laid level with the ground by *David* a Stripling, by the force of a *Sling*: A *Thousand Philistines* dispatcht out of the World by the *Jaw Bone of an Ass* in the hand of *Sampson*. He can master a stout Nation by an Army of *Locusts*, and render the Teeth of those little Insects as destructive as the Teeth, yea the strongst Teeth,
*Joel 1. 6, 7. the *Cheek-Teeth* of a great *Lion**. The *Thunderbolt* which produceth sometimes dreadful effects, is compacted of little Atoms which fly in the Air, small Vapors drawn up by the *Sun*, and mixt with other Sulphurous matter and petrifying Juice. Nothing is so weak, but his Strength can make victorious; nothing so small, but by his Power he can accomplish his great ends by it; nothing so vile, but his Might can conduct to his Glory; and no Nation so mighty, but he can waste and enfeeble by the meanest Creatures. God is great in Power in the greatest things, and not little in the smallest; his Power in the minutest Creatures which he uses for his service, surmounts the force of our Understanding.

III. *The Power of God appears in Redemption.* As our *Saviour* is called the
1 Cor. 1. 24. *Wisdom of God*, so he is called *the Power of God*. The Arm of Power was lifted up as high, as the designs of Wisdom were laid deep: As this way of Redemption could not be contriv'd, but by an Infinite Wisdom; so it could not be accomplish'd but by an Infinite Power. None but God could shape such a design, and none but God could effect it. The Divine Power in Temporal deliverances and freedom from the slavery of humane Oppressors, vails to that which glitters in Redemption; whereby the *Devil* is defeated in his designs, stript of his spoils, and yok'd in his strength. The Power of God in Creation requires not those degrees of Admiration, as in Redemption. In Creation the World was erected from Nothing; as there was Nothing to act, so there was Nothing to oppose; no victorious *Devil* was in that to be subdued, no thundering *Law* to be silenced, no *Death* to be conquer'd, no *Transgression* to be pardoned and rooted out, no *Hell* to be shut, no Ignominious death upon the *Cross* to be suffered. It had been in the nature of the thing, an easier thing to Divine Power to have created a new World, than repair'd a broken, and purified a polluted one. This is the most admirable Work that ever God brought forth in the World, greater than all the Marks of his Power in the first Creation.

And this will appear,

1. *In the Person Redeeming.*
2. *In the publication and propagation of the Doctrine of Redemption.*
3. *In the application of Redemption.*

I. *In the Person Redeeming.*

First, *In his Conception.*

1. *He was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the Womb of the Virgin.* Luk 1. 35. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee.* Which act is expresst to be the effect of the Infinite Power of God; and it expresses the supernatural manner of the forming the Humanity of our Saviour, and signifies not the Divine Nature of Christ infusing it self into the Womb of the Virgin; for the Angel refers it to the manner of the operation of the Holy Ghost in the producing the Humane Nature of Christ, and not to the Nature assuming that Humanity into union with it self. The *Holy Ghost*, or the Third Person in the Trinity overshadowed the Virgin, and by a Creative act fram'd the Humanity of Christ, and united it to the Divinity. It is therefore expresst by a word of the same Import with that used Gen. 1. 2. *The Spirit moved upon the face of the*

the face of the Waters, which ſignifies (as it were) a *Brooding* upon the *Chaos*, ſhadowing it with his Wings, as *Hens* ſit upon their Eggs to form them and hatch them into Animals; or elſe it is an alluſion to the *Cloud which covered the Tent of the Congregation*, when *the Glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle**. It was not ſuch a Creative Act as we call *Immediate*, which is a production out of Nothing; but a Mediate Creation, ſuch as Gods bringing things into form out of the firſt Matter, which had nothing but an Obediential or Paſſive diſpoſition to whatſoever ſtamp the Powerful Wiſdom of God ſhould imprint upon it. So the ſubſtance of the Virgin had no active, but only a paſſive diſpoſition to this work: The Matter of the Body was *Earthy*, the ſubſtance of the Virgin; the forming of it was *Heavenly*, the *Holy Ghoſt* working upon that Matter. And therefore when it is ſaid, that *ſhe was found with Child of the Holy Ghoſt*, 'tis to be underſtood of the efficacy of the *Holy Ghoſt*, not of the Subſtance of the Holy Ghoſt. The Matter was Natural, but the manner of Conceiving was in a Supernatural way, above the methods of Nature. In reference to the Active Principle the *Redeemer* is called in the Prophecy †, *The Branch of the Lord*, in regard of the Divine hand that planted him: In reſpect to the Paſſive Principle, *The Fruit of the Earth*, in regard of the Womb that bare him; and therefore ſaid to be *made of a Woman** That part of the Fleſh of the *Virgin* whereof the *Humane Nature* of Chriſt was made, was refin'd and purifi'd from Corruption by the *overſhadowing of the Holy Ghoſt*, as a skilful Workman ſeparates the *Droſs* from the *Gold*: Our Saviour is therefore called, *that Holy thing**, though born of the Virgin: He was neceſſarily ſome way to deſcend from *Adam*. God indeed might have created his Body out of Nothing, or have formed it (as he did *Adams*) out of the Duſt of the Ground: But had he been thus extraordinarily formed, and not propagated from *Adam*; though he had been a Man like one of us, yet he would not have been of *kin* to us, becauſe it would not have been a Nature deriv'd from *Adam*, the common Parent of us all. † It was therefore neceſſary to an *affinity* with us, not only that he ſhould have the ſame *Humane Nature*, but that it ſhould flow from the ſame Principle, and be propagated to him. But now, by this way of producing the *Humanity* of Chriſt of the Subſtance of the *Virgin*, He was in *Adam* (ſay ſome) Corporally, but not Seminally; of the Subſtance of *Adam* or a Daughter of *Adam*, but not of the Seed of *Adam*: And ſo he is of the ſame Nature that had ſinned, & ſo what he did and ſuffered may be imputed to us; which, had he been created as *Adam*, could not be claim'd in a Legal and Judicial way.

* Exod. 40. 34.

Mat. 1. 18.

† Iſai. 4. 2.

* Gal. 4. 4.

* Luke 1. 35.

† Amyrald. *in Symbol.* p. 103, &c.

2. *It was not convenient he ſhould be born in the common order of Nature, of Father and Mother*: For whoſoever is ſo born is polluted: A *Clean thing cannot be brought out of an unclean**: And our Saviour had been uncapable of being a *Redeemer*, had he been tainted with the leaſt ſpot of our Nature, but would have ſtood in need of Redemption himſelf. Beſides, it had been inconſiſtent with the Holineſs of the *Divine Nature*, to have aſſumed a tainted and defiled Body. He that was the Fountain of *Bleſſedneſs* to all Nations, was not to be ſubject to the *Curſe of the Law* for himſelf; which he would have been, had he been conceiv'd in an ordinary way. He that was to overturn the *Devils* Empire, was not to be any way captive under the Devils power, as a Creature under the Curſe; nor could he be able to *break the Serpents head*, had he been tainted with the Serpents breath.

* Job 14. 4.

Again, ſuppoſing that Almighty God by his Divine power had ſo order'd the matter, and ſo perfectly ſanctified an *Earthly* Father and Mother from all Original ſpot, that the Humane Nature might have been tranſmitted Immaculate to him, as well as the *Holy Ghoſt* did purge that part of the fleſh of the *Virgin* of which the Body of Chriſt was made; yet it was not convenient that that perſon, that was *God bleſſed for ever* as well as *Man*, partaking of our Nature, ſhould have a Conception in the ſame manner as ours, but different, and in ſome meaſure conformable to the Infinite dignity of his perſon; which could not have been, had not a ſupernatural power and a Divine perſon been concern'd as an active Principle in it. Beſides, ſuch a Birth had not been agreeable to the firſt Promiſe, which calls him *The Seed of the woman*, not of the Man; and ſo the Veracity of God had ſuffer'd ſome detriment: The *ſeed of the woman* only, is ſet in oppoſition to the *ſeed of the Serpent*.

Gen. 1. 15.

3. *By this manner of Conception, the Holineſs of his Nature is ſecur'd, and his fitneſs for his Office is aſſur'd to us.* 'Tis now a pure and unpolluted Humanity that is the

the Temple and Tabernacle of the Divinity: The *Fulneſs of the Godhead dwells in him bodily*, and dwells in him Holily. His Humanity is ſupernaturaliz'd, and elevated by the activity of the *Holy Ghoſt*, hatching the Fleſh of the *Virgin* into Man, as the *Chaos* into a World. Though we read of ſome *ſanctified from the Womb*, it was not a pure and perfect Holineſs; it was like the Light of Fire mixed with Smoak, an infus'd Holineſs accompanied with a Natural taint: But the Holineſs of the Redeemer by this Conception, is like the Light of the *Sun*, pure and without ſpot. The Spirit of *Holineſs* ſupplying the place of a Father in a way of Creation.

His Fitneſs for his Office is alſo aſſur'd to us; for being born of the *Virgin*, one of our Nature, but conceived by the *Spirit* a Divine perſon, the guilt of our Sins may be imputed to him becauſe of our Nature, without the ſtain of Sin inherent in him; becauſe of his Supernatural Conception he is capable, as one of Kin to us, to bear our *Curſe* without being toucht by our Taint. By this means our ſinful Nature is aſſum'd without Sin in that Nature which was aſſum'd by him: Fleſh he hath, but not *Sinful fleſh*, *Rom.* 8. 3. Real Fleſh, but not really Sinful, only by way of Imputation.

Nothing but the power of God is evident in this whole Work: By the ordinary Laws and courſe of Nature a Virgin could not bear a Son; nothing but a Supernatural and Almighty Grace could intervene to make ſo holy and perfect a Conjunction. *The generation of others, in an ordinary way, is by Male and Female: But the *Virgin* is *overſhadow'd by the Spirit*, and *Power of the Higheſt*. Man only is the product of Natural generation; this which is born of the *Virgin* is the *Holy thing*, the *Son of God*. In other generations a Rational Soul is only united to a Material Body: But in *this*, the Divine Nature is united with the Humane in one perſon by an indiſſoluble Union.

* Amyrant. *ſur Timole p.* 192.

II. The Second Act of Power in the Perſon Redeeming, is *the Union of the two Natures, the Divine and Humane*. The deſigning indeed of this was an act of Wiſdom; but the accompliſhing it was an act of Power.

1. *There is in this Redeeming Perſon a Union of two Natures.* He is God and Man in one Perſon. *Heb.* 1. 8, 9. *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever: God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the Oil of Gladneſs*, &c. The Son is called *God*, having a *Throne for ever and ever*, and the Unction ſpeaks him *Man*: The Godhead cannot be Anointed, nor hath any fellows. Humanity and Divinity are aſcrib'd to him, *Rom.* 1. 3, 4. *He was of the Seed of* David *according to the Fleſh, and declared to be the Son of God, by his Reſurrection from the dead.* The Divinity and Humanity are both Prophetically joyn'd, *Zach.* 12. 10. *I will pour out my Spirit*; the pouring forth the Spirit is an Act only of Divine Grace and Power. *And they ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced*; the ſame Perſon pours forth the Spirit as God, and is pierced as Man. *The Word was made Fleſh*, *Joh.* 1. 14. Word from Eternity was made Fleſh in time, Word and Fleſh in one Perſon; a great God, and a little Infant.

2. *The Terms of this Union were infinitely diſtant.* What greater diſtance can there be than between the Deity and Humanity, between the Creator and a Creature? Can you imagine the diſtance between Eternity and Time, Infinite Power and Miſerable Infirmity, an Immortal Spirit and Dying Fleſh, the Higheſt Being and Nothing? yet theſe are eſpous'd. A God of unmixt Bleſſedneſs is linkt perſonally with a Man of perpetual Sorrows: Life uncapable to Die, joyn'd to a Body in that Oeconomy uncapable to live without dying firſt; Infinite Purity, and a reputed Sinner; Eternal Bleſſedneſs with *a Curſed Nature*; Almightineſs and Weakneſs, Omniſcience and Ignorance, Immutability and Changableneſs, Incomprehenſibleneſs and comprehenſibility; that which cannot be comprehended, and that which can be comprehended; that which is entirely Independent, and that which is totally Dependant; the Creator forming all things and the Creature made met together to a perſonal Union; *the Word made Fleſh* †, the Eternal Son, the *Seed of Abraham**. What more miraculous than for God to become Man, and Man to become God? That a Perſon poſſeſſed of all the perfections of the Godhead, ſhould inherit all the Imperfections of the Manhood in one Perſon,

† John 1. 14.
* Heb. 2. 16.

Perſon, Sin only excepted: A Holineſs uncapable of ſinning to be made Sin; *God bleſſed for ever*, taking the properties of Humane Nature, and Humane Nature admitted to a *Union* with the properties of the *Creator*: The *Fulneſs* of the Deity and the Emptineſs of Man united together *; not by a ſhining of the Deity upon the Humanity, as the light of the *Sun* upon the *Earth*, but by an inhabitation or indwelling of the Deity in the Humanity. Was there not need of an Infinite power to bring together Terms ſo far aſunder, to elevate the Humanity to be capable of, and diſpoſed for a conjunction with the Deity? If a clod of *Earth* ſhould be advanced to, and united with the Body of the *Sun*, ſuch an advance would evidence it ſelf to be a work of Almighty Power: The Clod hath nothing in its own nature to render it ſo glorious, no power to climb up to ſo high a dignity: How little would ſuch a Union be, to that we are ſpeaking of? Nothing leſs than an incomprehenſible Power could effect, what an Incomprehenſible Wiſdom did project in this affair.

* Coloſ. 2. 9.

3. Eſpecially *ſince the Union is ſo ſtrait*. 'Tis not ſuch a *Union* as is between a Man and his Houſe he dwells in, whence he goes out and to which he returns, without any alteration of himſelf or his Houſe; nor ſuch a *Union* as is between a Man and his Garment, which both communicate and receive warmth from one another; nor ſuch as is between an Artificer and his Inſtrument wherewith he works; nor ſuch a *Union* as one Friend hath with another: All theſe are diſtant things, not one in Nature, but have diſtinct ſubſiſtences. Two Friends, though united by love, are diſtinct perſons; a Man and his Cloaths, an Artificer and his Inſtruments, have diſtinct ſubſiſtences: But the Humanity of Chriſt hath no ſubſiſtence, but in the Perſon of Chriſt.

† The ſtraitneſs of this *Union* is expreſt, and may be ſomewhat conceiv'd, by the union of *Fire* with *Iron*; [Fire pierceth through all the parts of Iron, it unites it ſelf with every particle, beſtows a light, heat, purity upon all of it; you cannot diſtinguiſh the Iron from the Fire, or the Fire from the Iron, yet they are diſtinct Natures: So the *Deity* is united to the whole *Humanity*, ſeaſons it, and beſtows an excellency upon it, yet the Natures ſtill remain diſtinct. And as during that union of *Fire* with *Iron*, the Iron is uncapable of ruſt or blackneſs; ſo is the *Humanity* uncapable of Sin: And as the operation of Fire is attributed to the red-hot Iron, (as the Iron may be ſaid to heat, burn, and the Fire may be ſaid to cut and pierce) yet the imperfections of the Iron do not affect the Fire; ſo in this Myſtery, thoſe things which belong to the *Divinity* are aſcribed to the *Humanity*, and thoſe things which belong to the *Humanity* are aſcribed to the *Divinity*, in regard of the Perſon in whom thoſe Natures are united; yet the Imperfections of the *Humanity* do not hurt the *Divinity*.] The Divinity of Chriſt is as really united with the Humanity, as the *Soul* with the *Body*: The Perſon was one, though the Natures were two, ſo united, that the Sufferings of the Humane Nature were the Sufferings of that Perſon, and the dignity of the Divine was imputed to the Humane, by reaſon of that Unity of both in one Perſon: Hence the Blood of the Humane Nature is ſaid to be the *Blood of God* †. * All things aſcrib'd to the Son of God, may be aſcrib'd to this Man; and the things aſcrib'd to this Man, may be aſcrib'd to the Son of God, as this Man is the Son of God Eternal, Almighty: And it may be ſaid, *God ſuffered*, was *Crucified*, &c. for the Perſon of Chriſt is but *one*, moſt ſimple; the *Perſon* ſuffered, that was *God* and *Man* united, making One Perſon.

† Leſſius *de Perf. divin. lib.* 12. *cap.* 4. p. 104.

† Acts 20. 28.
* Leſſius p. 103, 104.

4. And though the Union be ſo ſtrait, *yet without confuſion of the Natures, or change of them into one another*. † The *two* Natures of Chriſt are not mixed, as Liquors that incorporate with one another when they are poured into a Veſſel; the *Divine Nature* is not turned into the *Humane*, nor the *Humane* into the *Divine*, one Nature doth not ſwallow up another and make a *third* Nature, diſtinct from each of them. The Deity is not turned into the Humanity, as *Air* (which is next to a Spirit) may be thickned and turned into *Water*, and Water may be rarifi'd into Air by the power of *Heat* boyling it. The *Deity* cannot be chang'd, becauſe the Nature of it is to be unchangeable: It would not be Deity, if it were Mortal and capable of Suffering. The *Humanity* is not chang'd into the *Deity*, for then Chriſt could not have been a Sufferer: If the *Humanity* had been ſwallowed up into the *Deity*, it had loſt its own diſtinct Nature and put on the Nature of the Deity, and conſequently been uncapable of Suffering: *Finite* can never by any mixture be chang'd into *Infinite*, nor *Infinite* into *Finite*.

† Leſſius, *ut antea*, p. 103, 104. Amyrald. Irenic. p. 284.

This Union in this regard may be reſembled to the Union of *Light* and *Air*, which are ſtrictly joyn'd; for the Light paſſes through all parts of the Air, but they are not confounded, but remain in their diſtinct Eſſences as before the Union, without the leaſt confuſion with one another. * The Divine Nature remains as it was before the Union, intire in it ſelf, only the Divine Perſon aſſumes another Nature to himſelf. The Humane Nature remains, as it would have done had it exiſted ſeparately from the Λόγος, except that then it would have had a proper ſubſiſtence by it ſelf, which now it borrows from its union with the Λόγος, or *Word*; but that doth not belong to the Conſtitution of its Nature.

*Amyrald. Irenic. p. 282.

Now let us *Conſider*, what a wonder of Power is all this: The knitting a Noble Soul to a Body of Clay was not ſo great an exploit of Almightineſs, as the eſpouſing Infinite and Finite together. Man is further diſtant from God, than Man from Nothing. What a wonder is it, that *two* Natures infinitely diſtant, ſhould be more intimately united than any thing in the World, and yet without any confuſion? That the ſame Perſon ſhould have both a Glory and a Grief; an infinite Joy in the Deity, and an unexpreſſible Sorrow in the Humanity? That a God upon a Throne ſhould be an Infant in a Cradle; the Thundering Creator be a weeping Babe, and a ſuffering Man, are ſuch expreſſions of mighty Power, as well as condeſcending Love, that they aſtoniſh Men upon Earth, and Angels in Heaven.

3. *Power was evident in the progreſs of his life.* In the Miracles he wrought; How often did he expel malicious and powerful Devils from their habitations; hurl them from their Thrones, and make them fall from Heaven *like Lightning*? How many Wonders were wrought by his bare Word, or a ſingle Touch? *Sight* reſtored to the Blind, and *Hearing* to the Deaf; *Palſie* Members reſtored to the exerciſe of their functions; a diſmiſs given to many deplorable Maladies, impure *Leproſies* chas'd from the Perſons they had infected, and *Bodies* beginning to putrifie rais'd from the Grave. But the mightieſt Argument of Power was his *Patience*. That he who was in his Divine Nature elevated above the World, ſhould ſo long continue upon a Dung-hill, endure the *contradiction of Sinners* againſt himſelf; be patiently ſubject to the Reproaches and Indignities of Men, without diſplaying that Juſtice which was eſſential to the Deity, and in eſpecial manner daily merited by their provoking Crimes. The Patience of Man under great Affronts, is a greater Argument of power, than the Brawnyneſs of his Arm: A Strength employ'd in the revenge of every Injury, ſignifies a greater infirmity in the Soul, than there can be ability in the Body.

4. *Divine Power was apparent in his Reſurrection.* The unlocking the Belly of the *Whale* for the deliverance of *Jonas*; the reſcue of *Daniel* from the Den of *Lions*; and the reſtraining the *Fire* from burning the *Three Children*, were ſignal declarations of his Power, and types of the Reſurrection of our Saviour. But what are thoſe to that which was repreſented by them? That was a power over Natural cauſes, a curbing of Beaſts, and reſtraining of Elements; But in the Reſurrection of Chriſt, God exercis'd a power over himſelf, and quencht the flames of his own *Wrath*, hotter than Millions of *Nebuchadnezzars* Furnaces; unlockt the Priſon doors, wherein the *Curſes* of the Law had lodg'd our Saviour, ſtronger than the Belly and Ribs of a *Leviathan*. In the Reſcue of *Daniel* and *Jonas*, God overpowered Beaſts; and in this tore up the ſtrength of the Old Serpent, and pluckt the Scepter from the hand of the Enemy of Mankind. The Work of *Reſurrection* indeed, conſidered in it ſelf, requires the efficacy of an Almighty Power: Neither Man nor Angel can create new diſpoſitions in a Dead Body, to render it capable of lodging a Spiritual Soul; nor can they reſtore a diſlodged Soul, by their own power, to ſuch a Body. The reſtoring a Dead Body to life requires an Infinite Power, as well as the Creation of the World: But there was in the Reſurrection of Chriſt ſomething more difficult than this; while he lay in the Grave he was under the *Curſe* of the Law, under the execution of that dreadful Sentence, *Thou ſhalt die the death*. His *Reſurrection* was not only the re-tying the Marriage knot between his Soul and Body, or the rouling the *Stone* from the Grave; but a taking of an infinite weight, the *Sin* of Mankind, which lay upon him: So vaſt a weight could not be removed without the ſtrength

of

of an Almighty Arm. 'Tis therefore aſcrib'd, not to an ordinary operation, but an operation with *Power* †, and ſuch a Power wherein the Glory of the Father did appear. *Rom.* 6. 4. *Rais'd up from the dead by the glory of the Father*, that is, the glorious Power of God. As the Eternal Generation is ſtupendous, ſo is his Reſurrection, which is called, a *new begetting* of him, *Acts* 13. 33. 'Tis a wonder of Power, that the Divine and Humane Nature ſhould be joyn'd; and no leſs wonder, that his Perſon ſhould ſurmount and riſe up from the Curſe of God, under which he lay. The *Apoſtle* therefore adds one expreſſion to another, and heaps up a variety, ſignifying thereby that one was not enough to repreſent it, *Eph.* 1. 19. *Exceeding greatneſs of power, and working of mighty power, which he wrought in Chriſt when he raiſed him from the dead.* It was an *hyperbole* of Power, the excellency of the Mightineſs of his Strength; the loftineſs of the expreſſions ſeems to come ſhort of the apprehenſion he had of it in his Soul. † Rom. 1. 4.

Secondly, This Power appears *in the Publication and Propagation of the Doctrine of Redemption.*

The Divine Power will appear, if you conſider,

1. The *Nature of the Doctrine.*
2. The *Inſtruments employed in it.*
3. The *Means they us'd to propagate it.*
4. The *Succeſs they had.*

I. The *Nature of the Doctrine.*

1. *It was contrary to the common received reaſon of the World.* The *Philoſophers*, the Maſters of Knowledge among the *Gentiles*, had Maxims of a different ſtamp from it. Though they agreed in the Being of a God, yet their Notions of his Nature were confus'd and embroil'd with many Errors; the Unity of God was not commonly aſſented unto: They had multiplied Deities according to the Fancies they had received from ſome of a more elevated Wit and refin'd Brain, than others. Though they had ſome notion of Mediators, yet they placed in thoſe Seats, their publick Benefactors; Men that had been uſeful to the World, or their particular Countreys, in imparting to them ſome profitable Invention. To diſcard thoſe, was to charge themſelves with Ingratitude to them, from whom they had received ſignal benefits, and to whoſe Mediation, Conduct, or Protection, they aſcrib'd all the Succeſs they had been bleſſed with in their ſeveral Provinces; and to charge themſelves with Folly, for rendring an Honour and Worſhip to them ſo long. Could the Doctrine of a Crucified Mediator, whom they had never ſeen, that had conquer'd no Countrey for them, never enlarg'd their Territories, brought to light no new profitable Invention for the Increaſe of their Earthly welfare, as the reſt had done, be thought ſufficient to balance ſo many of their reputed *Heroes*? How ignorant were they in the foundations of the True Religion? The belief of a Providence was ſtaggering; nor had they a true proſpect of the nature of Virtue and Vice: Yet they had a fond Opinion of the ſtrength of their own Reaſon, and the Maxims that had been handed down to them by their Predeceſſors, which *Paul* * entitles, a *Science falſly ſo called*, either meant of the *Philoſophers* or the *Gnoſticks*. They preſum'd that they were able to meaſure all things by their own Reaſon; whence, when the *Apoſtle* came to preach the Doctrine of the Goſpel at *Athens*, the great School of Reaſon in that Age, they gave him no better a Title than that of a *Babler*, *Acts* 17. 18. and *openly mocked him*, Verſe 32. a *Seed gatherer* *, one that hath no more brain or ſenſe, than a Fellow that gathers up Seeds that are ſpilt in a Market, or one that hath a vain and empty ſound without Senſe or Reaſon, like a fooliſh Mountebank; ſo ſlightly did thoſe Rationaliſts of the World think of the Wiſdom of Heaven. That the Son of God ſhould vail himſelf in a Mortal Body, and ſuffer a diſgraceful Death in it, were things above the ken of Reaſon. * 1 Tim. 6. 20. * Σπερμολόγος.

Beſides, the World had a general diſeſteem of the Religion of the *Jews*, and were prejudic'd againſt any thing that came from them. Whence the *Romans* that uſed to incorporate the gods of other Conquer'd Nations in their *Capitol*, never moved to have the God of *Iſrael* worſhiped among them. Again they might

might argue againſt it with much fleſhly Reaſon: Here is a *Crucified God* preached by a Company of Mean and Ignorant perſons; What Reaſon can we have to entertain this Doctrine, ſince the *Jews*, who (as they tell us) had the *Prophecies* of him, did not acknowledge him? Surely, had there been ſuch Predictions, they would not have Crucified, but Crowned their King, and expected from him the Conqueſt of the Earth under their Power? What reaſon have we to entertain him, whom his own Nation (among whom he lived, with whom he converſed) ſo unanimouſly, by the Vote of the Rulers as well as the Rout, rejected? It was impoſſible to conquer Minds poſſeſſed with ſo many Errors, and applauding themſelves in their own Reaſon, and to render them capable of receiving Revealed Truths without the influence of a Divine Power.

2. *It was contrary to the Cuſtoms of the World.* The ſtrength of Cuſtome in moſt Men ſurmounts the ſtrength of Reaſon, and Men commonly are ſo wedded to it, that they will be ſooner divorc'd from any thing, than the Modes and Patterns received from their Anceſtors. The endeavouring to change Cuſtomes of an antient ſtanding, hath begotten Tumults and furious Mutinies among Nations, though the change would have been much for their advantage.

This *Doctrine* ſtruck at the Root of the Religion of the World, and the Ceremonies wherein they had been educated from their Infancy, delivered to them from their Anceſtors, confirm'd by the cuſtomary Obſervance of many Ages, rooted in their Minds, and eſtabliſh'd by their Laws. *Acts* 18. 13. *This Fellow perſwadeth us to worſhip God contrary to the Law*, againſt Cuſtomes, to which they aſcrib'd the happineſs of their States, and the proſperity of their People; and would put in the place of this Religion they would aboliſh, a new one Inſtituted by a Man whom the *Jews* had condemn'd, and put to death upon a Croſs, as an Impoſtor, Blaſphemer, and Seditious perſon.

It was a *Doctrine* that would change the Cuſtomes of the *Jews*, who were intruſted with the *Oracles of God*. It would bury for ever their Ceremonial Rites, delivered to them by *Moſes* from that God, who had with a mighty hand brought them out of *Egypt*, conſecrated their Law with *Thunders* and *Lightnings* from Mount *Sinai*, at the time of its publication, backt it with ſevere Sanctions, confirm'd it by many Miracles, both in the *Wilderneſs* and their *Canaan*, and had continued it for ſo many *Hundred years*. They could not but remember how they had been ravaged by other Nations, and Judgments ſent upon them when they neglected and ſlighted it; and with what great ſucceſs they were follow'd when they valued and obſerved it; and how they had abhorred the Author of this new Religion, who had ſpoken ſlightly of their Traditions, till they put him to death with Infamy. Was it an eaſie matter to divorce them from that Worſhip, upon which were entail'd (as they imagin'd) their *Peace*, *Plenty*, and *Glory*, things of the deareſt regard with Mankind? The *Jews* were no leſs devoted to their *Ceremonial Tradititons*, than the *Heathen* were to their *Vain Superſtitions*.

This Doctrine of the *Goſpel* was of that nature, that the ſtate of Religion all over the Earth muſt be overturned by it; the Wiſdom of the *Greeks* muſt vail to it, the Idolatry of the People muſt ſtoop to it, and the prophane Cuſtoms of Men muſt moulder under the weight of it. Was it an eaſie matter for the Pride of Nature to deny a cuſtomary Wiſdom, to entertain a new Doctrine againſt the Authority of their Anceſtors; to inſcribe *Folly* upon that which hath made them admir'd by the reſt of the World? Nothing can be of greater eſteem with Men, than the Credit of their *Law-givers* and *Founders*, the Religion of their Fathers, and Proſperity of themſelves; hence the Minds of Men were ſharpned againſt it. The *Greeks*, the Wiſeſt Nation, ſlighted it as Fooliſh; the *Jews*, the Religious Nation, ſtumbled at it, as contrary to the received Interpretations of Antient Prophecies and carnal Conceits of an *Earthly Glory*. The dimmeſt Eye may behold the difficulty to change Cuſtome, a Second Nature: 'Tis as hard as to change a *Wolf* into a *Lamb*, to level a *Mountain*, ſtop the courſe of the *Sun*, or change the Inhabitants of *Africk* into the colour of *Europe*. *Cuſtome* dips Men in as durable a Dye, as *Nature*. The difficulties of carrying it on againſt the Divine Religion of the *Jew*, and rooted Cuſtoms of the *Gentiles*, were unconquerable by

by any but an Almighty Power. And in this the Power of God hath appeared wonderfully.

3. *It was contrary to the Senſuality of the World, and the Luſts of the Fleſh.* How much the *Gentiles* were over-grown with baſe and unworthy Luſts at the time of the Publication of the Goſpel, needs no other Memento than the *Apoſtles* Diſcourſe, *Rom.* 1. As there was no Error but prevail'd upon their Minds, ſo there was no brutiſh Affection but was wedded to their Hearts. The *Doctrine* propoſed to them was not eaſie; it flatter'd not the Senſe, but checked the Stream of Nature. It thundred down thoſe three great Engines whereby the Devil had ſubdued the World to himſelf, *the luſt of the Fleſh, the luſt of the Eye*, and *the pride of Life*. Not only the moſt ſordid Affections of the Fleſh, but the more refin'd Gratifications of the Mind: It ſtript Nature both of *Devil* and *Man*; of what was commonly eſteem'd great and virtuous. That which was the root of their Fame, and the ſatisfaction of their Ambition, was ſtruck at by this Ax of the Goſpel. The firſt Article of it ordered them to deny themſelves, not to preſume upon their own worth; to lay their Underſtandings and Wills at the foot of the Croſs, and reſign them up to one newly crucified at *Jeruſalem*: Honours and Wealth were to be deſpis'd, Fleſh to be tam'd, the Croſs to be born, Enemies to be loved, Revenge not to be ſatisfied, Blood to be ſpilt, and Torments to be endured for the Honour of One they never ſaw, nor ever before heard of; who was preached with the Circumſtances of a ſhameful Death, enough to affright them from the Entertainment: And the Report of a Reſurrection and glorious Aſcenſion were things never heard of by them before, and unknown in the World, that would not eaſily enter into the belief of Men: The Croſs, Diſgrace, Self-denial, were only diſcours'd of in order to the attainment of an inviſible World, and an unſeen reward which none of their Predeceſſors ever returned to acquaint them with; a patient death, contrary to the pride of Nature, was publiſht as the way to Happineſs and a bleſſed Immortality: The deareſt Luſts were to be pierced to death for the honour of this new Lord. Other Religions brought Wealth and Honour; this, ſtruck them off from ſuch expectations, and preſented them with no Promiſe of any thing in this Life, but a proſpect of Miſery: except thoſe inward Conſolations to which before they had been utter Strangers, and had never experimented. It made them to depend not upon themſelves, but upon the ſole Grace of God. It decried all natural, all moral Idolatry, things as dear to Men as the Apple of their Eies. It deſpoil'd them of whatſoever the Mind, Will, and Affections of Men, naturally lay claim to, and glory in. It pulled Self up by the Roots, unman'd carnal Man, and debas'd the Principle of Honour and Self-ſatisfaction, which the World counted at that time noble and brave. In a word, it took them off from themſelves, to act like Creatures of Gods framing; to know no more than he would admit them, and do no more than he did command them. How difficult muſt it needs be to reduce Men, that plac'd all their happineſs in the pleaſures of this Life, from their pompous Idolatry and brutiſh Affections, to this mortifying Religion? What might the World ſay? Here is a Doctrine will render us a company of puling Animals: Farewel Generoſity, Bravery, Senſe of Honour, Courage in enlarging the Bounds of our Countrey, for an ardent Charity to the bittereſt of our Enemies. Here's a Religion will ruſt our Swords, Canker our Arms, diſpirit what we have hitherto called Virtue, and annihilate what hath been eſteem'd worthy and comely among Mankind. Muſt we change Conqueſt for Suffering, the increaſe of our Reputation for Self-denial, the natural Sentiment of Self-preſervation for affecting a dreadful Death? How impoſſible was it that a Crucified Lord, and a Crucifying Doctrine, ſhould be received in the World without the mighty Operation of a Divine Power upon the Hearts of Men? And in this alſo the Almighty Power of God did notably ſhine forth.

II. Divine Power appear'd *in the inſtruments employ'd for the publiſhing and propagating the Goſpel.* Who were

1. *Mean and worthleſs in themſelves.* Not noble and dignified with an Earthly Grandeur, but of a low Condition, meanly bred: So far from any ſplendid Eſtates, that they poſſeſſed nothing but their Nets; without any Credit and Reputation

tion in the World; without Comlineſs and Strength; as unfit to ſubdue the World by Preaching, as an Army of Hares were to conquer it by War. Not learned Doctors bred up at the feet of the Famous *Rabbins* at *Jeruſalem*, whom *Paul* calls *the Princes of the World* *; nor nurs'd up in the School of *Athens*, under the *Philoſophers* and Orators of the time: Not the Wiſe-men of *Greece*, but the Fiſhermen of *Galilee*; naturally skill'd in no Language but their own, and no more exact in that than thoſe of the ſame Condition in any other Nation: Ignorant of every thing but the Language of their Lakes and their fiſhing Trade; except *Paul*, call'd ſometime after the reſt to that employment: And after the deſcent of the Spirit, they were ignorant and unlearned in every thing but the Doctrine they were commanded to publiſh; for the Council before whom they were ſummon'd, prov'd them to be ſo, which increaſed their wonder at them, *Acts* 4. 13. Had it been publiſht by a Voice from Heaven, That *Twelve poor men*, taken out of Boats and Creeks, without any help of Learning, ſhould conquer the world to the Croſs, it might have been thought an Illuſion againſt all the Reaſon of Men; yet we know it was undertaken and accompliſht by them. They publiſh't this Doctrine in *Jeruſalem*, and quickly ſpread it over the greateſt part of the World. Folly out-witted Wiſdom, and Weakneſs over-poured Strength. The Conqueſt of the *Eaſt* by *Alexander* was not ſo admirable as the Enterpriſe of theſe poor men. He attempted his Conqueſt with the hands of a warlike Nation, though indeed but a ſmall number of Thirty thouſand againſt Multitudes, many hundred thouſands of the Enemies; yet an Effeminate Enemy; a People inur'd to Slaughter and Victory attack'd great Numbers, but enfeebled by Luxury and Voluptuouſneſs. Beſides, he was bred up to ſuch Enterprizes, had a learned Education under the beſt Philoſopher, and a Military Education under the beſt Commander, and a natural Courage to animate him. Theſe Inſtruments had no ſuch advantage from Nature; the Heavenly Treaſure was placed in thoſe Earthen Veſſels, as *Gideons* Lamps in empty Pitchers, *Judges* 7. 16. that *the Excellency* or Hyperbole *of the Power might be of God*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 7. and the ſtrength of his Arm be diſplay'd in the infirmity of the Inſtruments. They were deſtitute of Earthly Wiſdom, and therefore deſpis'd by the *Jews*, and derided by the *Gentiles*; the Publiſhers were accounted Mad Men, and the Embracers Fools. Had they been Men of known natural Endowments, the Power of God had been vail'd under the Gifts of the Creature.

2. *Therefore a Divine Power ſuddenly ſpirited them, and fitted them for ſo great a Work.* Inſtead of Ignorance they had the knowledge of the Tongues; and they that were ſcarce well skill'd in their own Dialect, were inſtructed on the ſudden to ſpeak the moſt flouriſhing Languages of the World, and Diſcourſe to the People of ſeveral Nations, the *great things of God* †. Though they were not enricht with any Worldly wealth and *poſſeſſed nothing*, yet they were ſo ſuſtained that they wanted nothing in any place where they came, a Table was ſpread for them in the midſt of their bittereſt Enemies. Their *Fearfulneſs* was turn'd into *Courage*, and they that a few days before skulk'd in Corners for fear of the *Jews* *, ſpeak boldly in the *Name of that Jeſus*, whom they had ſeen put to death by the power of the Rulers and the Fury of the People: They reproach them with the Murder of their Maſter, and out-brave that great People in the midſt of their *Temple*, with the glory of that Perſon they had ſo lately *Crucified* *. *Peter* that was not long before qualm'd at the preſence of a Maid, was not daunted at the Preſence of the Council, that had their hands yet reeking with the Blood of his Maſter; but being filled with the *Holy Ghoſt*, ſeems to dare the Power of the *Prieſts* and *Jewiſh Governours*, and is as *confident* in the *Council Chamber*, as he had been *cowardly* in the *High Prieſts Hall* †, the efficacy of Grace triumphing over the Fearfulneſs of Nature. Whence ſhould this Ardor and Zeal, to propagate a Doctrine that had already born the Scars of the Peoples Fury be, but from a mighty Power, which changed thoſe *Hares* into *Lions*, and ſtript them of their natural Cowardize to cloath them with a Divine Courage; making them in a moment both Wiſe and Magnanimous, alienating them from any Conſultations with Fleſh and Blood? As ſoon as ever the *Holy Ghoſt* came upon them *as a mighty ruſhing Wind*, they move up and down for the Intereſt of God; as *Fiſh*, after a great Clap of Thunder, are rowz'd, and move more nimbly

on

* 1 Cor. 2. 8.

† Acts 2. 11.

* John 20. 19.

* Acts 2. 23. Acts. 3. 13.

† Acts 4. 9. &c.

on the top of the Water; therefore that which did ſo fit them for this undertaking is called by the title of *Power from on high*, Luke 24. 49.

III. The Divine Power appears *in the Means whereby it was propagated.*

1. *By Means different from the Methods of the World.* Not by force of Arms, as ſome Religions have taken root in the World. *Mahomets* Horſe hath trampled upon the Heads of Men, to imprint an *Alcoran* in their Brains, and robb'd Men of their Goods to plant their Religion. But the *Apoſtles* bore not this Doctrine through the World upon the points of their Swords; they preſented a *Bodily death*, where they would beſtow an *Immortal life*: They employ'd not Troops of Men in a warlike poſture, which had been poſſible for them after the *Goſpel* was once ſpread; they had no Ambition to ſubdue Men unto themſelves, but to God; they coveted not the Poſſeſſions of others; deſign'd not to enrich themſelves; invaded not the Rights of Princes, nor the Liberties and Properties of the People; They rifled them not of their Eſtates, nor ſcar'd them into this Religion by a fear of loſing their Worldly happineſs. The Arguments they uſed would naturally drive them from an entertainment of this Doctrine, rather than allure them to be Proſelytes to it: Their deſign was to change their Hearts, not their Government; to wean them from the love of the *World*, to a love of a *Redeemer*; to remove that which would ruine their Souls. It was not to enſlave them, but ranſom them; they had a *warfare*, but not with *Carnal weapons*, but ſuch as were *mighty through God for the pulling down of ſtrong holds*, 2 Cor. 10. 4. they uſed no weapons but the Doctrine they preach'd. Others that have not gained Conqueſts by the edge of the Sword and the Stratagems of War, have extended their Opinions to others by the ſtrength of Humane Reaſon, and the Inſinuations of Eloquence. But the *Apoſtles* had as little flouriſh in their Tongues, as edge upon their Swords: Their Preaching was *not with the enticing words of Mans Wiſdom* *; their Preſence was mean, and their Diſcourſes without varniſh; their Doctrine was plain, a *Crucified Chriſt*; a Doctrine unlac'd, ungarniſh'd, untoothſome to the World; but they had the *demonſtration of the Spirit*, and a *mighty Power* for their Companion in the work. The Doctrine they preached, *viz.* the *Death*, *Reſurrection*, and *Aſcenſion of Chriſt*, are called the *Powers*, not of this World, but of the *World to come* †. No leſs than a Supernatural Power could conduct them in this Attempt, with ſuch weak Methods in Humane appearance.

* 1 Cor. 2. 4.

† Heb. 6. 5.

2. *Againſt all the Force, Power, and Wit of the World.* The Diviſions in the *Eaſtern* Empire, and the feeble and conſuming State of the *Weſtern*, contributed to *Mahomets* ſucceſs *. But never was *Rome* in a more flouriſhing condition: *Learning*, *Eloquence*, *Wiſdom*, *Strength* were at the higheſt pitch: Never was there a more diligent Watch againſt any *Innovations*; never was that State governed by more ſevere and ſuſpitious Princes, than at the time when *Tiberius* and *Nero* held the Rains. No time ſeemed to be more unfit for the entrance of a *New Doctrine* than that Age, wherein it begun to be firſt publiſh'd; never did any Religion meet with that Oppoſition from Men. *Idolatry* hath been often ſetled without any Conteſt; but this hath ſuffered the ſame Fate with the Inſtitutor of it, and endured the *Contradictions of Sinners* againſt it ſelf: And thoſe that publiſh'd it, were not only without any worldly prop, but expos'd themſelves to the Hatred and Fury, to the Racks and Tortures of the ſtrongeſt Powers on Earth. It never ſet foot in any place, but the Countrey was in an *uproar* †; Swords were drawn to deſtroy it; Laws made to ſuppreſs it; Priſons provided for the Profeſſors of it; Fires kindled to conſume them, and Executioners had a perpetual employment to ſtifle the progreſs of it.

* Daillé, 15. *Serm. p.* 57.

† Acts 19. 28.

Rome in the Conqueſt of Countreys chang'd not the Religion, Rites, and Modes of their Worſhip: They alter'd their Civil Government, but left them to the liberty of their Religion, and many times joyned with them in the Worſhip of their Peculiar gods; and ſometime imitated them at *Rome*, inſtead of aboliſhing them in the Cities they had ſubdued. But all their *Councils* were aſſembled, and their Force was bandied *againſt the Lord and againſt his Chriſt*; and that City that kindly receiv'd all manner of *Superſtitions*, hated this Doctrine with an irreconcileable hatred.

It

It met with *Reproaches* from the Wiſe, and *Fury* from the Potentates; it was derided by the *one* as the greateſt Folly, and perſecuted by the *other* as contrary to God and Mankind; the *one* were afraid to loſe their Eſteems by the Doctrine, and the *other* to loſe their Authority by a *Sedition* they thought a change of Religion would introduce. The *Romans*, that had been Conquerors of the Earth, feared Inteſtine Commotions, and the falling aſunder the Links of their Empire: Scarce any of their firſt Emperors, but had their *Swords* dy'd Red in the Blood of the *Chriſtians*. The *Fleſh* with all its Luſts, the *World* with all its Flatteries, the *Stateſmen* with all their Craft, and the *Mighty* with all their Strength joyn'd together to extirpate it: Though many Members were taken off by the Fires, yet the *Church* not only lived, but flouriſh'd in the Furnace. Converts were made by the Death of *Martyrs*, and the Flames which conſumed their Bodies, were the occaſion of firing Mens hearts with a Zeal for the Profeſſion of it. Inſtead of being extinguiſh'd, the Doctrine ſhone more bright, and multiplied under the Sickles that were employed to cut it down: God ordered every circumſtance ſo, both in the Perſons that publiſh'd it, the Means whereby, and the Time when, that nothing but his Power might appear in it, without any thing to dim and darken it.

IV. The Divine Power was conſpicuous *in the great ſucceſs it had under all theſe difficulties*. Multitudes were propheſied of to embrace it; whence the Prophet *Iſaiah*, after the Prophecy of the Death of Chriſt, *Iſai.* 53. calls upon the Church to enlarge her Tents, and *lengthen out her Cords* to receive thoſe Multitudes of Children that ſhould call her Mother. *Iſai.* 54. 2, 3. for ſhe ſhould *break forth on the right hand and on the left, and her ſeed ſhould inherit the Gentiles*: The Idolaters and Perſecutors ſhould liſt their Names in the Muſter-Roll of the Church.

Preſently after the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt from Heaven upon the *Apoſtles*, you find the hearts of *Three thouſand melted* by a plain declaration of this Doctrine; who were a little before ſo far from having a favourable thought of it, that ſome of them at leaſt, if not all, had expreſt their Rage againſt it, in Voting for the Condemning and Crucifying the *Author of it* †: But in a moment they were ſo altered, that they breath out Affections inſtead of Fury; neither the reſpect they had to their Rulers, nor the honor they bore to their Prieſts; nor the deriſions of the People, nor the threatning of Puniſhment, could ſtop them from owning it in the face of multitudes of Diſcouragements. How wonderful is it that they ſhould ſo ſoon, and by ſuch ſmall means pay a reverence to the Servants, who had none for the Maſter? that they ſhould hear them with patience, without the ſame Clamor againſt them as againſt Chriſt, *Crucifie them, Crucifie them?* But, that their hearts ſhould ſo ſuddenly be enflam'd with Devotion to him dead, whom they ſo much abhorred when living. It had gained footing not in a corner of the World, but in the moſt famous Cities; in *Jeruſalem*, where Chriſt had been Crucified; in *Antioch*, where the Name of *Chriſtians* firſt began; in *Corinth*, a place of Ingenious Arts; and *Epheſus*, the Seat of a noted Idol. In leſs than *Twenty years* there was never a Province of the *Roman* Empire, and ſcarce any part of the known World but was ſtor'd with the Profeſſors of it. *Rome*, that was the *Metropolis* of the Idolatrous World, had multitudes of them ſprinkled in every corner, whoſe *Faith was ſpoken of throughout the World* *. The Court of *Nero*, that Monſter of Mankind, and the cruelleſt and ſordidſt Tyrant that ever breathed, was not empty of ſincere Votaries to it; there were *Saints in Cæſars houſe*, while *Paul* was under *Nero*'s Chain *: And it maintain'd its ſtanding, and flouriſh'd in ſpite of all the force of Hell 250 *years* before any Sovereign Prince eſpouſed it.

† Acts 2. 41, 42.

* Rom. 1. 8.

* Phil. 4.

The Potentates of the Earth had conquer'd the Lands of Men, and ſubdued their Bodies; theſe vanquiſht Hearts and Wills, and brought the moſt beloved Thoughts under the *Yoke of Chriſt*: So much did this Doctrine overmaſter the Conſciences of its Followers, that they rejoyced more at their Yoke, than others at their Liberty; and counted it more a glory to die for the honour of it, than to live in the profeſſion of it. Thus did our Saviour Reign and gather Subjects in the midſt of his Enemies; in which reſpect, in the firſt diſcovery of the *Goſpel*, he is deſcrib'd as a *Mighty Conqueror*, Rev. 6. 2. and ſtill conquering in the greatneſs of his ſtrength.

How

How great a Teſtimony of his Power is it, that from ſo ſmall a Cloud ſhould riſe ſo glorious a *Sun*, that ſhould chaſe before it the Darkneſs and Power of Hell; Triumph over the Idolatry, Superſtition and Prophaneſs of the World? This plain Doctrine vanquiſh'd the Obſtinacy of the *Jews*, baffled the Underſtanding of the *Greeks*, humbled the Pride of the Grandees, threw the *Devil* not only out of Bodies but Hearts; tore up the foundation of his Empire, and planted the *Croſs* where the Devil had for many Ages before eſtabliſhed his *Standard*. How much more than a humane Force is illuſtrious in this whole Conduct? Nothing in any Age of the World can parallel it; it being ſo much againſt the Methods of Nature, the Diſpoſition of the World, and (conſidering the Reſiſtance againſt it) ſeems to ſurmount even the work of Creation. Never were there in any Profeſſion ſuch multitudes, not of *Bedlams*, but Men of *Sobriety*, *Acuteneſs*, and *Wiſdom*, that expos'd themſelves to the fury of the Flames, and challenged Death in the moſt terrifying ſhapes for the Honour of this Doctrine.

To *conclude*, This ſhould be often meditated upon to form our Underſtandings to a full aſſent to the *Goſpel*, and the Truth of it; the want of which conſideration of *Power*, and the cuſtomarineſs of an Education in the outward Profeſſion of it, is the ground of all the *Prophaneneſs* under it, and *Apoſtacy* from it; the diſeſteem of the *Truth* it declares, and the neglect of the *Duties* it enjoyns. The more we have a proſpect and ſenſe of the Impreſſions of *Divine Power* in it, the more we ſhall have a Reverence of the *Divine Precepts*.

III. The third thing is, the Power of God appears *in the application of Redemption*, as well as in the Perſon Redeeming, and the publication and propagation of the Doctrine of Redemption.

1. *In the planting Grace.*
2. *In the pardon of Sin.*
3. *In the preſerving Grace.*

1. *In the planting Grace.* There is no Expreſſion which the Spirit of God hath thought fit in Scripture to reſemble this Work to, but argues the exerting of a *Divine Power* for the effecting of it. When it is expreſt by *Light*, it is as much as the Power of God in creating the *Sun*; when by *Regeneration*, 'tis as much as the Power of God in forming an *Infant*, and faſhioning all the parts of a Man; when 'tis called *Reſurrection*, 'tis as much as the rearing of the Body again out of putrified Matter; when it is called *Creation*, 'tis as much as erecting a comely *World* out of meer Nothing, or an inform and uncomely Maſs. As we could not contrive the *Death of Chriſt* for our Redemption, ſo we cannot form our *Souls* to the Acceptation of it; the Infinite efficacy of *Grace* is as neceſſary for the one, as the Infinite *Wiſdom of God* was for laying the Platform of the other.

'Tis by his Power we have whatſoever pertains to *Godlineſs* as well as *Life* *: He puts his Fingers upon the handle of the Lock, and turns the Heart to what Point he pleaſes; the Action whereby he performs this, is expreſt by a word of *Force* †. *He hath ſnatcht us from the power of Darkneſs*; the Action whereby it is perform'd manifeſts it. In reference to this Power it is called *Creation*, which is a production from Nothing; and *Converſion* is a production from ſomething more uncapable of that ſtate, than meer Nothing is of Being. There is a greater diſtance between the Terms of *Sin* and *Righteouſneſs*, *Corruption* and *Grace*, than between the Terms of *Nothing* and *Being*; The greater the diſtance is, the more Power is requir'd to the producing any thing. As in *Miracles*, the Miracle is the greater where the Change is the greater; and the Change is the greater where the Diſtance is the greater: As it was a more ſignal mark of Power to change a *dead Man to life*, than to change a *ſick Man to health*; ſo that the change here being from a Term of a greater diſtance, is more Powerful than the Creation of *Heaven* and *Earth*: Therefore whereas Creation is ſaid to be *wrought by his Hands*, and the Heavens *by his Fingers*, or *his Word*; Converſion is ſaid to be wrought by his *Arm* *: In Creation we had an *Earthly*; by Converſion a *Heavenly ſtate*: In Creation, *Nothing* is changed into *Something*; in Converſion, *Hell* is tranſform'd into *Heaven*, which is more than the turning *Nothing* into a glorious *Angel*.

* 2 Pet. 1. 3.

† Coloſſ. 1. 13. ἐῤῥύσατο.

* Iſa. 53. 1.

In that Thanksgiving of our Saviour for the *Revelation* of the knowledge of himself *to Babes*, the simple of the World, he gives the Title to his Father, of *Lord of Heaven and Earth* *, intimating it to be an act of his Creative and Preserving Power; that Power whereby he formed *Heaven* and *Earth*, hath preserved the standing, and governed the motions of all Creatures from the beginning of the World.

* Mat. 11. 5.

'Tis resembled to the most Magnificent Act of Divine Power that God ever put forth, *viz.* that *in the Resurrection of our Saviour* *, wherein there was more than an ordinary impression of Might. 'Tis not so small a Power as that whereby we speak with *Tongues*, or whereby Christ opened the Mouths of the *Dumb* and the Ears of the *Deaf*, or unloosed the cords of *Death* from a Person. 'Tis not that Power whereby our *Saviour* wrought those stupendous Miracles when he was in the World; but that Power which wrought a Miracle that amaz'd the most knowing Angels, as well as ignorant Man. The taking off the weight of the *Sin of the World* from our Saviour, and advancing him in his Humane Nature to rule over the *Angelical* Host, making him Head of *Principalities* and *Powers*; as much as to say, as great as all that Power which is display'd in our *Redemption*, from the first foundation to the last line in the superstructure. 'Tis therefore often set forth with an Emphasis, as *Excellency of Power* *, and *Glorious power* †. To *glory and vertue*, we Translate it; but it is διὰ δόξης, *Through glory and vertue*, that is, by a glorious vertue or strength.

* Eph. 1. 19.

* 2 Cor. 4. 7.
† 2 Pet. 1. 3.

2. *The Instrument whereby it is wrought, is dignified with the title of Power.* The *Gospel* which God useth in this great Affair, is called, *The power of God to salvation*, Rom. 1. 16. And the *Rod of his strength*, Psal. 110. 2. And the day of the Gospels appearance in the Heart, is emphatically called, *The day of Power*, verse 3. wherein he brings down strong Holds and towring Imaginations. * And therefore the Angel *Gabriel*, which Name signifies the *Power of God*, was always sent upon those Messages which concerned the Gospel, as to *Daniel*, *Zechary*, *Mary*. The *Gospel* is the Power of God in a way of Instrumentality, but the Almightiness of God is the Principal in a way of Efficiency. The *Gospel* is the Scepter of Christ; but the *Power* of Christ is the Mover of that Scepter. The *Gospel* is not as a bare Word spoken, and proposing the thing; but as back'd with a higher efficacy of Grace: As the *Sword* doth instrumentally cut, but the Arm that weilds it gives the blow, and makes it successful in the stroak. But this Gospel is the *Power of God*, because he edgeth this by his own Power, to surmount all resistance, and vanquish the greatest Malice of that Man he designs to work upon.

* Grotius *in* Luke 1. 19.

The Power of God is conspicuous,

1. *In turning the heart of Man against the strength of the Inclinations of Nature.* In the forming of Man of the Dust of the Ground, as the Matter contributed nothing to the Action whereby God formed it, so it had no Principle of resistance contrary to the design of God: But in Converting the Heart, there is not only wanting a principle of Assistance from him in this Work, but the whole strength of Corrupt Nature is alarm'd to combat against the Power of his Grace. When the *Gospel* is presented, the Understanding is not only ignorant of it, but the Will perverse against it; the one doth not relish, and the other doth not esteem the Excellency of the Object. The Carnal wisdom in the Mind contrives against it, and the rebellious Will puts the Orders in execution against the Counsel of God, which requires the invincible Power of God to enlighten the *dark Mind*, to know what it slights; and the *fierce Will*, to embrace what it loaths. The stream of Nature cannot be turned, but by a Power above Nature: 'Tis not all the Created Power in Heaven and Earth can change a *Swine* into a Man, or a venemous *Toad* into a holy and illustrious *Angel*. Yet this Work is not so great in some respect, as the stilling the fierceness of Nature, the silencing the swelling Waves in the heart, and the casting out those brutish Affections which are born and grow up with us. There would be no, or far less resistance in a meer Animal to be chang'd into a Creature of a higher rank, than there is in a Natural Man to be turned into a serious Christian.

There

There is in every Natural Man a ſtoutneſs of heart, a ſtiff-neck, unwillingneſs to good, forwardneſs to evil: Infinite Power quells this ſtoutneſs, demoliſheth theſe ſtrong Holds, turns this wild *Aſs* in her courſe, and routs thoſe Armies of turbulent Nature againſt the Grace of God. To ſtop the Floods of the *Sea* is not ſuch an act of Power, as to turn the Tyde of the Heart. This Power hath been employ'd upon every Convert in the World: What would you ſay then, if you knew all the Chanels in which it hath run ſince the days of *Adam?* If the alteration of one Rocky heart into a Pool of Water be a wonder of Power, what then is the calming and ſweetning by his Word thoſe *One hundred forty four thouſand* of the Tribes of *Iſrael*, and that numberleſs Multitude of all *Nations* and *People* that ſhall ſtand *before the Throne* *, which were all naturally ſo many raging *Seas?* Not one converted Soul from *Adam*, to the laſt that ſhall be in the End of the World, but is a Trophy of the Divine Conqueſt. None were pure Voluntiers, nor liſted themſelves in his Service, till he put forth his ſtrong Arm to draw them to him. No mans Underſtanding but was chain'd with *Darkneſs*, and fond of it; no Man but had *Corruption* in his Will, which was dearer to him than any thing elſe which could be propos'd for his true happineſs. Theſe things are moſt evident in Scripture and Experience. * Rev. 7. 9.

2. As 'Tis wrought againſt the Inclinations of Nature; *ſo againſt a multitude of Corrupt habits rooted in the ſouls of Men.* A Diſtemper in its firſt Invaſion may more eaſily be cured, than when it becomes Chronical and Inveterate. The ſtrength of a Diſeaſe, or the complication of many, magnifies the Power of the *Phyſician*, and efficacy of the Medicine that tames and expels it. What Power is that which hath made Men ſtoop, when *Natural habits* have been grown Giants by Cuſtom; when the *putrefaction of Nature* hath engendred a multitude of Worms; when the *Ulcers* are many and deplorable; when *many Cords*, wherewith God would have bound the *Sinner*, have been broken, and (like *Sampſon*) the wicked Heart hath gloried in its ſtrength and grown more proud, that it hath ſtood like a *ſtrong Fort* againſt thoſe Batteries, under which others have fallen flat?

Every *proud Thought*, every *evil Habit* captivated, ſerves for matter of Triumph to the *Power of God* †. What reſiſtance will a multitude of them make, when *one* of them is enough to hold the Faculty under its dominion, and intercept its Operations? So many *cuſtomary Habits*, ſo many *old Natures*, ſo many *different Strengths* added to Nature, every one of them ſtanding as a *Barricado* againſt the way of Grace; all the Errors the *Underſtanding* is poſſeſſed with, think the *Goſpel* folly; all the Vices the *Will* is filled with, count it the Fetter and Band. Nothing ſo contrary to Man, as to be thought a *Fool*; nothing ſo contrary to Man, as to enter into *ſlavery*. 'Tis no eaſie matter to plant the *Croſs* of Chriſt upon a Heart guided by many Principles againſt the Truth of it, and byaſt by a world of Wickedneſs againſt the Holineſs of it. *Nature* renders a man too feeble and indiſpos'd, and *Cuſtom* renders a Man more weak and unwilling to change his hue †. To diſpoſſeſs Man then of his Self-eſteem and Self-excellency; to make room for God in the Heart, where there was none but for *Sin*, as dear to him as himſelf; to hurle down the *pride of Nature*; to make *ſtout Imaginations* ſtoop to the *Croſs*; to make *deſires of Self-advancement* ſink under a *Zeal for the glorifying of God*, and an *over-ruling deſign for his Honour*, is not to be aſcrib'd to any, but an out-ſtretched Arm wielding the *Sword of the Spirit*. To have a heart full of the *Fear of God*, that was juſt before filled with a *Contempt* of him; to have a ſenſe of his *Power*, an eye to his *Glory*, admiring thoughts of his *Wiſdom*, a Faith in his *Truth*, that had lower thoughts of him and all his Perfections, than he had of a Creature: To have a *hatred* of his habitual Luſts, that had brought him in much ſenſitive Pleaſure; to *loath* them as much as he *loved* them; to *chetiſh* the Duties he hated; to live by *Faith* in, and *Obedience* to the Redeemer, who was before ſo heartily under the conduct of *Satan* and *Self*; to chaſe the acts of Sin from his *Members*, and the pleaſing thoughts of Sin from his *Mind*; to make a ſtout Wretch willingly fall down, crawl upon the ground, and adore that *Saviour* whom before he out-dar'd, is a Triumphant Act of Infinite Power that can *ſubdue all things to it ſelf*, and break thoſe multitude of Locks and Bolts that were upon us. † 2 Cor. 10. 5. † Jer. 13. 23.

3. *Against a multitude of Temptations and Interests.* The Temptations Rich Men have in this World are so numerous and strong, that the entrance of one of them into the *Kingdom of Heaven*, that is, the entertainment of the *Gospel* is made by our Saviour an *impossible thing with Men*, and procurable only by *the Power of God* *. The Divine Strength only can separate the World from the Heart, and the Heart from the World. There must be an Incomprehensible Power to chase away the *Devil*, that had so long, so strong a footing in the Affections, to render the Soyl he had sown with so many *Tares* and *Weeds*, capable of good Grain; to make Spirits, that had found the sweetness of Worldly prosperity, wrapt up all their Happiness in it, and not only bent down, but (as it were) buried in earth and mud, to be loosened from those beloved Cords, to disrelish the Earth for a *Crucified Christ*; I say, this must be the effect of an Almighty Power.

* Luke 18,24, 25, 26.

4. *The manner of Conversion* shews no less the Power of God. There is not only a resistible Force used in it, but an agreeable Sweetness. The Power is so Efficacious, that nothing can vanquish it; and so Sweet, that none did ever complain of it. The Almighty Vertue displays it self Invincibly, yet without Constraint,; compelling the *Will* without offering Violence to it, and making it cease to be Will: Not forcing it, but changing it; not dragging it, but drawing it; making it *will* where before it *nill'd*; removing the Corrupt Nature of the Will, without invading the Created Nature and Rights of the Faculty; not working in us against the Physical Nature of the Will, but working *to will* †. This work is therefore called *Creation*, *Resurrection*, to shew its Irresistible Power; 'Tis called *Illumination*, *Perswasion*, *Drawing*, to shew the suitableness of its Efficacy to the nature of the Humane Faculties: 'Tis a *drawing with Cords*, which testifies an Invincible strength; but, with *Cords of Love*, which testifies a Delightful conquest: 'Tis hard to determine whether it be more Powerful than Sweet, or more Sweet than Powerful. 'Tis no mean part of the Power of God to twist together *Victory* and *Pleasure*; to give a blow as delightful as strong, as pleasing to the Sufferer, as it is sharp to the Sinner.

† Phil. 2. 13.

II. The Power of God in the application of Redemption is evident *in the Pardoning a Sinner.*

1. *In the Pardon it self.* The Power of God is made the ground of his *Patience*; or the reason why he is Patient, is, because he would *shew his Power* *. 'Tis a part of Magnanimity to pass by Injuries: As weaker Stomacks cannot concoct the tougher Food, so weak minds cannot digest the harder Injuries; He that passes over a Wrong, is superior to his Adversary that does it. When God speaks of his own Name as *Merciful*, he speaks first of himself as *Powerful*, *Exod.* 34. 6. *The Lord, the Lord God*, that is, the Lord the *strong Lord*, *Jehovah*, the strong *Jehovah*. *Let the Power of my Lord be great*, saith *Moses*, when he prays for the Forgiveness of the People *: The word *Jigdal* is written with a great *Jod*, or a *Jod* above the other Letters. The Power of God in Pardoning is advanc'd beyond an ordinary strain, beyond the Creative strength. In the Creation, he had power over the Creatures; in *this*, power over himself: In Creation, not Himself, but the Creatures were the Object of his Power; in that no Attribute of his Nature could article against his Design. In the pardon of a Sinner, after many Overtures made to him and refus'd by him, God exerciseth a power over himself; for the Sinner hath dishonour'd God, provok'd his *Justice*, abus'd his *Goodness*, done injury to all those Attributes which are necessary to his relief: It was not so in Creation, nothing was uncapable of disobliging God from bringing it into being. The *Dust*, which was the Matter of *Adams* Body, needed only the extrinsick Power of God to form it into a *Man*, and inspire it with a *living Soul*: It had not render'd it self obnoxious to Divine Justice, nor was capable to excite any disputes between his Perfections. But after the entrance of *Sin*, and the merit of *Death*, thereby there was a resistance in Justice to the free Remission of Man: God was to exercise a Power over himself, to answer his *Justice*, and pardon the *Sinner*; as well as a power over the Creature, to reduce the Run-away and Rebel. Unless we have recourse to the Infiniteness of Gods Power, the infiniteness of our *Guilt* will weigh us down: We must consider not

* Rom. 9. 22.

* Num. 14. 17. גדל *be exalted.* Sept. ἰσχὺς *Strength*, &c.

only that we have a mighty Guilt to preſs us, but a mighty God to relieve us. In the ſame act of his being our Righteouſneſs, he is our Strength: *In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, Iſai. 45. 24.

2. *In the ſenſe of Pardon.* When the Soul hath been wounded with the ſenſe of ſin, and its Iniquities have ſtar'd it in the face; the raiſing the Soul from a deſpairing condition, and lifting it above thoſe Waters which terrified it; to caſt the light of Comfort, as well as the light of Grace, into a heart covered with more than an *Egyptian* Darkneſs, is an act of his Infinite and Creating Power; *Iſai* 57. 19. *I create the fruit of the lips, peace.* Men may wear out their Lips with numbring up the Promiſes of Grace and Arguments of Peace; but all will ſignifie no more without a Creative Power, than if all Men and Angels ſhould call to that White upon the Wall to ſhine as ſplendidly as the *Sun*. God only can create *Jeruſalem*, and every Child of *Jeruſalem a rejoycing* *. A Man is no more able to apply to himſelf any word of Comfort under the ſenſe of Sin, than he is able to Convert himſelf, and turn the propoſals of the Word into gracious Affections in his heart. To *reſtore the joy of Salvation*, is in *Davids* Judgment an act of Soveraign Power, equal to that of *creating a clean heart*, Pſal. 51. 10, 12. Alas, 'tis a ſtate like to that of *Death*; as Infinite Power can only raiſe from Natural death, ſo from a Spiritual death, alſo from a Comfortleſs death: *In his favour there is life*; in the want of his favour there is death. The Power of God hath ſo placed Light in the *Sun*, that all Creatures in the World, all the Torches upon Earth kindled together cannot make it Day, if that doth not riſe: ſo all the Angels in Heaven and Men upon Earth, are not competent Chirurgions for a *wounded Spirit*. The cure of our Spiritual Ulcers, and the pouring in Balm, is an Act of Soveraign Creative Power: 'Tis more viſible in ſilencing a Tempeſtuous Conſcience, than the Power of our Saviour was in the ſtilling the ſtormy *Winds* and the roaring *Waves*. As none but Infinite Power can remove the Guilt of Sin, ſo none but Infinite Power can remove the Deſpairing ſenſe of it.

* Iſa. 65. 18.

III. This Power is evident *in the preſerving Grace*. As the Providence of God is a manifeſtation of his Power in a continued Creation; ſo the *preſervation* of *Grace*, is a manifeſtation of his Power in a continued Regeneration. To keep a Nation under the Yoke, is an act of the ſame Power that ſubdu'd it. 'Tis this that *ſtrengthens Men in ſuffering* againſt the Fury of Hell †; 'tis this that keeps them from falling againſt the *force of Hell*, the *Fathers hand*, *John* 10. 29. His *ſtrength* abates and moderates the violence of Temptations; his *Staff* ſuſtains his People under them; his *Might* defeats the power of *Satan*, and bruiſeth him under a Believers feet. The Counterworkings of Indwelling Corruption; the reluctances of the Fleſh againſt the breathings of the Spirit; the fallacy of the Senſes and the rovings of the Mind, have ability quickly to ſtifle and extinguiſh Grace, if it were not maintained by that Powerful blaſt that firſt inbreathed it. No leſs Power is ſeen in *perfecting* it, than was in planting it ‡; no leſs in fulfilling the work of Faith, than in ingrafting the *Word of Faith*, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 11.

† Coloſ. 1. 11.

‡ 2 Pet. 1. 3.

The *Apoſtle* well underſtood the Neceſſity and Efficacy of it in the preſervation of *Faith*, as well as in the firſt infuſion, when he expreſſes himſelf in thoſe terms of a Greatneſs or Hyperbole of Power, his *Mighty Power*, or the *Power of his Might*, Epheſians 1. 19. The Salvation he beſtows, and the Strength whereby he effects it, are joyned together in the *Prophets* Song, *Iſai.* 12. 2. *The Lord is my ſtrength and my ſalvation*: And indeed, God doth more magnifie his Power in continuing a Believer in the World, a weak and half-rigg'd Veſſel, in the midſt of ſo many Sands whereon it might ſplit; ſo many Rocks whereon it might daſh; ſo many Corruptions within, and ſo many Temptations without; than if he did immediately tranſport him into Heaven, and cloth him with a perfectly Sanctified Nature.

To *Conclude*: What is there then in the World which is deſtitute of Notices of Divine Power? Every Creature affords us the Leſſon, all acts of Divine Government are the marks of it. Look into the Word, and the manner of its propagation inſtructs

us

us in it; your *changed Natures*, your *pardoned Guilt*, your *shining Comfort*, your *quell'd Corruptions*, the standing of your *staggering Graces*, are sufficient to preserve a sense, and prevent a forgetfulness of this great Attribute, so necessary for your support, and conducing so much to your comfort.

Uses.

I. *Of Information and Instruction.*

1. If Incomprehensible and Infinite Power belongs to the Nature of God, *then Jesus Christ hath a Divine Nature, because the Acts of Power proper to God are ascribed to him.* This perfection of *Omnipotence* doth unquestionably pertain to the Deity, and is an incommunicable Property, and the same with the Essence of God: He therefore to whom this Attribute is ascribed, is essentially God.

This is challenged by Christ in conjunction with Eternity; *Revel.* 1. 8. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.* This the Lord Christ speaks of himself. He who was equal with God, proclaims himself by the Essential Title of the Godhead, part of which he repeats again, *verse* 11. And this is the Person which *walks in the midst of the seven golden Candlesticks*; the Person that *was dead and now lives*, vers. 17, 18. which cannot possibly be meant of the *Father*, the First Person, who can never come under that denomination of *having been dead.* Being therefore adorn'd with the same Title, he hath the same Deity; and though his *Omnipotence* be only positively asserted, *ver.* 8. yet his *Eternity* being asserted, *ver.* 11, 17. it inferreth his *Immense Power*; for he that is Eternal without limits of Time, must needs be conceived Powerful, without any dash of Infirmity.

Again, when He is said to be *a Child born* and *a Son given*, in the same breath he is called the *Mighty God**. 'Tis introduc'd as a ground of Comfort to the Church, to preserve their Hopes in the accomplishment of the Promises made to them before. They should not imagine him to have only the Infirmity of a Man, though he was vail'd in the appearance of a Man. No, they should look through the disguise of his *Flesh*, to the Might of his *Godhead.* The Attribute of *Mighty* is added to the Title *GOD*, because the consideration of Power is most capable to sustain the drooping Church in such a condition, and to prop up her hopes. 'Tis upon this account he saith of himself, that *whatsoever things the Father doth, those also doth the Son likewise*, John 5. 19. In creation of Heaven, Earth, Sea, and the preservation of all Creatures, the Son works with the same Will, Wisdom, Vertue, Power, as the Father works: Not as two may concur in an Action in a different manner; as an Agent and an Instrument, a Carpenter and his Tools; but in the same manner of Operation, ὁμοίως, which we Translate *Likeness*, which doth not express so well the Emphasis of the word. There is no diversity of Action between Us; what the Father doth, that I do by the same Power, with the same Easiness in every respect; there is the same Creative, Productive, Conservative Power in both of us; and that not in one work that is done *ad extra*, but in All, in whatsoever the Father doth. *In the same manner*; not by a delegated, but Natural and Essential Power, by one undivided operation and manner of working.

* Isai. 9. 6.

1. *The Creation, which is a work of Omnipotence, is more than once ascrib'd to him.* This he doth own himself; the Creation of the Earth, and of Man upon it; the stretching out the Heavens by his Hands, and the forming of *all the Host of them by his Command*, Isai. 45. 12. He is not only the Creator of *Israel*, the Church, *verse* 12. but of the whole World, and every Creature on the face of the Earth, and in the Glories of the Heavens; which is repeated also *verse* 18. where in this act of Creation he is called *God* himself, and speaks of himself in the Term *Jehovah*; and swears by himself, *ver.* 23. What doth he swear? *That unto him every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear.* Is this Christ? Yes, if the *Apostle* may be believed, who applies it to him, *Rom.* 14. 11. to prove the appearance of all Men before the Judgment Seat of Christ, whom the *Prophet* calls, *verse* 15. a

God that hides himself; and so he was a hidden God when obscur'd in our fleshly Infirmities. He was in conjunction with the Father when the *Sea* receiv'd his Decree, and the *foundations of the Earth* were appointed; not as a Spectator, but as an Artificer, for so the word in *Prov.*8.30.signifies, *As one brought up with him*; it signifies also, *A cunning workman* *. He was the *East*, or the *Sun* from whence sprang all the light of Life and Being to the Creature; so the word קדם *verse* 22. which is translated, *Before his works of old*, is rendred by some, and signifies the *East* as well as *Before*: But if it notes only his existence before, 'tis enough to prove his Deity. * Cant. 7. 1.

The *Scripture* doth not only allow him an existence before the World, but exalts him as the cause of the World: A thing may precede another that is not the cause of that which follows; a precedency in Age doth not entitle one Brother or thing the cause of another: But our *Saviour* is not only ancienter then the World, but is the Creator of the World, *Heb.*1.10,11. *Who laid the foundations of the Earth, and the Heavens are the works of his hands.* So great an Elogy cannot be given to one destitute of *Omnipotence*. Since the distance between *Being* and *not Being* is so vast a Gulf that cannot be surmounted and stept over, but by an Infinite Power: He is *the First* and *the Last*, that called the *Generations from the beginning* *, and had an Almighty voice to call them out of Nothing. In which regard he is called, *The everlasting Father*, Isai. 9.6. as being the Efficient of Creation; as God is called *the Father of the Rain*, or as *Father* is taken for the Inventor of an Art; as *Jubal*, the first Framer and Inventor of Musick, is called, The *Father of such as handle the Harp*, Gen.4.21. And that Person is said to *make the Sea, and form the dry Land by his hands*, Psal.95.5,6. against whom we are exhorted not to *harden our hearts*, ver. 8. which is applied to *Christ* by his *Apostle*, *Heb.* 3.8. in the 15 *verse* he is called, *A great King*, and *a great God our Maker*. The places wherein the Creation is attributed to *Christ*, those that are the Antagonists of his *Deity*, would evade by understanding them of the New or Evangelical, not of the first, old and material Creation: But what appearance is there for such a sense? Consider, * Isa. 41. 4

1. That of *Heb.* 1.10, 11. 'tis spoken of that *Earth* and *Heavens* which were in the *beginning* of Time; 'tis that Earth that *shall perish*, that Heaven that shall be *folded up*, that Creation that shall *grow old* towards a decay; that is, only the visible and material Creation: The Spiritual shall endure for ever; it grows not old to decay, but grows up to a perfection; it sprouts up to its happiness, not to its detriment. The same Person creates that shall destroy, and the same World is created by him that shall be destroyed by him, as well as it subsisted by virtue of his *Omnipotency*.

2. Can that also, *Heb.* 1. 2. *By whom also he made the worlds*, speaking of *Christ*, bear the same plea? It was the same Person by whom *God spake to us in these last times*, the same Person which he hath constituted *Heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds*: And the Particle *Also*, intimates it to be a distinct act from his Speaking or Prophetical Office, whereby he restored and new created the World, as well as the rightful Foundation God had to make him *Heir of all things*. It refers likewise, not to the time of Christ's speaking upon earth; but to something past, and something different from the publication of the Gospel: 'Tis not, *doth make*, which had been more likely if the *Apostle* had meant only the New Creation; but *hath made* †, referring to time long since past, something done before his appearance upon Earth as a Prophet. *By whom also he made the Worlds*, or *Ages*, all things subjected to, or measured by Time; which must be meant according to the *Jewish* Phrase of this material visible World: So they entitle God in their Liturgy, the *Lord of Ages*, that is, the Lord of the World, and all Ages and Revolutions of the World, from the Creation to the last period of Time. If any thing were in Being before this Frame of *Heaven* and *Earth*, and within the compass of Time, it receiv'd Being and Duration from the Son of God. The *Apostle* would give an Argument to prove the equity of making him Heir of all things *as Mediator*, because he was the Framer of all things *as God*. He may well be the Heir or Lord of *Angels* as well as *Men*, who created Angels as well as Men: All things were justly under his Power as *Mediator*, since they deriv'd their Existence from him as *Creator*. † Emphat.

3. But Thirdly, What evasion can there be for that, *Colos.* 1.16. *By him were all things created that are in Heaven and that are in Earth, whether they be Thrones,*

or

or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers, all things were created by him and for him. He is ſaid to be the Creator of Material and Viſible things, as well as Spiritual and Inviſible; of things in *Heaven*, which needed no reſtoration, as well as things on *Earth*, which were polluted by Sin, and ſtood in need of a new Creation. How could the *Angels* belong to the new Creation, who had never put off the honour and purity of the firſt? Since they never diveſted themſelves of their original Integrity, they could not be reinveſted with that which they never loſt. Beſides, ſuppoſe the holy *Angels* be one way or other reduc'd as parts of the new Creation, as being under the Mediatory Government of our *Saviour*, as their Head, and in regard of their confirmation by him in that happy ſtate. In what manner ſhall the *Devils* be rank'd among new Creatures? They are called *Principalities* and *Powers* as well as the *Angels*, and may come under the Title of *Things inviſible*: That they are called *Principalities* and *Powers* is plain, *Epheſ.* 6. 12. *For we wreſtle not againſt Fleſh and Blood, but againſt Principalities and Powers, the Rulers of the darkneſs of this world; againſt Spiritual wickedneſs in high places.* Good Angels are not there meant, for what War have Believers with them, or they with Believers? They are the Guardians of them, ſince *Chriſt* hath taken away the Enmity between our Lord and theirs, in whoſe quarrel they were engag'd againſt us: And ſince the *Apoſtle* ſpeaking of *All things created by him*, expreſſeth it ſo, that it cannot be conceived he ſhould except any thing; how come the finally Impenitent and Unbelievers, which are *things in earth*, and viſible, to be liſted here in the Roll of *New Creatures*? None of theſe can be called *New Creatures*, becauſe they are ſubjected to the Government of Chriſt; no more than the *Earth* and *Sea*, and the Animals in it, are made new Creatures, becauſe they are all under the Dominion of Chriſt and his Providential Government. Again, the *Apoſtle* manifeſtly makes the Creation he here ſpeaks of, to be the Material, and not the New Creation; for that he ſpeaks of afterwards as a diſtinct act of our Lord Jeſus under the Title of *Reconciliation*, Coloſſ. 1. 20, 21. which was the reſtoration of the World, and the ſatisfying for that *Curſe* that lay upon it. His intent is here to ſhew, that not an Angel in Heaven, nor a Creature upon Earth, but was placed in their ſeveral degrees of Excellency by the Power of the Son of God, who after that act of Creation and the entrance of Sin, was the *Reconciler of the World through the Blood of his Croſs.*

4. There is another place as clear, *John* 1. 3. *All things were made by him, and without him was nothing made that was made.* The Creation is here aſcrib'd to him; Affirmatively, *All things were made by him*; Negatively, *There was nothing made without him:* and the Words are Emphatical, οὐδὲ ἕν, *Not one thing*: excepting nothing; including inviſible things, as well as things conſpicuous to ſenſe only, mentioned in the ſtory of the Creation, *Gen.* 1. not only the intire Maſs, but the diſtinct Parcels, the ſmalleſt Worm and the higheſt Angel, owe their Original to him. And if not *one* thing, then the Matter was not created to his hands; and his Work conſiſted not only in the forming things from that Matter: If that *one* thing of Matter were excepted, a chief thing were excepted; if *not one thing* were excepted, then he created Something of Nothing, becauſe Spirits, as *Angels* and *Souls*, are not made of any pre-exiſting or fore-created Matter How could the *Evangeliſt* phraſe it more extenſively and comprehenſively? This is a Character of *Omnipotency*; to create the World, and every thing in it, of Nothing, requires an Infinite Virtue and Power. If all things were created by him, they were not created by him *as Man*, becauſe Himſelf, as Man, was not in Being before the Creation: If all things were made by him, then Himſelf was not made, Himſelf was not created; and to be exiſtent without being made, without being created, is to be unboundedly Omnipotent. And if we underſtand it of the New Creation, as they do that will not allow him an exiſtence in his *Deity* before his *Humanity*, it cannot be true of that; for how could he regenerate *Abraham*, make *Simeon* and *Anna* new Creatures, who *waited for the ſalvation of Iſrael*, and from *John Baptiſt*, and fill him with the *Holy Ghoſt*, even *from the womb** (who belong'd to the new Creation, and was to *prepare the way*) if *Chriſt* had not a Being before him? The *Evangeliſt* alludes to, and explains the Hiſtory of the Creation in the beginning, and acquaints us what was meant by *God ſaid*, ſo often, *viz. the Eternal Word*,

* Luke 1. 15.

and

and describes him in his Creative Power, manifested in the framing the World, before he describes him in his Incarnation, when he came to lay the Foundation of the restoration of the World, *John* 1. 14. *The Word was made flesh*, this Word who was *with God*, *who was God*, *who made all things*, and gave Being to the most glorious Angels and the meanest Creature without exception; this *Word*, in time, *was made flesh*.

5. The *Creation* of things mentioned in these *Scriptures* cannot be attributed to him as an Instrument. As if when it is said, *God created all things by him*, and *by him made the Worlds*, we were to understand the Father to be the Agent, and the Son to be a Tool in his Fathers hand, as an Ax in the hand of a Carpenter, or a File in the hand of a Smith, or a Servant acting by Command as the Organ of his Master. The Preposition *Per*, or διὰ, doth not alway signifie an Instrumental cause: When it is said, that the *Apostle* gave the *Thessalonians* a Command *by Jesus Christ*, 1 *Thess.* 4. 2. was Christ the Instrument, and not the Lord of that Command the *Apostle* gave? The immediate operation of Christ dwelling in the *Apostles*, was that whereby they gave the Commands to their Disciples. When we are called *by God*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 9. Is he the Instrumental or Principal cause of our effectual Vocation? And can the Will of God be the Instrument of putting *Paul* into the Apostleship, or the Sovereign cause of investing him with that Dignity, when he calls himself an *Apostle by the will of God*? *Ephes.* 1. 3. And when all things are said to be *through* God, as well as *of* him, must he be counted the Instrumental cause of his own Creation, Counsels, and Judgments *? When we *mortifie the deeds of the Body through the Spirit*, *Rom.* 8. 13. or keep the *Treasure of the Word by the Holy Ghost*, 2 *Tim* 1. 14. Is the Holy Ghost of no more dignity in such acts than Instrument? Nor doth the gaining a thing *by* a Person make him a meer Instrument or Inferior; as when a Man gains his Right in a way of Justice against his Adversary by the Magistrate, is the Judge inferior to to the Suppliant? If the *Word* were an Instrument in Creation, it must be a created or uncreated Instrument: If Created, it could not be true what the *Evangelist* saith, that *All things were made by him*, since himself the Principal thing could not be made by himself; if Uncreated, he was God, and so acted by a Divine Omnipotency, which surmounts an Instrumental cause. But indeed, an Instrument is impossible in Creation, since it is wrought only by an act of the Divine Will. Do we need any Organ to an act of Volition? the efficacious Will of the Creator is the cause of the Original of the Body of the World, with its particular Members and exact Harmony: It was form'd *by a Word* and establish'd *by a Command* †; the beauty of the Creation stood up at the Precept of his Will. Nor was the *Son* a Partial cause; as when many are said to build a House, one works one part, and another frames another part: God created all things by the immediate operation of the Son, in the unity of Essence, Goodness, Power, Wisdom; not an extrinsick, but a connatural Instrument. As the *Sun* doth illustrate all things by his Light, and quickens all things by his Heat; so God created the Worlds *by Christ*, as he was the *brightness* or splendor *of his Glory*, the *exact image of his Person*; which follows the declaration of his making the Worlds *by* him *, to shew, that he acted not as an Instrument, but one in Essential conjunction with him; as Light and brightness with the *Sun*. But suppose he did make the World as a kind of Instrument, He was then before the World, not bounded by Time; and Eternity cannot well be conceiv'd belonging to a Being without Omnipotency: He is the *End* as well as the Author of the Creatures*; not only the Principle which gave them Being, but the Sea into whose glory they run and dissolve themselves, which consists not with the meanness of an Instrument.

* Rom. 11. 36.

† Psal. 33. 9.

* Heb. 1. 3. 4.

* Colos. 1. 16.

2. As Creation, so *Preservation is ascribed to him*, Colos. 1. 17. *By him all things consist*. As he preceded all things in his Eternity, so he establishes all things by his Omnipotency, and fixes them in their several Centers, that they sink not into that nothing from whence he fetched them. By him they flourish in their several Beings, and observe the Laws and Orders he first appointed: That Power of his which extracted them from insensible Nothing, upholds them in their several Beings with the same facility as he spake Being into them, even *by the word of his Power* *, and by one Creative continued Voice called all Generations from

* Heb. 1. 3.

the beginning to the Period of the World *, and causes them to flourish in their several seasons. 'Tis *by him Kings Reign, and Princes Decree justice*, and all things are confin'd within the limits of Government. All which are Acts of an Infinite Power.

*Isai. 41. 4.

3. *Resurrection is also ascrib'd to him.* The Body crumbled to Dust, and that Dust blown to several quarters of the World, cannot be gathered in its distinct parts, and new formed for the entertainment of the Soul, without the Strength of an Infinite Arm. This he will do and more; change the vileness of an Earthly Body into the glory of an Heavenly one; a Dusty Flesh into a Spiritual Body, which is an argument of a Power Invincible, to which all things cannot but stoop; for it is by such an operation, which testifies an ability *to subdue all things to himself* †; especially when he works it with the same ease as he did the Creation, by the power of his Voice. *John* 5. 28. *All that are in the Graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth*: Speaking them into a restored life from insensible Dust, as he did into Being from an empty Nothing. The greatest acts of Power are own'd to belong to Creation, Preservation, Resurrection: *Omnipotence* therefore is his Right; and therefore a Deity cannot be denied to him that inherits a Perfection essential to none but God, and impossible to be intrusted in, or managed by the hands of any Creatures.

† Phil. 3. 21.

And this is no mean comfort to those that believe in him: He is, in regard of his Power, *the Horn of salvation*; so *Zachariah* sings of him, *Luke* 1. 69. Nor could there be any more *Mighty* found out upon whom God could have *laid our help* *. No reason therefore to doubt his ability to save to the utmost, who hath the Power of *Creation*, *Preservation*, and *Resurrection* in his hands. His Promises must be accomplished, since nothing can resist him: He hath Power to fulfil his Word and bring all thing to a final issue, because he is *Almighty*; by his Outstretched Arm in the Deliverance of his *Israel* from *Egypt*, (for it was his Arm 1 *Cor.* 10.) he shewed that he was able to deliver us from Spiritual *Egypt*. The charge of Mediator to expiate Sin, vanquish Hell, form a Church, conduct and perfect it, are not to be effected by a person of less ability than Infinite. Let this *Almightiness* of his be the Bottom, wherein to cast and fix the Anchor of our Hopes.

*Psal. 89. 19.

2. Information. Hence may be inferred *the Deity of the Holy Ghost*. Works of Omnipotency are ascrib'd to the *Spirit of God*: By the motion of the Wings of this Spirit, as a Bird over her Eggs, was that rude and unshapen Mass hatcht into a comly *World* *. The *Stars*, or perhaps the *Angels*, are meant by the *garnishing of the Heavens* in the *Verse before the Text*, were brought forth in their comliness and dignity, as the ornaments of the upper World, by this Spirit; *By his Spirit he hath garnished the Heavens.* To this Spirit *Job* ascribes the formation both of the Body and Soul under the Title of *Almighty*, *Job* 33. 4. *The Spirit of God hath made, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. Resurrection*, another work of Omnipotency is attributed to him, *Rom.* 8. 11. The *Conception* of our Saviour in the Womb; the *Miracles* that he wrought, were by the power of the *Spirit* in him. *Power* is a Title belonging to him, and sometimes both are put together, 1 *Thess.* 1. 5, and other places. And that great Power of changing the Heart, and sanctifying a polluted Nature, a work greater than Creation, is frequently acknowledged in the Scripture to be the peculiar act of the *Holy Ghost*. The *Father*, *Son*, *Spirit*, are one Principle in Creation, Resurrection, and all the Works of Omnipotence.

* Gen. 1. 2. *So the word* Moved *properly signifies.*

3. Inference from the Doctrine. *The Blessedness of God is hence evidenc'd.* If God be Almighty, he can want nothing; all *want* speaks Weakness. If he doth what he will, he he cannot be miserable; all *Misery* consists in those things which happen contrary to our Will. There is nothing can hinder his Happiness, because nothing can resist his Power. Since he is *Omnipotent* nothing can hurt him, nothing can strip him of what he hath, of what he is †. If he can do whatsoever he will, he cannot want any thing that he wills: He is as happy, as great, as glorious, as he will; for he hath a perfect liberty of Will to will, and a perfect Power to attain what he will; His Will cannot be restrained, nor his Power resisted. It would be a defect in Blessedness, to Will what he were not able to do: Power is

† Sabunde, *Tit.* 39.

is the result of a want of Power, with a presence of Will. * If he could Will any thing which he could not effect, he would be miserable, and no longer God: He can do whatsoever he pleases, and therefore can want nothing that pleases him. He cannot be happy, the original of whose Happiness is not in himself: Nothing can be infinitely happy, that is limited and bounded. * Pont *Part* 6. *med.* 16. *p.* 531.

4. *Hence is a ground for the Immutability of God.* As he is uncapable of changing his Resolves, because of his Infinite Wisdom; so he is uncapable of being forced to any Change, because of his Infinite Power. Being *Almighty*, He can be no more chang'd from Power to Weakness; than being *All-wise*, He can be chang'd from Wisdom to Folly; or being *Omniscient*, from Knowledge to Ignorance. He cannot be alter'd in his Purposes, because of his *Wisdom*, nor in the manner and method of his Actions, because of his *Infinite strength*. Men indeed, when their Designs are laid deepest, and their Purposes stand firmest, yet are forced to stand still, or change the manner of the execution of their Resolves, by reason of some outward Accidents that obstruct them in their course; for having not Wisdom to foresee future hindrances, they have not power to prevent them, or strength to remove them, when they unexpectedly interpose themselves between their desire and performance: But no created Power has strength enough to be a bar against God. By the same act of his Will that he resolves a thing, He can puff away any Impediments that seem to rise up against him. He that wants no Means to effect his purposes, cannot be check'd by any thing that riseth up to stand in his way: *Heaven, Earth, Sea*, the deepest places, are too weak to resist his Will †. The Purity of the *Angels* will not, and the *Devils* Malice cannot frustrate his Will; the one voluntarily obeys the beck of his hand, and the other are vanquisht by the power of it. What can make him change his Purposes, who (if he please) can dash the *Earth* against the *Heavens* in the twinkling of an Eye, untying the World from its Center, clap the *Stars* and *Elements* together into one Mass, and blow the whole Creation of *Men* and *Devils* into Nothing. Because he is Almighty, therefore he is Immutable. † Psal. 135. 6.

5. Hence is inferred *the Providence of God, and his Government of the World.* His *Power* as well as his *Wisdom* gives him a right to Govern: Nothing can equal him, therefore nothing can share the Command with him; since All things are his Works, 'tis fittest they should be under His Order: He that frames a work, is fittest to guide and govern it. God hath the most Right to Govern, because he hath Knowledge to direct his Power, and Power to execute the results of his Wisdom: He knows what is convenient to order, and hath Strength to effect what he orders. As his Power would be oppressive without *Goodness* and *Wisdom*; so his Goodness and Wisdom would be fruitless without Power. An Artificer that hath lost his Hands may direct, but cannot make an Engine: A Pilot that hath lost his Arms, may advise the way of Steerage, but cannot hold the Helm; something is wanting in him to be a compleat Governour: But since both *Counsel* and *Power* are Infinite in God, hence results an Infinite Right to Govern, and an Infinite Fitness, because his Will cannot be resisted, his Power cannot be enfeebled or diminish'd; he can quicken and increase the strength of all Means as he pleases. He can hold all things in the World together, and preserve them in those Functions wherein he setled them, and conduct them to those ends for which he designed them.

Every Artificer, the more Excellent he is, and the more Excellency of Power appears in his work, is the more careful to maintain and cherish it. Those that deny Providence, do not only ravish from him the bowels of his *Goodness*, but strip him of a main exercise of his *Power*, and engender in Men a suspicion of Weariness and Feebleness in him; as though his strength had been spent in making them, that none is left to guide them. They would make him Headless in regard of his *Wisdom*, and Bowelless in regard of his *Goodness*, and Armless in regard of his *Strength*: If he did not, or were not able to preserve and provide for his Creatures, his Power in making them would be in a great part an Invisible Power; if he did not preserve what he made, and govern what he preserves, it would be a kind of strange and rude Power, to make, and suffer it to be dasht in pieces at the pleasure of others. If the Power of God should relinquish the World, the life

of things would be extinguiſht, the Fabrick would be confounded and fall into a deplorable *Chaos*. That which is compoſed of ſo many various pieces, could not maintain its Union, if there were not a ſecret Virtue binding them together and maintaining thoſe varieties of links.

Well then, ſince God is not only ſo Good, that he cannot will any thing but what is good: ſo Wiſe, that he cannot erre or miſtake; but alſo ſo Able, that he cannot be defeated or mated: He hath every way a full Ability to govern the World; where thoſe three are Infinite, the right and fitneſs reſulting from thence is unqueſtionable: And indeed, to deny God this Active part of his Power, is to render him Weak, Fooliſh, Cruel, or all.

6. Here is a *ground for the Worſhip of God*. Wiſdom and Power are the grounds of the Reſpect we give to Men; they being both infinite in God, are the foundation of a ſolemn Honour to be returned to him by his Creatures. If a Man make a curious Engine, we honour him for his skill; if another vanquiſh a vigorous Enemy, we admire him for his Strength: And ſhall not the efficacy of Gods Power in *Creation*, *Government*, *Redemption*, enflame us with a ſenſe of the Honour of his Name and Perfections? We admire thoſe Princes that have vaſt Empires, numerous Armies, that have a power to conquer their Enemies, and preſerve their own People in Peace: How much more ground have we to pay a mighty Reverence to God, who without Trouble and Wearineſs made and manages this vaſt Empire of the World by a Word and Beck? What ſenſible thoughts have we of the noiſe of Thunder, the power of the Sun, the ſtorms of the Sea? Theſe things that have no Underſtanding have ſtruck Men with ſuch a Reverence, that many have ador'd them as gods. What Reverence and Adoration doth this *Mighty Power*, joyned with an *Infinite Wiſdom* in God, demand at our hands?

All Religion and Worſhip ſtands eſpecially upon two Pillars, *Goodneſs* and *Power* in God; if either of theſe were defective, all Religion would faint away. We can expect no entertainment with him without *Goodneſs*, nor any benefit from him without *Power*. This God Prefaceth to the Command to Worſhip him, the benefit his *Goodneſs* had conferr'd upon them, and the *Powerful manner* of conveyance of it to them, 2 *Kings* 17. 36. *The Lord brought you up from the Land of* Egypt *with great Power and an Out-ſtretched Arm; him ſhall you fear, and him ſhall you worſhip, and to him ſhall you do ſacrifice.* Becauſe this Attribute is a main foundation of Prayer, the *Lords Prayer* is concluded with a doxology of it, *For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory.* As he is Rich, poſſeſſing all Bleſſings; ſo he is Powerful, to confer all Bleſſings on us, and make them efficacious to us. * The *Jews* repeat many times in their Prayers, ſome ſay an hundred times מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם *The King of the World*; 'tis both an Awe and an Encouragement. We could not without conſideration of it pray in Faith of ſucceſs; nay we could not pray at all, if his *Power* were defective to help us, and his *Mercy* too weak to relieve us. Who would ſollicite a Lifeleſs, or lie a proſtrate Suppliant to a feeble Arm! Upon this Ability of God, our Saviour built his Petitions; *Heb.* 5. 7. *He offered up ſtrong Cries unto him that was able to ſave him from death.* *Abraham*'s Faith hung upon the ſame ſtring, *Rom.* 4. 21. and the Captiv'd *Church* ſupplicates God to act according to the *greatneſs of his Power*, *Pſal.* 79. 11. In all our Addreſſes this is to be ey'd and conſidered, God is able to help, to relieve, to eaſe me, let my miſery be never ſo great, and my Strength never ſo weak. *If thou wilt thou canſt make me clean*, was the Conſideration the *Leper* had when he came to worſhip Chriſt; he was clear in his *Power* and therefore worſhiped him, though he was not equally clear in his *Will*. All *Worſhip* is ſhot wrong that is not directed to, and conducted by the thoughts of this Attribute, whoſe aſſiſtance we need. When we beg the Pardon of our Sins, we ſhould eye *Mercy* and *Power*; when we beg his righting us in any caſe where we are unjuſtly oppreſt, we do not eye *Righteouſneſs* without *Power*; when we plead the performance of his Promiſe, we do not regard his *Faithfulneſs* only without the prop of his *Power*. As *Power* uſhers in all the Attributes of God in their exerciſe and manifeſtation in the World, ſo ſhould it be the Butt our Eyes ſhould be fixed upon in all our acts of Worſhip: As without his Power his other Attributes would be uſeleſs, ſo without Apprehenſions of his Power our Prayers will be

* Capel. *in* 1 Tim. 1. 17.

Matt. 8. 2.

Faithleſs

Faithleſs and Comfortleſs. The Title in the *Lords Prayer* directs us to a proſpect both of his *Goodneſs* and *Power*; his Goodneſs in the word *Father*, his Greatneſs, Excellency and Power in the word *Heaven*. The heedleſs Conſideration of the Infiniteneſs of this Perfection roots up *Piety* in the midſt of us, and makes us ſo careleſs in Worſhip. Did we more think of that Power that rais'd the World out of nothing; that orders all Creatures by an act of his Will; that perform'd ſo great an exploit, as that of our Redemption, when maſterleſs ſin had triumphed over the World, we ſhould give God the Honour and Adoration which ſo great an excellency challengeth and deſerves at our hands, though we our ſelves had not been the work of his hands, or the monuments of his ſtrength; how could any Creature engroſs to it ſelf that reverence from us which is due to the powerful Creator, of whom it comes infinitely ſhort in Strength as well as Wiſdom?

7. From this we have *a ground for the belief of the Reſurrection.* God aims at the glory of his Power, as well as the glory of any other Attribute. *Moſes* elſe would not have cull'd out this as the main Argument in his pleading with God, for the ſheathing the Sword which he began to draw out againſt them in the Wilderneſs, *Numb.* 14.16. *The Nations will ſay, becauſe the Lord was not able to bring theſe People into the Land which he ſware to them*, &c. As the finding out the particulars of the duſt of our Bodies diſcovers the vaſtneſs of his Knowledge; ſo to raiſe them, will manifeſt the glory of his Power as much as Creation: Bodies that have mouldred away into multitudes of Atoms, been reſolved into the Elements, paſſed through varieties of changes; been ſometimes the matter to lodge the form of a Plant, or been turned into the ſubſtance of a Fiſh or Foul, or vapour'd up into a Cloud, and been part of that matter which hath compacted a Thunder-bolt; diſpos'd of in places far diſtant, ſcatter'd by the Winds, ſwallowed and concocted by Beaſts; for theſe to be called out from their different places of abode to meet in one Body, and be reſtored to their former Conſiſtency in a marriage union in the *twinkling of an eye* *, 'tis a Conſideration that may juſtly amaze us, and our ſhallow Underſtandings are too feeble to comprehend it. But is it not credible, ſince all the Diſputes againſt it may be ſilenced by reflections on Infinite Power, which nothing can oppoſe, for which nothing can be eſteemed too difficult to effect, which doth not imply a Contradiction in it ſelf. It was no leſs amazing to the *bleſſed Virgin* to hear a Meſſage that ſhe ſhould Conceive a Son without knowing a Man; but ſhe is quickly anſwered by the Angel, with a *Nothing is impoſſible to God*, *Luke* 1. 34.37. The diſtinct parts of our Bodies cannot be hid from his All-ſeeing Eye, whereever they are lodged, and in all the Changes they paſs through, as was diſcourſed when the Omniſcience of God was handled; ſhall then the collection of them together be too hard for his Invincible Power and Strength, and the uniting all thoſe parts into a Body, with new diſpoſitions, to receive their ſeveral Souls, be too big and bulky for that Power which never yet was acquainted with any bar? Was not the Miracle of our Saviours multiplying the Loaves, ſuppoſe it had not been by a new Creation, but a collection of Grain from ſeveral parts, very near as ſtupendous as this? Had any one of us been the only Creatures made juſt before the matter of the World, and beheld that inform *Chaos* covered with a *thick darkneſs*, mentioned *Gen.* 1. 2. would not the Report, that from this dark deep, next to nothing, ſhould be rais'd ſuch a multitude of comely Creatures, with ſuch innumerable varieties of Members, Voices, Colours, Motions, and ſuch numbers of ſhining Stars; a bright Sun, one uniform Body of Light from this Darkneſs, that ſhould like a Giant, rejoyce to run a race for many thouſands of years together, without ſtop or wearineſs: Would not all theſe have ſeemed as incredible as the Collection of ſcattered Duſt? What was it that erected the innumerable Hoſt of Heaven, the glorious Angels, and glittering Stars, for ought we know, more numerous than the Bodies of Men, but an act of the Divine Will; and ſhall the Power that wrought this, ſink under the Charge of gathering ſome diſper'd Atoms, and compacting them into a Human Body? † Can you tell how the Duſt of the ground was kneaded by God into the Body of Man, and changed into Fleſh, Skin, Hair, Bones, Sinews, Veins, Arteries and Blood, and fitted for ſo many ſeveral Activities, when a Human Soul was breath'd into it? Can you imagine how a Rib taken from *Adam*'s ſide, a lifeleſs Bone was formed into Head, Hands, Feet, Eyes? Why may not

* 1 Cor. 15. 52.

† Lingend. *Tom.* 3. *p.* 779, 780.

not the matter of men which have been, be reſtor'd, as well as that which was not, be firſt erected? Is it harder to repair thoſe things which were, than to create thoſe things which were not? Is there not the ſame Artificer? Hath any Diſeaſe or Sicklineſs abated his Power? Is the *Ancient of days* grown feeble; or ſhall the Elements and other Creatures, that alway yet obeyed his Command, ruffle againſt his raiſing Voice, and refuſe to diſgorge thoſe remains of Human Bodies they have ſwallowed up in their ſeveral Bowels? Did the whole World, and all the parts of it riſe at his word, and ſhall not ſome parts of the World, the Duſt of the dead, ſtand up out of the Graves at a word of the ſame mighty Efficacy? Do we not annually ſee thoſe Marks of Power which may ſtun our Incredulity in this Concern? Do you ſee in a ſmall Acorn or little Seed, any ſuch ſights, as a Tree with Body, Bark, Branches, Leaves, Flowers, Fruit, where can you find them? Do you know the inviſible Corners where they lurk in that little Body? And yet theſe you afterwards view riſing up from this little Body, when ſown in the Ground, that you could not poſſibly have any proſpect of when you rould it in your hand, or opened its Bowels. And why may not all the particulars of our Bodies, however diſpos'd as to their diſtinct Natures inviſibly to us, remain diſtinct, as well as if you mingle a thouſand Seeds together, they will come up in their diſtinct kinds, and preſerve their diſtinct Virtues?

Again, Is not the making Heaven and Earth, the Union of the Divine and Humane Nature, Eternity and Infirmity, to make a Virgin conceive a Son, bear the Creator, and bring forth the Redeemer, to form the Blood of God of the Fleſh of a Virgin, a greater Work than the Calling together and uniting the ſcattered parts of our Bodies, which are all of one Nature and Matter? And ſince the Power of God is manifeſted in pardoning innumerable ſins, is not the ſcattering our Tranſgreſſions, as far as the *Eaſt* is from the *Weſt*, as the expreſſion is, *Pſal.* 103. 12. and caſting ſuch numbers into the depths of the Sea, which is Gods Power over himſelf, a greater Argument of *Might*, than the recalling and repairing the Atoms of our Bodies from their various receptacles? 'Tis not hard for them to believe this of the Reſurrection, that have been ſenſible of the weight and force of their Sins, and the Power of God in pardoning and vanquiſhing that mighty reſiſtance which was made in their Hearts againſt the power of his renewing and ſanctifying Grace. The conſideration of the Infinite Power of God, is a good ground of the belief of the Reſurrection.

8. Since the Power of God is ſo great and incomprehenſible, *How ſtrange is it that it ſhould be contemned and abuſed by the Creatures as it is?* The Power of God is beaten down by ſome, outraged by others, blaſphemed by many under their Sufferings. The ſtripping God of the honour of his Creation, and the glory of his Preſervation of the World, falls under this charge: Thus do they that deny his framing the World alone, or thought the firſt matter was not of Gods creation: and ſuch as fancieed an Evil Principle, the Author of all Evil, as God is the Author of all Good, and ſo exempt from the Power of God, that it could not be vanquiſht by him. Theſe things have formerly found Defenders in the World; but they are in themſelves ridiculous and vain, and have no footing in common Reaſon, and are not worthy of debate in a Chriſtian Auditory.

In *General*, all Idolatry in the World did ariſe from the want of a due Notion of this Infinite Power. The Heathen thought one God was not ſufficient for the managing all things in the World, and therefore they feign'd ſeveral gods that had ſeveral charges: As *Ceres* preſided over the Fruits of the Earth; *Eſculapius* over the Cure of Diſtempers; *Mercury* for Merchandize and Trade; *Mars* for War and Battles; *Apollo* and *Minerva* for Learning and Ingenious Arts; and *Fortune* for Caſual things. Whence doth the other ſort of Idolatry, the adoring our Bags and Gold, our dependencies on, and truſting in Creatures for help, ariſe, but from Ignorance of God's Power, or mean and ſlender Apprehenſions of it?

Firſt, There is *a Contempt of it.*

Secondly, *An Abuſe of it.*

1. *'Tis contemn'd in every Sin, eſpecially in obſtinacy in Sin.* All Sin whatſoever is built upon ſome falſe Notion or monſtrous Conception of one or other of Gods Perfe-

Perfections, and in particular of this. It includes a ſecret and lurking Imagination, that we are able to grapple with *Omnipotence*, and enter the liſts with *Almightineſs*; what elſe can be judged of the *Apoſtles* expreſſion 1 *Cor.* 10. 22. *Do we provoke the Lord to jealouſie, are we ſtronger than he?* Do we think we have an Arm too powerful for that Juſtice we provoke, and can repel that Vengeance we exaſperate? Do we think we are an even match for God, and are able to deſpoil him of his Divinity? to deſpiſe his Will, violate his Order; practiſe what he forbids with a ſevere Threatning, and pawns his Power to make it good; is to pretend to have *an Arm like God*, and be able to *thunder* with a Voice equal or ſuperior to him, as the expreſſion is *Job* 40. 9. All Security in Sin is of this ſtrain; When Men are not concerned at Divine Threatnings, nor ſtagger'd in their ſinful Race, they intimate, that the Declarations of Divine Power are but Vainglorious boaſtings; that God is not ſo ſtrong and able, as he reports himſelf to be; and therefore they will venture it, and dare him to try, whether the ſtrength of his Arm be as forcible as the Words of his Mouth are terrible in his Threats; this is to believe themſelves Creators, not Creatures. We magnifie Gods Power in our wants, and debaſe it in our Rebellions; as though Omnipotence were only able to ſupply our Neceſſities, and unable to revenge the Injuries we offer him.

2. This Power is Contemn'd *in Diſtruſt of God.* All *Diſtruſt* is founded in a doubting of his Truth, as if he would not be as good as his Word; or of his Omniſcience, as if he had not a memory to retain his Word; or of his Power, as if He could not be as great as his Word. We meaſure the Infinite Power of God by the ſhort Line of our Underſtandings, as if Infinite ſtrength were bounded within the narrow compaſs of our Finite Reaſon; as if He could do no more than we were able to do.

How ſoon did thoſe *Iſraelites* loſe the remembrance of Gods Out-ſtretched Arm, when they utter'd that Atheiſtical Speech, *Pſal.* 78. 9. *Can God furniſh a Table in the Wilderneſs?* As if he that turned the Duſt of *Egypt* into *Lice*, for the puniſhment of their Oppreſſors, could not turn the Duſt of the *Wilderneſs* into *Corn*, for the ſupport of their Bodies? As if he that had Miraculouſly rebuked the *Red Sea*, for their Safety, could not provide *Bread* for their Nouriſhment? Though they had ſeen the *Egyptians* with loſt Lives in the Morning, in the ſame place where *Their* Lives had been miraculouſly preſerved in the Evening; yet They diſgrace that Experimented Power, by oppoſing to it the Stature of the *Anakims*, the Strength of their Cities, and the height of their Walls, *Numb.* 13. 32. And *Numb.* 14. 3. *Wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this Land to fall by the Sword?* As though the *Giants* of *Canaan* were too ſtrong for Him, for whom they had ſeen the Armies of *Egypt* too weak. How did they contract the Almightineſs of God into the littleneſs of a Little man, as if he muſt needs ſink under the Sword of a *Canaanite?*

This *Diſtruſt* muſt ariſe either from a flat *Atheiſm*, a denial of the Being of God, or his Government of the World; or unworthy Conceits of a Weakneſs in him, that he had made Creatures too hard for himſelf; that he were not ſtrong enough to grapple with thoſe mighty *Anakims*, and give them the poſſeſſion of *Canaan* againſt ſo great a Force. *Diſtruſt* of him implies either, that He was alway deſtitute of Power, or that his Power is exhauſted by his former Works, or that it is limited and near a Period: 'Tis to deny him to be the Creator that moulded Heaven and Earth. Why ſhould we by Diſtruſt put a ſlight upon that Power which he hath ſo often expreſt, and which in the minuteſt Works of his hands ſurmount the force of the ſharpeſt Underſtanding?

3. 'Tis Contemn'd *in too great a fear of Man, which ariſeth from a diſtruſt of Divine Power.* Fear of Man, is a crediting the Might of Man with a diſrepute of the Arm of God; it takes away the glory of his Might, and renders the Creature ſtronger than God, and God more feeble than a Mortal; as if the Arm of Man were a *Rod of Iron*, and the Arm of God a *brittle Reed.* How often do Men tremble at the Threatnings and Hectorings of Ruffians, yet will ſtand as Stakes againſt

againſt the Precepts and Threatnings of God, as though he had leſs Power to preſerve us, than Enemies had to deſtroy? With what diſdain doth God ſpeak to Men infected with this humour? *Iſai.* 51. 12, 13. *Who art thou, that art afraid of a Man that ſhall die, and of the Son of Man that ſhall be made as graſs; and forgetteſt the Lord thy Maker, that hath ſtretched forth the Heavens, and laid the foundation of the Earth; and haſt feared continually every day, becauſe of the fury of the Oppreſſor?*

To fear Man that is as Graſs, that cannot think a Thought without a Divine concourſe, that cannot Breath, but by a Divine Power, nor touch a Hair without Licenſe firſt granted from Heaven: This is a forgetfulneſs, and conſequently a ſlight, of that Infinite Power, which hath been manifeſted in founding the Earth and garniſhing the Heavens. All Fear of Man, in the way of our Duty, doth in ſome ſort thruſt out the remembrance, and diſcredit the great Actions of the Creator. Would not a Mighty Prince think it a Diſparagement to him, if his Servant ſhould decline his Command for fear of one of his Subjects? And hath not the Great God juſt cauſe to think himſelf diſgrac'd by us, when we deny him Obedience for fear of a Creature: As though he had but an *Infant ability* too feeble to bear us out in Duty, and uncapable to ballance the ſtrength of an Arm of Fleſh?

4. 'Tis Contemn'd *by truſting in our ſelves, in Means, in Man, more than in God.* When in any Diſtreſs we will try every Creature-refuge, before we have recourſe to God; and when we apply our ſelves to him, we do it with ſuch ſlight and perfunctory frames, and with ſo much deſpondency, as if we deſpair'd either of his Ability or Will to help us; and Implore him with cooler Affections, than we ſollicite Creatures: Or, when in a Diſeaſe we depend upon the virtue of the Medicine, the ability of the *Phyſitian*, and reflect not upon that Power that endued the Medicine with that virtue, and ſupports the quality in it, and concurs to the operation of it. When we depend upon the activity of the Means, as if they had power originally in themſelves, and not derivatively; and do not eye the Power of God animating and aſſiſting them. We cannot expect relief from any thing with a neglect of God, but we render it in our Thoughts more powerful than God: We acknowledge a greater fulneſs in a ſhallow Stream, than in an Eternal Spring; we do in effect depoſe the true God, and create to our ſelves a New one; we aſſert by ſuch a kind of acting, the Creature, if not ſuperior, yet equal with God and independent on him. When we truſt in our own ſtrength, without begging his Aſſiſtance; or boaſt of our own ſtrength, without acknowledging his concurrence, as the *Aſſyrian*; *By the ſtrength of my hand have I done this, I have put down the Inhabitants like a valiant Man*, Iſai. 10. 13. 'Tis, as if the *Ax ſhould boaſt it ſelf againſt him that hews therewith*, and thinks it ſelf more Mighty than the Arm that wields it, *Verſe* 15. when we truſt in others more than in God. Thus God upbraids thoſe by the *Prophet* that ſought help from *Egypt*, telling them, *Iſai.* 31. 3. *The Egyptians were men and not gods*; intimating that by their dependance on them, they render'd them gods and not Men, and advanc'd them from the ſtate of Creatures to that of Almighty Deities. 'Tis to ſet a pile of Duſt, a heap of Aſhes, above Him that created and preſerves the World. To truſt in a Creature, is to make it as Infinite as God; to do that which is impoſſible in it ſelf to be done. God himſelf cannot make a Creature infinite, for that were to make him God.

'Tis alſo contemn'd when we aſcribe what we receive, to the power of Inſtruments, and not to the power of God. Men, in whatſoever they do for us, are but the Tools whereby the Creator works. Is it not a diſgrace to the Limner to admire his Penſil, and not himſelf; to the Artificer, to admire his File and Engines, and not his Power? *'Tis not I*, ſaith *Paul*, *that labour, but the Grace*, the efficacious Grace *of God which is in me.* Whatſoever good we do is from him, not from our ſelves; to aſcribe it to our ſelves, or to Inſtruments, is to overlook and contemn his Power.

5. *Unbelief*

5. *Unbelief of the Goſpel is a contempt and diſowning Divine Power.* This Perfection hath been diſcover'd in the Conception of Chriſt, the Union of the *two* Natures, his Reſurrection from the Grave, the Reſtoration of the World, and the Converſion of Men, more than in the Creation of the World: Then what a diſgrace is *Unbelief* to all that Power, that ſo ſeverely puniſhed the *Jews* for the rejecting the *Goſpel*; turn'd ſo many Nations from their beloved Superſtitions; humbled the Power of Princes and the Wiſdom of Philoſophers; chas'd *Devils* from their Temples, by the weakneſs of Fiſhermen; planted the Standard of the *Goſpel*, againſt the common Notions, and inveterate Cuſtoms of the World? What a diſgrace is *Unbelief* to this Power, which hath preſerved *Chriſtianity* from being extinguiſh'd by the force of Men and Devils, and kept it flouriſhing in the midſt of Sword, Fire, and Executioners; that hath made the *Simplicity* of the Goſpel overpower the Eloquence of Orators, and multiplied it from the aſhes of *Martyrs*, when it was deſtitute of all Humane Aſſiſtances? Not heartily to believe and embrace that Doctrine, which hath been attended with ſuch marks of Power, is a high reflection upon this Divine Perfection, ſo highly manifeſted in the firſt publication, propagation, and preſervation of it.

II. *The power of God is abuſed*, as well as contemned.

1. *When we make uſe of it to juſtifie Contradictions.* The Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation* is an abuſe of this Power. When the Maintainers of it cannot anſwer the Abſurdities alledg'd againſt it, they have recourſe to the power of God. It implies a Contradiction, that the *ſame Body* ſhould be on Earth and in Heaven at the ſame inſtant of time; that it ſhould be at the Right hand of God, and in the Mouth and Stomach of a Man; that it ſhould be a Body of *Fleſh*, and yet *Bread* to the Eye and to the Taſte; that it ſhould be Viſible and Inviſible, a glorious *Body*, and yet gnawn by the Teeth of a Creature; that it ſhould be multiplied in a Thouſand places, and yet an entire Body in every one, where there is no Member to be ſeen, no Fleſh to be taſted; that it ſhould be above us in the higheſt Heavens, and yet within us in our lower Bowels: Such Contradictions as theſe are an Abuſe of the Power of God.

Again, We abuſe this *Power* when we believe every idle Story that is reported, becauſe God is able to make it ſo, if he pleaſed. We may as well believe *Eſop*'s *Fables* to be true, that Birds ſpake and Beaſts reaſoned, becauſe the power of God can enable ſuch Creatures to ſuch acts. Gods Power is not the Rule of our Belief of a thing without the exerciſe of it in matter of Fact, and the declaration of it upon ſufficient Evidence.

2. The Power of God is abus'd, *by preſuming on it, without uſing the Means he hath appointed.* When Men ſit with folded Arms, and Make a Confidence in his Power, a glorious Title to their *Idleneſs* and *Diſobedience*; they would have his Strength do all, and his precept ſhould move them to do nothing; this is a truſt of his Power againſt his Command, a pretended glorifying his Power with a ſlight of his Sovereignty. Though God be Almighty, yet for the moſt part he exerciſeth his Might in giving life and ſucceſs to Second Cauſes and lawful endeavours. When we ſtay in the Mouth of Danger, without any Call ordering us to continue, and againſt a Door of Providence open'd for our reſcue, and ſanctuary our ſelves in the *Power of God* without any Promiſe, without any Providence conducting us; this is not to glorifie the Divine Might, but to neglect it, in neglecting the Means which his Power affords to us for our eſcape, * To condemn it to our humors; to work Miracles for us according to our wills, and againſt his own. God could have ſent a *Worm* to be *Herods* Executioner, when he ſought the life of our *Saviour*, or employed an Angel from Heaven to have tied his hands or ſtopt his breath, and not put *Joſeph* upon a flight to *Egypt* with our Saviour; yet had it not been an abuſe of the power of God, for *Joſeph* to have neglected the Precept, and ſlighted the Means God gave him for the preſerving his own life and that of the Childs? *Chriſt* himſelf, when the *Jews* conſulted to deſtroy him, preſum'd not upon the *Power of God* to ſecure him, but uſed ordinary means for his preſervation, by *walking no more openly*, but retiring himſelf into a City near the *Wilderneſs* till the *hour was come*, and the Call of his Father manifeſt †.

* Harwood, p. 13.

† John 11. 53, 54.

a raſh running upon Danger, though for the Truth it ſelf, is a preſuming upon, and conſequently an abuſe of this Power; a proud challenging it to ſerve our turns againſt the Authority of his Will, and the force of his Precept: A not reſting in his Ordinate Power, but demanding his Abſolute Power to pleaſure our Follies and Preſumptions; concluding and expecting more from it than what is Authoriz'd by his Will.

9. Inſtruction. If Infinite Power be a peculiar property of God; *How miſerable will all wicked Rebels be under this Power of God?* Men may break his Laws, but not impair his Arm; they may ſlight his Word, but cannot reſiſt his Power. If he ſwear that he will ſweep a place with the Beſom of Deſtruction, *As he hath thought ſo ſhall it come to paſs; and as he hath purpoſed ſo ſhall it ſtand, Iſai.* 14. 23, 24. Rebels againſt an Earthly Prince may exceed him in ſtrength, and be more powerful than their Sovereign: None can equal God, much leſs exceed him. As none can exerciſe an act of hoſtility againſt him without his permiſſive Will; ſo none can ſtruggle from under his hand without his poſitive Will. He hath an Arm not to be moved, a Hand not to bo wrung aſide. God is repreſented on his Throne like a *Jaſper Stone, Revel* 4.3. as one of Invincible Power when he comes to Judge; the *Jaſper* is a Stone which withſtands the greateſt force*. Though Men reſiſt the Order of his Laws, they cannot reſiſt the Sentence of their puniſhment, nor the execution of it. None can any more exempt themſelves from the Arm of his Strength, than they can from the Authority of his Dominion. As they muſt bow to his Sovereignty; ſo they muſt ſink under his Force. A priſoner in this World may make his eſcape; but a priſoner in the World to come cannot; *Job.* 10. 7. *There is none that can deliver out of thine hand.* There is *none to deliver* when he *tears in pieces, Pſal.* 50. 22. His Strength is uncontroulable; hence his *Throne* is repreſented as a *Fiery flame, Dan.* 7. 9. As a ſpark of Fire hath power to kindle one thing after another, and increaſe till it conſumes a Forreſt, a City, ſwallow up all combuſtible Matter, till it conſumes a World, and many Worlds, if they were in Being. What power hath a Tree to reſiſt the Fire, though it ſeems mighty when it out-braves the Winds? What Man to this day hath been able to free himſelf from that Chain of *Death*, God clapt upon him for his Revolt? And if he be too feeble to reſcue himſelf from a Temporal, much leſs from an Eternal Death. The *Devils* have to this minute groaned under the Pile of Wrath, without any ſucceſs in delivering themſelves by all their ſtrength, which much ſurmounts all the ſtrength of Mankind, nor have they any hopes to work their reſcue to Eternity.

* Grot. *in loc.*

How fooliſh is every Sinner? Can we poor Worms ſtrut it out againſt Infinite Power? We cannot reſiſt the meaneſt Creatures when God Commiſſions them, and puts a Sword into their hands. They will not, no not the *Worms*, be ſtartled at the glory of a King, when they have their Creators Warrant to be his Executioners †. Who can withſtand him, when he commands the Waves and Inundations of the Sea to leap over the Shore; when he divides the Ground in Earthquakes, and makes it gape wide to ſwallow the Inhabitants of it; when the Air is corrupted to breed Peſtilences; when Storms and Showers, unſeaſonably falling, putrify the Fruits of the Earth; what created Power can mend the matter, and with a prevailing Voice ſay to him, What doſt thou?

† Acts 12. 23.

There are *two* Attributes God will make gliſter in Hell to the full, his *Wrath* and his *Power*; Rom. 9. 22. *What if God willing to ſhew his Wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much Long-ſuffering the veſſels of wrath fitted for deſtruction?* If it were meer Wrath, and no Power to ſecond it, it were not ſo terrible; but 'tis *Wrath* and *Power*, both are joyn'd together: 'Tis not only a ſharp Sword, but a powerful Arm; and not only that, for then it were well for the damned Creature. To have many ſharp blows, and from a ſtrong Arm; this may be without putting forth the higheſt ſtrength a Man hath: But in this God makes it his deſign to make his Power known and conſpicuous; He takes the Sword (as it were) in both hands, that he may ſhew the ſtrength of his Arm in ſtriking the harder blow; and therefore the *Apoſtle calls it* 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 9. the *Glory of his Power*, which puts a Sting into this Wrath; and it is called *Revel.* 19. 15. the *fierceneſs of the wrath of the Almighty.* God will do it in ſuch a manner, as to make Men ſenſible

ſible of his Almightineſs in every ſtroke. How great muſt that Vengeance be, that is backed by all the Strength of God? When there will be a powerful Wrath without a powerful Compaſſion; when all his Power ſhall be exerciſed in Puniſhing, and not the leaſt mite of it exercis'd in pitying; how irreſiſtible will be the load of ſuch a weighty Hand? How can the *duſt of the Ballance* break the mighty Bars, or get out of the Liſts of a powerful Vengeance, or hope for any grain of Comfort? Oh, that every obſtinate Sinner would think of this, and conſider his unmeaſurable boldneſs in thinking himſelf able to grapple with *Omnipotence*! What force can any have to reſiſt the preſence of him, before whom Rocks melt, and the Heavens at length ſhall be ſhrievell'd up as a Parchment by the laſt Fire? As the Light of Gods Face is too dazeling to be beheld by us; ſo the Arm of his Power is too Mighty to be oppoſed by us. His Almightineſs is above the reach of our Pot-ſheard ſtrength, as his Infiniteneſs is above the capacity of our purblind Underſtandings. God were not Omnipotent, if his Power could be rendred ineffectual by any.

A *Second Uſe* of this Point from the Conſideration of the Infinite Power of God, is of *Comfort*. As Omnipotence is an Ocean that cannot be fathom'd; ſo the Comforts from it are ſtreams that cannot be exhauſted. What Joy can be wanting to him that finds himſelf folded in the Arms of *Omnipotence*? Uſe II. *Comfort.*

This Perfection is made over to Believers in the Covenant, as well as any other Attribute; *I am the Lord your God*; therefore that *Power* which is as eſſential to the Godhead as any other Perfection of his Nature, is in the rights and extent of it aſſured unto you. Nay, we may not ſay, It is made over more than any other, becauſe it is that which animates every other Perfection, and is the Spirit that gives them Motion and Appearance in the World. If God had expreſt himſelf in particular, as, *I am a True God, a Wiſe God, a Loving God, a Righteous God, I am yours*; what would all or any of thoſe have ſignified, unleſs the other alſo had been implyed, as, *I am an Almighty God, I am your God*? In Gods making over himſelf in any particular Attribute, this of his *Power* is included in every one, without which all his other Grants would be inſignificant. 'Tis a Comfort that Power is in the hand of God; it can never be better placed, for he can never uſe his Power to injure his confiding Creature: If it were in our own hands, we might uſe it to injure our ſelves. 'Tis a Power in the hand of an indulgent Father, not a hard-hearted Tyrant: 'Tis a juſt Power, *His right hand is full of Righteouſneſs*, *Pſal.* 48. 10. becauſe of his Righteouſneſs he can never uſe it ill, and becauſe of his Wiſdom he can never uſe it unſeaſonably. Men that have ſtrength, often miſplace the actings of it, becauſe of their Folly; and ſometimes employ it to baſe ends, becauſe of their Wickedneſs: But this Power in God is alway awakned by *Goodneſs* and conducted by *Wiſdom*; 'tis never exercis'd by Self-will and Paſſion, but according to the Immutable Rule of his own Nature, which is *Righteouſneſs*. How Comfortable is it to think that you have a God that can do what he pleaſes; nothing ſo difficult but he can effect, nothing ſo ſtrong but he can over-rule? You need not dread Men, ſince you have One to reſtrain them; nor fear Devils, ſince you have One to chain them: No Creature but is acted by this Power; no Creature but muſt fall upon the withdrawing of this Power. It was not all laid out in Creation: 'Tis not weakned by his preſervation of things; he yet hath a fulneſs of Power, and a reſidue of Spirit: For whom ſhould that Eternal *Arm of the Lord* be diſplayed, and that Incomprehenſible *Thunder of his Power* be ſhot out, but for thoſe for whoſe ſake and for whoſe *Comfort* it is revealed in his Word?

In Particular,

1. Here is *Comfort in all Afflictions and Diſtreſſes*. Our Evils can never be ſo great to oppreſs us, as his Power is great to deliver us. The ſame Power that brought a World out of a *Chaos*, and conſtituted, and hath hitherto preſerved the regular Motion of the Stars, can bring Order out of our Confuſions, and Light out of our Darkneſs. When our Saviour was in the greateſt diſtreſs, and beheld the Face of his Father frowning, while he was upon the *Croſs*, in his Complaint to him he exerciſeth Faith upon his Power, *Matth.* 27. 46. *Eli, Eli*; *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me*; that is, *My ſtrong, my ſtrong*; *El*, is a Name of Power

belonging to God: He comforts himſelf in his Power, while he complains of his Frowns. Follow his pattern, and forget not that Power that can ſcatter the Clouds, as well as gather them together. The *Pſalmiſts* ſupport in his Diſtreſs was in the Creative Power of God, *Pſal.* 121. 2 *My help comes from the Lord which made Heaven and Earth.*

2. 'Tis Comfort *in all ſtrong and ſtirring Corruptions and mighty Temptations.* 'Tis by this we may arm our ſelves, and *be ſtrong in the power of his might, Epheſ.* 6. 10. By this we may conquer Principalities and Powers as dreadful as Hell, but not ſo mighty as Heaven. By this we may triumph over Luſts within, too ſtrong for an Arm of Fleſh. By this the *Devils* that have poſſeſſed us may be caſt out; the batter'd Walls of our Souls may be repaired, and the Sons of *Anak* laid flat. That Power that brought Light out of Darkneſs, and over-maſter'd the deformity of the *Chaos*, and ſet bounds to the Ocean, and dried up the *Red Sea* by a Rebuke; can quell the Tumults in our Spirits, and level Spiritual *Goliahs* by his Word. When the *Diſciples* heard that terrifying Speech of our *Saviour*, concerning *Rich men*, that it was *eaſier for a Camel to go through the eye of a Needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God, Mat.* 19. 24. to entertain the *Goſpel*, which commanded Self-denial; and that, becauſe of the Allurements of the World, and the ſtrong Habits in their Soul; Chriſt refers them to the Power of God, *verſe* 26. who could expel thoſe ill Habits, and plant good ones; *With Men this is impoſſible, but with God all things are poſſible.* There is no reſiſtance, but he can ſurmount; no ſtrong hold but he can demoliſh; no Tower, but he can level.

3. 'Tis Comfort from hence, *that all Promiſes ſhall be performed. Goodneſs* is ſufficient to make a Promiſe, but *Power* is neceſſary to perform a Promiſe. Men that are honeſt, cannot often make good their words, becauſe ſomething may intervene that may ſhorten their Ability; but nothing can diſable God, without diminiſhing his Godhead. He hath an Infiniteneſs of Power to accompliſh his Word, as well as an Infiniteneſs of Goodneſs to make and utter his Word. That *Might whereby he made Heaven and Earth*, and *his keeping Truth for ever*, are joyn'd together, *Pſal.* 146. 5, 6. His Fathers Faithfulneſs, and His Creative Power are link'd together. 'Tis upon this *Baſis* the Covenant, and every part of it, is eſtabliſhed, and ſtands as firm as the *Almightineſs* of God, whereby he ſprung up the Earth, and rear'd the Heavens. *No power can reſiſt his Will,* Rom. 9. 19. *Who can diſannul his purpoſe, and turn back his hand when it is ſtretched out? Iſai.* 14. 27. His Word is unalterable, and his Power is invincible. He could not deceive himſelf, for he knew his own ſtrength when he promiſed: No unexpected event can change his Reſolution, becauſe nothing can happen without the compaſs of his Foreſight. No Created Strength can ſtop him in his Action, becauſe all Creatures are ready to ſerve him at his Command; not the Devils in Hell, nor all the Wicked men on Earth, ſince he hath ſtrength to reſtrain them, and an Arm to puniſh them. What can be too hard for him that created Heaven and Earth? Hence it was, that when God promiſed any thing antiently to his People, he uſed often the Name of the *Almighty*, the *Lord that created Heaven and Earth*, as that which was an undeniable Anſwer to any Objection, againſt any thing that might be made againſt the greatneſs and ſtupendiouſneſs of any Promiſe; by that *Name* in all his Works of Grace *was he known* to them, *Exod.* 6. 3. When we are ſure of his Will, we need not queſtion his Strength, ſince he never over-engageth himſelf above his Ability. He that could not be reſiſted by nothing in Creation, nor vanquiſh'd by *Devils* in Redemption, can never want Power to glorifie his Faithfulneſs in his Accompliſhment of whatſoever he hath promiſed.

4. From this Infiniteneſs of Power in God we have ground of *Aſſurance for Perſeverance.* Since *Converſion* is reſembled to the Works of *Creation* and *Reſurrection*, two great Marks of his *Strength*, he doth not ſurely employ himſelf in the firſt work of Changing the Heart, to let any Created ſtrength baffle that Power which he began and intends to glorifie. It was this Might that ſtruck off the Chain, and expell'd that *ſtrong one* that poſſeſſed you. What if you are too weak to keep him out of his loſt poſſeſſion, will God loſe the glory of his firſt ſtrength, by ſuffering his foiled Adverſary to make

make a re-entry, and regain his former uſurpation? His Out-ſtretched Arm will not do leſs by his Spiritual, than it did by his National *Iſrael*: It guarded them all the way to *Canaan*, and left them not to ſhift for themſelves; after he had ſtruck off the Fetters of *Egypt*, and buried their Enemies in the *Red Sea*; *Deut.* 1. 31. This Greatneſs of the *Father* above all, our Saviour makes the ground of Believers continuance for ever, againſt the blaſts of Hell and engines of the World, *John* 10. 29. *My Father is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Fathers hands.* Our keeping is not in our own weak hands, but in the hands of him who is mighty to ſave. That Power of God keeps us which intends our ſalvation. In all fears of falling away, ſhelter your ſelves in the Power of God: *He ſhall be holden up*, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, ſpeaking concerning one weak in Faith; and no other Reaſon is rendred by him but this, *for God is able to make him to ſtand*, Rom. 14. 4.

From this Attribute of the Infinite Power of God, we have a ground of *comfort in the loweſt eſtate of the Church.* Let the ſtate of the Church be never ſo deplorable, the condition never ſo deſperate, that Power that created the World, and ſhall raiſe the Bodies of Men, can create a happy ſtate for the Church, and raiſe her from an overwhelming Grave: Though the Enemies trample upon her, they cannot upon the Arm that holds her, which by the leaſt motion of it, can lift her up above the heads of her Adverſaries, and make them feel the thunder of that Power that none can underſtand: By the *blaſt of God they periſh*, and *by the breath of his Noſtrils they are conſumed*, Job 4. 9. they *ſhall be ſcattered as Chaff before the wind*: If once he *draw his hand out of his boſom*, all muſt fly before him, or ſink under him *: And when there is *none to help, his own Arm ſuſtains him, and brings ſalvation* †, *and his fury doth uphold him.* What if the Church totter under the underminings of Hell? What if it hath a ſad Heart and wet Eyes? In what a little moment can he make the night turn into day, and make the *Jews* that were preparing for death in *Shuſhan*, triumph over the necks of their Enemies, and march in one hour with Swords in their hands, that expected the laſt hour *ropes about their necks*? *Eſth.* 9. 1. 5. If *Iſrael* be purſued by *Pharoah*, the Sea ſhall open its arms to protect them: If they be thirſty, a Rock ſhall ſpout out Water to refreſh them: If they be hungry, Heaven ſhall be their Granary for *Manna*: If *Jeruſalem* be beſieg'd, and hath not force enough to encounter *Senacherib*, an Angel ſhall turn the Camp into an *Aceldema*, a Field of Blood. His People ſhall not want deliverances, till God want a power of working Miracles for their ſecurity: He is more jealous of his Power, than the Church can be of her Safety. And if we ſhould want other Arguments to preſs him, we may implore him by virtue of his Power: For when there is nothing in the Church as a Motive to him to ſave it, there is enough in his own Name, and *the illuſtration of his Power*, *Pſal.* 106. 8. Who can grapple with the Omnipotency of that God, who is jealous of, and zealous for the honour of it? And therefore God, for the moſt part, takes ſuch opportunities to deliver, wherein his Almightineſs may be moſt conſpicuous, and his Counſels moſt admirable. He awakened not himſelf to deliver *Iſrael*, till they were upon the brink of the *Red Sea*; nor to reſcue the *three Children*, till they were in the fiery Furnace; nor *Daniel*, till he was in the *Lions Den.* 'Tis in the *weakneſs* of his Creature that *his ſtrength is perfected*; not in a way of addition of perfectneſs to it, but in a way of manifeſtation of the perfection of it. As it is the perfection of the Sun to ſhine and enlighten the World, not that the Sun receives an increaſe of light by the darting of his Beams, but diſcovers his Glory to the admiration of Men, and pleaſure of the World. If it were not for ſuch occaſions, the World would not regard the Mightineſs of God, nor know what Power were in him. It traverſes the Stage in its fulneſs and livelineſs upon ſuch occaſions, when the enemies are ſtrong, and their ſtrength edg'd with an intenſe hatred, and but little time between the contrivance and execution. 'Tis the great comfort that the loweſt Diſtreſſes of the Church are a fit *Scene* for the diſcovery of this Attribute, and that the Glory of God's Omnipotence, and the Churches Security, are ſo ſtraitly linkt together. 'Tis a promiſe that will never be forgotten by God, and ought never to be forgotten by us, that *in this Mountain, the hand of the Lord ſhall reſt* *; that is, the Power of the Lord ſhall abide; *and* Moab *ſhall be trodden under him*

* Pſal. 74. 11

† Iſai. 63. 5.

* Iſai. 25. 10.

him, even as Straw is trodden down for the Dunghil. And *the Plagues of* Babylon *ſhall come in one day, death and mourning, and famine; for ſtrong is the Lord who judges her*, Rev. 18. 8.

Uſe III. The *Third Uſe* is for *Exhortation.*

1. *Meditate on this Power of God, and preſs it often upon your Minds.* We conclude many things of God that we do not practically ſuck the comfort of, for want of deep thoughts of it, and frequent inſpection into it. We believe God to be true, yet diſtruſt him; we acknowledge him powerful, yet fear the motion of every ſtraw. Many Truths, though aſſented to in our Underſtandings, are kept under hatches by corrupt Affections, and have not their due influence, becauſe they are not brought forth into the open air of our Souls by meditation. If we will but ſearch our hearts; we ſhall find it is the power of God we often doubt of. When the heart of *Ahaz* and his Subjects trembled at the Combination of the *Syrian* and *Iſraelitiſh* Kings againſt him, for want of a confidence in the Power of God, God, ſends his *Prophet* with Commiſſion to work a miraculous ſign at his own choice, to rear up his fainting heart; and when he refus'd to ask a ſign out of diffidence of that Almighty Power, the *Prophet* complains of it as an affront to his *Maſter**. *Moſes* ſo great a Friend of God, was overtaken with this kind of unbelief, after all the Experiments of God's miraculous Acts in *Egypt*; the Anſwer God gives him, manifeſts this to be at the Core: *Is the Lord's hand waxed ſhort?* Numb. 11. 23.

* Iſai. 7. 12, 13.

For want of actuated thoughts of this, we are many times turned from our known duty by the blaſt of a Creature; as though man had more power to diſmay us, than God hath to ſupport us in his commanded way. The belief of God's Power is one of the firſt ſteps to all Religion; without ſetled thoughts of it, we cannot pray lively and believingly, for the obtaining the Mercies we want, or the averting the Evils we fear; we ſhould not love him, unleſs we are perſwaded he hath a Power to bleſs us; nor fear him, unleſs we were perſwaded of his Power to puniſh us. The frequent thoughts of this would render our Faith more ſtable, and our Hopes more ſtedfaſt; it would make us more feeble to ſin, and more careful to obey. When the *Virgin* ſtagger'd at the Meſſage of the *Angel*, that ſhe ſhould *bear a Son*, he in his Anſwer turns her to the Creative Power of God, *Luke* 1. 35. *The Power of the higheſt ſhall over-ſhadow thee.* Which ſeems to be in alluſion to the Spirits moving upon the face of the Deep, and bringing a comely World out of a confus'd Maſs. Is it harder for God to make a Virgin conceive a Son by the power of his Spirit, than to make a World? Why doth he reveal himſelf ſo often under the title of *Almighty*, and preſs it upon us, but that we ſhould preſs it upon our ſelves? And ſhall we be forgetful of that, which every thing about us, every thing within us is a mark of? How come we by a power of ſeeing and hearing, a faculty and act of Underſtanding and Will, but by this Power framing us, this Power aſſiſting us? What though the Thunder of his Power cannot be underſtood, no more can any other perfection of his Nature; ſhall we therefore ſeldom think of it? The Sea cannot be fathom'd, yet the Merchant excuſeth not himſelf from ſailing upon the Surface of it. We cannot glorifie God, without due conſideration of this Attribute: for his *Power* is his *Glory* as much as any other, and called both by the Name of *Glory*, *Rom.* 6. 4. ſpeaking of Chriſt's Reſurrection by the Glory of the Father; and alſo *the riches of his Glory*, *Eph.* 3. 16. Thoſe that have ſtrong Temptations in their courſe and over-preſſing Corruptions in their hearts, have need to think of it out of Intereſt, ſince nothing but this can relieve them. Thoſe that have experimented the working of it in their new Creation, are oblig'd to think of it out of gratitude. It was this mighty Power over himſelf that gave riſe to all that pardoning Grace already conferred, or hereafter expected; without it our Souls had been conſum'd, the World overturned; we could not have expected a happy Heaven, but have lain yelling in an eternal Hell; had not the power of his Mercy exceeded that of his Juſtice, and his Infinite Power executed what his Infinite Wiſdom had contrived for our Redemption. How much alſo ſhould we be rais'd in our admirations of God, and raviſh our ſelves in contemplating that Might that can raiſe innumerable Worlds in thoſe Infinite imaginary Spaces without this Globe of Heaven and Earth, and exceed unconceivably what he hath done in the Creation of this?

2. From

2. From the preſſing the conſideration of this upon our ſelves, *Let us be induc'd to truſt God upon the account of his Power.* The main end of the revelation of his power of the *Patriarchs*, and of the miraculous Operations of it in *Egypt*, was to induce them to an entire repoſing themſelves in God: And the *Pſalmiſt* doth ſcarce ſpeak of the Divine Omnipotence without making this Inference from it; and ſcarce exhorts to a truſt in God, but backs it with a Conſideration of his Power in Creation, it being the chief ſupport of the Soul, *Pſal.* 146. 1. *Happy is he whoſe hope is in the Lord his God, which made Heaven and Earth, the Sea and all that therein is.* That Power is invincible that drew the World out of nothing: Nothing can happen to us harder than the making the World without the concurrence of Inſtruments: No difficulty can nonplus that ſtrength, that hath drawn all things out of nothing, or out of a confus'd Matter next to nothing: No power can rifle what we commit to him, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. He is all Power, above the reach of all Power; all other powers in the World flowing from him, or depending on him. He is worthy to be truſted, ſince we know him true, without ever breaking his word, and Omnipotent, never failing of his pupoſe; and a confidence in it is the chief act whereby we can glorifie this Power, and credit his Arm. A ſtrong God, and a weak Faith in Omnipotence, do not ſute well together. Indeed we are more engaged to a truſt in Divine Power than the Antient *Patriarchs* were: They had the Verbal Declaration of his Power, and many of them little other Evidence of it, than in the Creation of the World; and their Faith in God being eſtabliſh'd in this firſt diſcovery of his Omnipotence, drew out it ſelf further to believe, That whatſoever God promiſed by his Word, he was able to perform, as well as the Creation of the *World out of nothing*; which ſeems to be the intendment of the *Apoſtle*, *Heb.* 11. 3. Not barely to ſpeak of the Creation of the World by God, which was a thing the *Hebrews* underſtood well enough from their Antient Oracles; but to ſhew the Foundation of the *Patriarchs* Faith, *viz. God making the World by his Word*, and what uſe they made of the Diſcovery of his Power in that, to lead them to believe the promiſe of God concerning the *Seed of the Woman* to be brought into the World. But we have not only the ſame Foundation, but ſuperadded Demonſtrations of this Attribute in the Conception of our Saviour, the Union of the two Natures, the glorious Redemption, the Propagation of the Goſpel, and the new Creation of the World. They relied upon the naked Power of God, without thoſe more illuſtrious Appearances of it, which have been in the Ages ſince, and arriv'd to their notice: We have the wonderful Effects of that which they had but obſcure Expectations of.

1. Conſider, *Truſt in God can never be without taking in Gods power as a concurrent Foundation with his Truth.* 'Tis the main ground of Truſt, and ſo ſet forth in the Prophet, *Iſai.* 26. 4. *Truſt ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength.* And the Faith of the Antients ſo recommended *Heb.* 11. had this chiefly for its ground; and the Faith in Goſpel-times is called a *Truſting on his Arm*, *Iſai.* 51. 5. All the Attributes of God are the Objects of our Veneration, but they do not equally contribute to the producing Truſt in our hearts; his Eternity, Simplicity, Infiniteneſs, raviſh and aſtoniſh our Minds when we conſider them: But there is no immediate tendency in their Nature to allure us to a confidence in him, no not in an innocent State; much leſs in a laps'd and revolted Condition: But the other perfections of his Nature, as his Holineſs, Righteouſneſs, Mercy, are amiable to us in regard of the immediate Operations of them upon and about the Creature, and ſo have ſomething in their own Nature to allure us to repoſe our ſelves in him: But yet thoſe cannot engage to an intire truſt in him, without reflecting upon his Ability, which can only render thoſe uſeful and ſucceſsful to the Creature. For whatſoever bars ſtand in the way of his holy, righteous, and merciful proceedings towards his Creatures, are not overmaſter'd by thoſe perfections, but by that Strength of his which can only relieve us in concurrence with the other Attributes. How could his Mercy ſuccor us without his Arm, or his Wiſdom guide us without his Hand, or his Truth perform Promiſes

Amyrant. *Moral. Tom.* 3. *p.* 170.

ſes to us without his ſtrength? As no Attribute can act without it, ſo in our addreſſes to him upon the account of any particular perfection in the Godhead according to our indigency, one eye muſt be perpetually fixed upon this of his Power; and our Faith would be feeble and diſpirited without eying this: Without this, his *Holineſs*, which hates ſin, would not be regarded; and his *Mercy*, pitying a grieving ſinner would not be valued. As this Power is the ground of a wicked man's fear, ſo it is the ground of a good man's truſt. This was that which was the principal ſupport of *Abraham*, not barely his promiſe, but his *ability to make it good*, Rom. 4. 21. And when he was commanded to ſacrifice *Iſaac*, the *ability of God to raiſe him up again*, Heb. 11. 19. All Faith would droop, and be in the mire, without leaning upon this. All thoſe Attributes which we conſider as Moral in God, would have no influence upon us, without this, which we conſider Phyſically in God. Though we value the kindneſs Men may expreſs to us in our Diſtreſſes, yet we make them not the Objects of our confidence, unleſs they have an ability to act what they expreſs. There can be no truſt in God without an eye to his Power.

2. *Sometimes the Power of God is the ſole Object of Truſt.* As when we have no promiſe to aſſure us of his Will, we have nothing elſe to pitch upon but his Ability; and that not his abſolute Power, but his ordinate, in the way of his Providence; we muſt not truſt in it ſo, as to expect he ſhould pleaſe our humour with freſh Miracles, but reſt upon his Power, and leave the manner to his Will. *Aſa* when ready to Conflict with the vaſt *Ethiopian* Army, pleaded nothing elſe but this *Power of God*† And the *three Children*, who had no particular promiſe of deliverance (that we read of) ſtuck to God's ability to preſerve them againſt the Kings threatning, and own'd it in the face of the King, yet with ſome kind of inward intimations in their own Spirits that he would alſo deliver them; *Dan.* 3. 17. *Our God whom we ſerve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery Furnace.* And accordingly the fire burnt the Cords that tied them, without ſinging any thing elſe about them. But when this Power hath been exercis'd upon like occaſions, 'tis a preſident he hath given us to reſt upon. Preſidents in Law are good pleas, and ſtrong encouragements to the Clyent to expect ſucceſs in his Sute. *Our Fathers truſted in thee, and thou didſt deliver them*, ſaith *David*, *Pſal.* 22. 4. And *Jehoſaphat* in a caſe of diſtreſs, 2 *Chron.* 20. 7. *Art not thou our God, that didſt drive out the Inhabitants of this Land before thy People Iſrael?* When we have not any Statute Law and Promiſe to plead, we may plead his Power, together with the former Preſidents and Acts of it. The *Centurion* had nothing elſe to act his Faith upon, but the Power of Chriſt, and ſome Evidences of it in the Miracles reported of him; but he is ſilent in the latter, and caſts himſelf only upon the former, acknowledging that *Chriſt* had the ſame *command over Diſeaſes, as himſelf had over his Soldiers**. And our Saviour when he receives the petition of the blind men, requires no more of them in order to a Cure, but a belief of his Ability to perform it; *Math.* 9. 28. *Believe you that I am able to do this?* His Will is not known but by Revelation, but his Power is apprehended by Reaſon, as eſſentially and eternally linkt with the Notion of a God. God alſo is jealous of the Honour of this Attribute; and ſince it is ſo much virtually diſcredited, he is pleaſed when any do cordially own it, and intirely reſign themſelves to the aſſiſtance of it.

† 2 Chron. 14. 11.

* Matth. 8. 10.

Well then, in all Duties where Faith is particularly to be acted, forget not this as the main prop of it: Do you pray for a flouriſhing and triumphing Grace? Conſider him *as able to make all Grace to abound in you*, 2 *Cor* 9. 8. Do you want comfort and reviving under your contritions and godly ſorrow? Conſider him as he declares himſelf, *The high and lofty One*, *Iſa.* 57. 15: Are you under preſſing diſtreſſes? take *Eliphaz* his advice to *Job*, when he tells him what he himſelf would do if he were in his caſe; *Job* 5. 8. *I would ſeek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cauſe:* But obſerve under what conſideration, *Verſ.* 9. as to one *that doth great things and unſearchable; marvellous things without number.* When you beg of him the melting your rocky hearts, the daſhing in pieces your ſtrong Corruptions, the drawing his beautiful Image in your Soul, the quickning your dead hearts, and reviving your drooping Spirits, and ſupplying your Spiritual wants, conſider him as one *able to do abundantly*, not only *above what you can ask*, but *above what you can think*, *Eph.* 3. 20. Faith will be ſpiritleſs, and Prayer will be liveleſs, if Power be not eyed

eyed by us in those things which cannot be done without an Arm of Omnipotence.

3. This Doctrine teacheth us *Humility* and *Submission*. The vast disproportion between the mightiness of God, and the meanness of a Creature, inculcates the Lesson of Humility in his Presence: How becoming is Humility *under a mighty hand*? 1 *Pet.* 5. 6. What is an Infant in a Giants hand, or a Lamb in a Lions paw? Submission to irresistible Power is the best Policy, and the best security: This gratifies and draws out Goodness, whereas murmuring and resistance exasperates and sharpens Power. We sanctify his Name, and glorify his strength by falling down before it; 'tis an acknowledgment of his invisible strength, and our inability to match it. How low should we therefore lye before him, against whose Power our Pride and Murmuring can do no good, who can out-wrestle us in our Contests, and alway *overcome when he judges*? Rom. 3. 4.

4. This Doctrine teacheth us, *not to fear the pride and force of man*. How unreasonable is it, to fear a limited above an unbounded Power? How unbecoming is the fear of man in him, who hath an interest in a Strength able to curb the strongest Devils? Who would tremble at the threats of a Dwarf, that hath a mighty and watchful Giant for his Guard? If *God* doth but *arise*, *his enemies are scattered*, Psal. 68. 1. the least motion makes them fly before him: 'Tis no difficult thing for him, that made them by a word, to unmake their designs, and shiver them in pieces by the breath of his mouth: *He brings Princes to nothing, and makes the Judges of the Eearth vanity; they wither when he blows upon them, and their stock shall not take root in the Earth. He can command a whirlwind to take them away as stubble*, Isai. 40. 23. 24. yea, with the *shaking of his hand, he makes Servants to become Rulers* of those that were their Masters, *Zech.* 2. 9. Whole Nations are no more in his hands than a *morning Cloud*, or the *dew upon the ground*, or *the chaff before the wind*, or the smoak against the motion of the Air, which though it appear out of a Chimney like a black invincible Cloud, is quickly dispersed, and becomes invisible*. How inconsiderable are the most Mighty to this Strength, which can puff away a whole world of proud Grashoppers, and a whole Sky of daring Clouds? He that by his word masters the rage of the Sea, can over-rule the Pride and Power of Men. Where is the Fury of the Oppressor? It cannot over-leap the Bounds he hath set it, nor march an inch beyond the point he hath prescrib'd it. Fear not the confederacies of man, but *sanctifie the Lord of Hosts, let him be your fear, and let him be your dread*, Isai. 8. 13. To fear men is to dishonour the Name of God, and regard him as a feeble Lord, and not as the Lord of Hosts, who is mighty in strength, so that they that harden themselves against him *shall not prosper*.

* Hos. 13. 3.

5. Therefore this Doctrine teacheth us *the fear of God*. The *Prophet Jeremiah* counts it as an impossible thing for men to be destitute of the fear of God, when they seriously consider his Name to be great and mighty. *Jer.* 10. 6, 7. *Thou art great, and thy Name is great in might; who would not fear thee, O thou King of Nations*? Shall we not tremble at his Presence, who hath placed the *Sand for the bound of the Sea by a perpetual decree*; that though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet they *cannot prevail*, Jer. 5. 22. He can Arm the weakest Creature for our destruction, and disarm the strongest Creatures which appear for our preservation. He can command a hair, a crumb, a kernel to go awry, and strangle us. He can make the Heavens brass over our head, stop close the bottles of the Clouds, and make the fruit of the Fields droop, when there is a small distance to the Harvest; he can arm mens wit, wealth, hands against themselves: He can turn our sweet morsels into bitter, and our own Consciences into devouring Lions: He can root up Cities by Moles, and conquer the proudest by Lice and Worms. The Omnipotence of God is not only the Object of a Believer's trust, but a Believer's fear. 'Tis from the consideration of this Power only, that our *Saviour* presses his Disciples, whom he intitles his *Friends*, *to fear God*; which Lesson he presses by a *double repetition*, and with a kind of Asseveration, without rendring any other Reason than this of the *ability of God to cast into Hell*, Luke 12. 5. We are to fear him because he can; but bless his goodness because he will not. In regard of his Omnipotence, he is to be reverenc'd, not only by mortal Men, but by the blessed Angels, who are past the fear of any danger by his Power, being confirm'd in a

happy ſtate by his unalterable Grace: When they adore him for his Holineſs, they reverence him for his Power with covered Faces: The Title of the *Lord of Hoſts* is joyned in their reverential praiſe with that of his Holineſs, *Iſai.* 6. 3. *Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hoſts.* How ſhould we adore that Power which can preſerve us, when Devils and Men conſpire to deſtroy us? How ſhould we ſtand in awe of that Power which can deſtroy us, though Angels and Men ſhould combine to preſerve us? The parts of his ways which are diſcovered, are ſufficient Motives to an humble and reverential Adoration: But who can fear and adore him according to the vaſtneſs of his Power, and his excellent Greatneſs, ſince the *Thunder of his Power who can underſtand?*

A DISCOURSE UPON THE Holineſs of God.

Exodus 15. 11.

Who is like unto thee, Oh Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in Holineſs, fearful in praiſes, doing wonders.

THis Verſe is one of the loftieſt deſcriptions of the Majeſty and Excellency of God in the whole Scripture *. 'Tis a part of *Moſes*'s Ἐπινίκιον, or *Triumphant Song*, after a great and real, and a Typical Victory; in the womb of which all the deliverances of the *Church* were couch'd. 'Tis the firſt Song upon Holy Record, and it conſiſts of Gratulatory and Prophetick Matter: It caſts a look backward, to what God did for them in their Deliverance from *Egypt*; and a look forward, to what God ſhall do for the *Church* in future Ages. That Deliverance was but a rough draught of ſomething more excellent to be wrought towards the cloſing up of the World; when his Plagues ſhall be poured out upon the *Antichriſtian* Powers, which ſhould revive the ſame *Song of Moſes* in the Church; as fitted ſo many Ages before for ſuch a Scene of Affairs †. 'Tis obſerv'd therefore, that many words in this Song are put in the *Future Tenſe*, noting a time to come; and the very firſt word, *ver.* 1. *Then Sang Moſes and the Children of Iſrael this Song*: יָשִׁיר *ſhall ſing*; implying, that it was compos'd and calculated for the celebrating ſome greater Action of Gods, which was to be wrought in the world *. Upon this account ſome of the *Jewiſh Rabbins*, from the conſideration of this Remark, aſſerted the Doctrine of the *Reſurrection* to be meant in this place; That *Moſes* and thoſe *Iſraelites* ſhould riſe again to ſing the ſame Song, for ſome greater Miracles God ſhould work, and greater Triumphs he ſhould bring forth, exceeding thoſe Wonders at their Deliverance from *Egypt*.

* Trap. *in loc.*

† Rev. 15. 2. 3.

* Manaſſ. ben. Iſrael, *de Reſur. lib.* 1. *cap.* 1. *p.* 7.

* It conſiſts of, 1. *A Preface*, Verſ. 1. *I will ſing unto the Lord.*

2. *An Hiſtorical Narration of matter of fact*, Verſ. 3, 4. *Pharaohs Chariots and his Hoſt hath he caſt into the Red Sea*; which he ſolely aſcribes to God, *verſ* 6. *Thy right hand, oh Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, oh Lord, hath daſht in pieces the Enemy*; which he doth Prophetically, as reſpecting ſomething to be done in After times; or further, for the compleating of that Deliverance; or as Others think, reſpecting their entring into *Canaan*; for the words in theſe two *Verſes* are put in the *Future Tenſe*. The manner of the Deliverance is deſcribed *verſe* 8. *The Flouds ſtood upright as an heap, and the depths were congeal'd in the heart*

* Pareus *in* Exod 15.

heart of the Sea. In the *9th Verſe*, he magnifies the Victory from the Vainglory and ſecurity of the Enemy; *The Enemy ſaid, I will purſue, I will overtake, I will divide the ſpoil*, &c. And *Verſe* 16. 17. he prophetically deſcribes the fruit of this Victory, in the influence it ſhall have upon thoſe Nations, by whoſe Confines they were to Travel to the Promiſed Land; *Fear and dread ſhall fall upon them: By the greatneſs of thy Arm they ſhall be as ſtill as a ſtone, till thy People paſs over which thou haſt purchaſed.* The phraſe of this, and the *17th* and *18th Verſes*, ſeems to be more magnificent, than to deſign only the bringing the *Iſraelites* to the Earthly *Canaan*; but ſeems to reſpect the gathering his Redeemed Ones together, to place them in the Spiritual Sanctuary which he had eſtabliſhed, wherein the Lord ſhould Reign for ever and ever, without any Enemies to diſturb his Royalty; *The Lord ſhall reign for ever and ever*, v. 18. The *Prophet*, in the midſt of his Hiſtorical Narrative, ſeems to be in an extaſie, and breaks out in a ſtately exaltation of God in the Text.

Who is like unto thee, oh Lord, among the gods, &c.] Interrogations are in Scripture the ſtrongeſt Affirmations or Negations: 'Tis here a ſtrong Affirmation of the Incomparableneſs of God, and a ſtrong denial of the worthineſs of all Creatures to be partners with him in the degrees of his Excellency: 'Tis a preference of God before all Creatures in *Holineſs*, to which the purity of Creatures is but a ſhadow; in deſert of Reverence and Veneration, he being *Fearful in praiſes*. The Angels cover their Faces when they adore him in his particular Perfections.

* Rivet. *Amongſt the gods.*] Among the *Idols* of the Nations, ſay ſome; Others ſay * 'Tis not to be found that the *Heathen Idols* are ever dignified with the Title of *Strong* or *Mighty*, as the word tranſlated *Gods*, doth import; and therefore underſtand it of the Angels, or other Potentates of the World; or rather incluſively, of all that are noted for, and can lay claim to the Title of *Strength* and *Might* upon the Earth or in Heaven. God is ſo Great and Majeſtick, that no Creature can ſhare with him in his Praiſe.

Fearful in praiſes.] Various are the Interpretations of this paſſage: To be *reverenc'd in praiſes*; his Praiſe ought to be celebrated with a Religious Fear. Fear is the product of his Mercy as well as his Juſtice; *He hath forgiveneſs that he may be feared, Pſal.* 130. 4. Or, *Fearful in praiſes*; whom none can praiſe without Amazement at the conſiderations of his works. † Calvin. † None can truly praiſe him without being affected with Aſtoniſhment at his Greatneſs. Or, *Fearful in praiſes*; * Munſter. * whom no Mortal can ſufficiently praiſe, ſince he is above all Praiſe. Whatſoever a Human Tongue can ſpeak, or an Angelical Underſtanding think of the Excellency of his Nature and the Greatneſs of his Works, falls ſhort of the vaſtneſs of the Divine Perfection. A Creatures Praiſes of God are as much below the tranſcendent Eminency of God, as the meaneſs of a Creatures Being is below the Eternal Fulneſs of the Creator. Or rather, *Fearful*, or Terrible *in praiſes*; that is, in the Matter of thy Praiſe: And the Learned *Rivet* concurs with me in this ſenſe. The Works of God celebrated in this *Song* were Terrible: It was the Miraculous overthrow of the Strength and Flower of a Mighty Nation: His Judgments were ſevere, as well as his Mercy was ſeaſonable. The word נורא ſignifies *Glorious* and *Illuſtrious*, as well as *Terrible* and *Fearful*. No Man can hear the Praiſe of thy Name, for thoſe great Judicial Acts, without ſome Aſtoniſhment at thy Juſtice, the ſtream, and thy *Holineſs* the Spring of thoſe Mighty Works. This ſeems to be the ſenſe of the following words, *Doing wonders*: Fearful in the Matter of thy Praiſe, they being Wonders which thou haſt done among us and for us.

Doing wonders.] Congealing the Waters by a Wind, to make them ſtand like Walls for the reſcue of the *Iſraelites*; and melting them by a Wind, for the overthrow of the *Egyptians*, are prodigies that challenge the greateſt Adorations of that *Mercy* which delivered the one, and that *Juſtice* which puniſhed the other; and of the Arm of that Power whereby he effected both his Gracious and his Righteous Purpoſes.

Doctr. Whence obſerve, That *the Judgments of God upon his Enemies, as well as his Mercies to his People, are matter of Praiſe.* The Perfections of God appear in both

both. *Justice* and *Mercy* are so linkt together in his acts of Providence, that the one cannot be forgotten whiles the other is acknowledged. He is never so Terrible as in the *Assemblies of his Saints*, and the Deliverance of them, *Psal.* 89. 7. As the Creation was erected by him for his Glory; so all the Acts of his Government are design'd for the same end: And his Creatures deny him his due, if they acknowledge not his Excellency in whatsoever dreadful, as well as pleasing Garbs, it appears in the World. His Terror as well as his Righteousness appears, when he is a *God of Salvation*. Psal. 65. 5. *By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, oh God of our Salvation.*

But the Expression I pitch upon in the *Text* to handle, is *Glorious in Holiness*. † He is *Magnified* or *Honourable in Holiness*; so the word נאדר is translated *Isai.* 42. 21. *He will magnifie the Law and make it Honourable.* Thy Holiness hath shone forth admirably in this last Exploit, against the Enemies and Oppressors of thy People. The *Holiness* of God is his Glory, as his *Grace* is his Riches: *Holiness* is his Crown, and his *Mercy* is his Treasure. This is the Blessedness and Nobleness of his Nature; it renders him Glorious in himself, and Glorious to his Creatures, that understand any thing of this lovely Perfection.

Holiness is a glorious Perfection belonging to the Nature of God. Hence he is in Scripture styled often the *Holy one*, the *Holy one of Jacob*, the *Holy one of Israel*; and oftner entituled *Holy*, than *Almighty*, and set forth by this part of his Dignity more than by any other. This is more affix'd as an Epithete to his Name than any other: You never find it exprest, his *Mighty Name*, or his *Wise Name*; but his *Great Name*, and most of all, his *Holy Name*. This is his greatest Title of Honour, in *this* doth the Majesty and Venerableness of his Name appear. When the Sinfulness of *Senacherib* is aggravated, the Holy Ghost takes the rise from this Attribute, 2 *Kings* 19. 22, *Thou hast lift up thine eyes on high even against the Holy one of Israel*; not against the *Wise*, *Mighty*, &c. but against the *Holy one of Israel*, as that wherein the *Majesty* of God was most illustrious. 'Tis upon this account he is called *Light*, as Impurity is called *Darkness*; both in this sence are opposed to one another: He is a pure and unmixt Light, free from all blemish in his Essence, Nature, and Operations. *Doctr.*

1. *Heathens have own'd it. Proclus* calls him, the *Undefiled Governour of the World* *. The Poetical Transformations of their False gods, and the Extravagancies committed by them, was (in the account of the wisest of them) an unholy thing to report and hear †. * And some vindicate *Epicurus* from the Atheism wherewith he was commonly charged; that he did not deny the Being of God, but those Adulterous and contentious Deities the People worshipped, which were Practises unworthy and unbecoming the Nature of God. Hence they asserted, that Virtue was an imitation of God, and a Virtuous Man bore a resemblance to God: If Virtue were a Copy from God, a greater Holiness must be owned in the Original. And when some of them were at a loss, how to free God from being the Author of Sin in the World, they ascribe the birth of Sin to Matter, and run into an absurd Opinion, fancying it to be uncreated, that thereby they might exempt God from all mixture of Evil; so Sacred with them was the Conception of God, as a *Holy God*.

* Ἄχραντος ὑγιαίνων.

† Οὐδ' ἀκούειν ὅσιον. Ammon. *in* Plut. *de* Ei *apud* Delphos, p. 393.

* Gassend. *Tom* 1. *Phys.* §. 1. *lib.* 4. *cap* 2. p. 289.

2. *The Absurdest Hereticks have own'd it.* * The *Manichees* and *Marchionites*, that thought Evil came by Necessity, yet would salve Gods being the Author of it, by asserting two distinct Eternal Principles, One the Original of Evil, as God was the Fountain of good: So rooted was the Notion of this Divine Purity, that none would ever slander Goodness it self with that which was so disparaging to it.

* Petav. *Theol. Dogmat. Tom.* 1. *lib.* 6. *cap.* 5. p. 415.

3. *The Nature of God cannot rationally be conceived without it.* Though the *Power* of God be the first Rational conclusion, drawn from the sight of his Works; *Wisdom* the next, from the order and connexion of his Works: *Purity* must result from the beauty of his Works: That God cannot be deform'd by Evil, who hath made every thing so beautiful in its time. The Notion of a God cannot be entertain'd, without separating from him whatsoever is impure and bespotting both in his Essence and Actions. Though we conceive him Infinite in Majesty,

jeſty, Infinite in Eſſence, Eternal in Duration, Mighty in Power, and Wiſe, and Immutable in his Counſels; Merciful in his Proceedings with Men, and whatſoever other Perfections may dignify ſo Sovereign a Being; yet if we conceive him deſtitute of this excellent Perfection, and imagine him poſſeſſed with the leaſt contagion of Evil, we make him but an Infinite Monſter, and ſully all thoſe Perfections we aſcrib'd to him before; we rather own him a *Devil*, than a God. 'Tis a contradiction to be God and to be Darkneſs, or to have one Mote of Darkneſs mixed with his Light. 'Tis a leſs Injury to him to deny his Being, than to deny the Purity of it; the one makes him no God, the other a deform'd, unlovely, and a deteſtable God.

Plutarch ſaid not amiſs, that he ſhould count himſelf leſs injured by that Man, that ſhould deny that there was ſuch a Man as *Plutarch*, than by him that ſhould affirm that there was ſuch a one indeed, but he was a debauch'd Fellow, a looſe and vicious Perſon. 'Tis a leſs wrong to God to diſcard any acknowledgments of his Being, and to count him Nothing; than to believe him to exiſt, but imagine a baſe and unholy Deity: He that ſaith, *God is not Holy*, ſpeaks much worſe than he that ſaith, *There is no God at all.*

Let theſe *two Things* be conſidered:

1. *If any, this Attribute hath an excellency above his other Perfections.* There are ſome Attributes of God we prefer, becauſe of our Intereſt in them, and the relation they bear to us: As we eſteem his *Goodneſs* before his *Power*; and his *Mercy* whereby he relieves us, before his *Juſtice* whereby he puniſheth us. As there are ſome we more delight in, becauſe of the goodneſs we receive by them; ſo there are ſome that God delights to honour, becauſe of their Excellency.

1. *None is ſounded out ſo loftily with ſuch ſolemnity, and ſo frequently by Angels that ſtand before his Throne, as this.* Where do you find any other Attribute trebled in the Praiſes of it, as this? *Iſai.* 6. 3. *Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hoſts, the whole Earth is full of his Glory*; and *Rev.* 4. 8. The *four Beaſts reſt not day and night, ſaying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God, Almighty, &c.* His Power or Soveraignty, as *Lord of Hoſts*, is but once mentioned; but with a ternal repetition of his Holineſs. Do you hear in any Angelical Song any other Perfection of the Divine Nature thrice repeated? Where do we read of the crying out *Eternal, Eternal, Eternal*; or *Faithful, Faithful, Faithful Lord God of Hoſts?* Whatſoever other Attribute is left out, *this* God would have to fill the Mouths of Angels and Bleſſed Spirits for ever in Heaven.

2. *He ſingles it out to ſwear by.* Pſal. 89. 35. *Once have I ſworn by my Holineſs, that I will not lie unto David*: And *Amos* 4. 2. *The Lord will ſwear by his Holineſs*: He twice ſwears by his Holineſs; once by his Power, *Iſai.* 62. 8. once by all, when he ſwears by his Name, *Jer.* 44. 26. He lays here his Holineſs to pledge for the aſſurance of his Promiſe, as the Attribute moſt dear to him, moſt valued by him, as though no other could give an aſſurance parallel to it in this concern of an Everlaſting Redemption which is there ſpoken of: He that ſwears, ſwears by a greater than himſelf; God having no greater than himſelf, ſwears by himſelf: And ſwearing here by his Holineſs, ſeems to equal that ſingle one to all his other Attributes; as if he were more concern'd in the Honour of it, than of all the reſt. 'Tis as if he ſhould have ſaid, ſince I have not a more excellent Perfection to ſwear by, than that of my Holineſs. I lay this to pawn for your ſecurity, and bind my ſelf by that which I will never part with, were it poſſible for me to be ſtript of all the reſt. 'Tis a tacit Imprecation of himſelf, If I lye unto *David*, let me never be counted *holy*, or thought righteous enough to be truſted by Angels or Men. This Attribute he makes moſt of.

3. *Tis his glory and beauty.* Holineſs is the Honour of the Creature, *ſanctification and honour* are linkt together, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 4. much more is it the honour of God; 'tis the *Image* of God in the Creature*: When we take the Picture of a Man, we draw the moſt beautiful part, the Face, which is a Member of the greateſt excellency. When God would be drawn to the Life, as much as can be, in the Spirit of his Creatures, He is drawn in this Attribute, as being the moſt beautiful Perfection of God, and moſt valuable with him. *Power* is his Hand and Arm,

* Epheſ. 4. 24.

Omni-

Omniſcience, his Eye; *Mercy*, his Bowels; *Eternity*, his Duration; his *Holineſs* is his Beauty; 2 *Chron.* 20. 21.—*ſhould praiſe the Beauty of Holineſs.* In the 27*th Pſalm* and the 4*th* Verſe, *David* deſires *to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and enquire in his Holy Temple*; that is, the Holineſs of God manifeſted in his hatred of Sin in the daily Sacrifices. *Holineſs* was the Beauty of the Temple, *Iſai.* 46. 11. *Holy* and *Beautiful Houſe* are joyned together; much more the Beauty of God that dwelt in the Sanctuary.

This renders him lovely to all his Innocent Creatures, though formidable to the Guilty ones. * A *Heathen* Philoſopher could call it, the *Beauty of the Divine Eſſence*, and ſay, That God was not ſo happy by an Eternity of Life, as by an Excellency of Virtue. And the *Angels* Song intimate it to be his glory, *Iſaiah* 6. 3. *The whole Earth is full of thy Glory*; that is, of his Holineſs in his Laws, and in his Judgments againſt Sin; that being the Attribute applauded by them before.

* Plutarch. Eugubin. *de Perenni Phil. lib.* 6. *cap.* 6.

4. *'Tis his very life.* So it is called, *Epheſ.* 4. 18. *Alienated from the life of God*, that is, from the *Holineſs* of God; ſpeaking of the oppoſite to it, the *Uncleanneſs* and *Prophaneneſs* of the *Gentiles*. We are only alienated from that which we are bound to imitate; but this is the perfection, alway ſet out as the pattern of our Actions, *Be you Holy, as I am Holy*; no other is propoſed as our Copy. Alienated from that *Purity of God*, which is as much as his *Life*, without which he could not live. If he were ſtript of this, he would be a dead God more, than by the want of any other Perfection. His Swearing by it intimates as much; He Swears often by his own Life, *As I live, ſaith the Lord*: ſo he Swears by his Holineſs, as if it were his Life, and more his Life than any other. *Let me not Live*, or *Let me not be Holy*, are all one in his Oath. His Deity could not out-live the Life of his Purity.

II. *As it ſeems to challenge an Excellency above all his other Perfections, ſo 'tis the glory of all the reſt.* As it is the glory of the Godhead, ſo 'tis the glory of every Perfection in the Godhead. As his *Power* is the Strength of them, ſo his *Holineſs* is the Beauty of them. As all would be weak without *Almightineſs* to back them; ſo all would be uncomly without *Holineſs* to adorn them. Should this be ſullied, all the reſt would loſe their Honour and their comfortable Efficacy. As at the ſame inſtant that the *Sun* ſhould loſe its Light, it would loſe its Heat, its Strength, its generative and quickning Virtue. As *Sincerity* is the luſtre of every Grace in a Chriſtian; ſo is *Purity* the ſplendor of every Attribute in the Godhead. His Juſtice, is a holy Juſtice; his Wiſdom, a holy Wiſdom; his Arm of Power, a *Holy Arm*, Pſal. 98. 1. his Truth or Promiſe, a *Holy Promiſe*, Pſal. 105. 42. *Holy* and *True* go hand in hand, *Revel.* 6. 10. His *Name* which ſignifies all his Attributes in conjunction, *is Holy*, Pſal. 103. 1. Yea, he is *Righteous in all his ways, and Holy in all his works*, Pſal. 145. 17. 'Tis the Rule of all his Acts, the Source of all his Puniſhments. If every Attribute of the Deity were a diſtinct Member, *Purity* would be the Form, the Soul, the Spirit to animate them. Without it, his *Patience* would be an Indulgence to Sin, his *Mercy* a Fondneſs, his *Wrath* a Madneſs, his *Power* a Tyranny, his *Wiſdom* an unworthy Subtilty. 'Tis this gives a *Decorum* to all. His *Mercy* is not exercis'd without it, ſince he pardons none but thoſe that have an Intereſt, by Union in the Obedience of a *Mediator*, which was ſo delightful to his Infinite Purity. His *Juſtice*, which Guilty man is apt to tax with Cruelty and Violence in the exerciſe of it, is not acted out of the compaſs of this Rule. In Acts of Mans vindictive Juſtice there is ſomething of Impurity, Perturbation, Paſſion, ſome mixture of Cruelty; but none of theſe fall upon God in the ſevereſt Acts of Wrath. When God appears to *Ezekiel* in the reſemblance of *Fire*, to ſignifie his Anger againſt the *Houſe of Judah* for their Idolatry, *from his Loyns downward* there was *the appearance of Fire*; but *from the Loyns upward, the appearance of Brightneſs, as the colour of Amber*, Ezek. 8. 2. His Heart is cleft in his moſt Terrible acts of Vengeance, 'tis a *pure Flame* wherewith he ſcorcheth and burns his Enemies. He is *Holy* in the moſt fiery appearance. This Attribute therefore is never ſo much applauded, as when his Sword hath been drawn, and he hath manifeſted the greateſt fierceneſs againſt his Enemies. The Magnificent and Triumphant expreſſion of it in the *Text*, follows juſt upon Gods

Gods Miraculous defeat and ruine of the *Egyptian* Army, *The Sea covered them; they ſank as Lead in the mighty waters*: Then it follows, *Who is like unto thee, oh Lord, glorious in Holineſs?* And when it was ſo celebrated by the *Seraphims*, *Iſai.* 6. 3. It was when the *Poſts moved*, and *the Houſe was filled with ſmoke*, v. 4. which are ſigns of Anger, *Pſal.* 18. 7, 8. And when he was about to ſend *Iſaiah* upon a Meſſage of Spiritual and Temporal Judgments, that he would make the *heart of that people fat, and their ears heavy, and their eyes ſhut; waſte their Cities without Inhabitant, and their Houſes without Man, and make the Land deſolate*, Verſes 9, 10, 11, 12. and the Angels which here applaud him for his Holineſs, are the Executioners of his Juſtice; and here called *Seraphims*, from *burning*, or *fiery Spirits*, as being the Miniſters of his Wrath. His *Juſtice* is part of his *Holineſs*, whereby he doth reduce into order thoſe things that are out of order. When he is conſuming Men by his Fury, he doth not diminiſh, but manifeſt Purity; *Zephany* 3. 5. *The juſt Lord is in the midſt of her, he will do no iniquity.* Every action of his is free from all tincture of Evil. 'Tis alſo celebrated with praiſe by the *four Beaſts* about his *Throne*, when he appears in a Covenant garb, with a *Rain-bow about his Throne*, and yet with *Thundrings* and *Lightnings* ſhot out againſt his Enemies, *Revel.* 4. 8. *compared with* Verſ. 3. 5. to ſhew, that all his Acts of *Mercy* as well as *Juſtice*, are clear from any ſtain.

This is the Crown of all his Attributes, the Life of all his Decrees, the Brightneſs of all his Actions: Nothing is Decreed by him, nothing is acted by him but what is worthy of the Dignity, and becoming the Honour of this Attribute.

For the better underſtanding this Attribute, obſerve,

1. *The Nature of this Holineſs.*
2. *The Demonſtration of it.*
3. *The Purity of his Nature in all his Acts about Sin.*
4. *The Uſe of all to our ſelves.*

First, *The Nature of Divine Holineſs.*

In *General.*

The *Holineſs of God Negatively*, is a *perfect and pollated freedom from all Evil.* As we call Gold pure that is not embaſed by any Droſs, and that Garment clean that is free from any Spot; ſo the Nature of God is eſtranged from all ſhadow of Evil, all imaginable contagion.

Poſitively, 'Tis the *Rectitude or Integrity of the Divine Nature, or that conformity of it in Affection and Action to the Divine Will, as to his Eternal Law, whereby he works with a becomingneſs to his own Excellency, and whereby he hath a delight and complacency in every thing agreeable to his Will, and an abhorrency of every thing contrary thereunto.*

As there is no darkneſs in his Underſtanding, ſo there is no ſpot in his Will: As his Mind is poſſeſſed with all Truth, ſo there is no deviation in his Will from it. He loves all Truth and Goodneſs; He hates all Falſity and Evil. In regard of his Righteouſneſs, he loves Righteouſneſs; *Pſal.* 11. 7. *The righteous Lord loveth righteouſneſs; and hath no pleaſure in wickedneſs, Pſal.* 5. 4. He values Purity in his Creatures, and deteſts all Impurity, whether inward or outward. * We may indeed diſtinguiſh the *Holineſs* of God from his *Righteouſneſs* in our Conceptions: *Holineſs* is a Perfection abſolutely conſidered in the Nature of God; *Righteouſneſs*, a Perfection as referred to others in his Actions towards them and upon them.

* Martin. *de Deo*, p. 86.

In *Particular.*

This *Property* of the *Divine Nature* is,

First, *An eſſential and neceſſary Perfection*: He is eſſentially and neceſſarily Holy. 'Tis the eſſential glory of his Nature: His Holineſs is as neceſſary to his Being, as neceſſary as his Omniſcience: As he cannot but know what is right, ſo he

he cannot but do what is juſt. His Underſtanding is not as Created Underſtandings, capable of Ignorance as well as Knowledge; ſo his Will is not as Created Wills, capable of Unrighteouſneſs, as well as Righteouſneſs. There can be no contradiction or contrariety in the Divine Nature, to know what is right, and to do what is wrong: If ſo, there would be a diminution of his Bleſſedneſs, he would not be a God alway bleſſed, *Bleſſed for ever*, as he is *. He is as neceſſarily Holy, as he is neceſſarily God; as neceſſarily without Sin, as without Change. As he was God from Eternity, ſo he was Holy from Eternity. † He was Gracious, Merciful, Juſt in his own Nature, and alſo Holy; though no Creature had been framed by him to exerciſe his Grace, Mercy, Juſtice, or Holineſs upon. If God had not created a World, he had in his own Nature been Almighty, and able to Create a World. If there never had been any thing but himſelf, yet he had been *Omniſcient*, knowing every thing that was within the verge and compaſs of his Infinite Power; ſo he was Pure in his own Nature, though he never had brought forth any Rational Creature whereby to manifeſt this Purity. Theſe Perfections are ſo neceſſary, that the Nature of God could not ſubſiſt without them. And the acts of thoſe *ad intra*, or within himſelf, are neceſſary; for being *Omniſcient* in Nature, there muſt be an act of Knowledge of Himſelf and his own Nature. Being Infinitely Holy, an act of *Holineſs* in Infinitely loving himſelf, muſt neceſſarily flow from this Perfection *. As the Divine Will cannot but be perfect; ſo it cannot be wanting to render the higheſt Love to it ſelf, to its Goodneſs, to the Divine Nature, which is due to him. Indeed, the acts of thoſe *ad extra* are not neceſſary, but upon a condition. To love Righteouſneſs without himſelf, or to deteſt Sin, or inflict Puniſhment for the committing of it, could not have been, had there been no Righteous Creature for him to love, no Sinning Creature for him to loath, and to exerciſe his Juſtice upon as the Object of Puniſhment.

* Rom. 9. 5.

† Turretin. *de Satisfac.* p. 28.

* Ochino, *Predic. part.* 3. *Bodic.* 51. *pag.* 347, 348.

Some Attributes require a Condition to make the Acts of them neceſſary. As it is at Gods liberty, whether he will create a Rational Creature, or no: But when he decrees to make either Angel or Man, 'tis neceſſary from the Perfection of his Nature to make them Righteous. 'Tis at Gods liberty whether he will ſpeak to Man, or no; but if he doth, 'tis impoſſible for him to ſpeak that which is falſe, becauſe of his Infinite Perfection of Veracity. 'Tis at his liberty whether he will permit a Creature to ſin; but if he ſees good to ſuffer it, 'tis impoſſible but that he ſhould deteſt that Creature that goes croſs to his Righteous Nature. His Holineſs is not ſolely an Act of his Will, for then he might be Unholy as well as Holy; he might love Iniquity and hate Righteouſneſs; he might then command that which is good, and afterwards command that which is bad and unworthy: For what is only an act of his Will, and not belonging to his Nature, is indifferent to him. As the poſitive Law he gave to *Adam*, of not eating the *Forbidden Fruit*, was a pure Act of his Will; he might have given him liberty to eat of it, if he had pleaſed, as well as prohibited him. But what is moral and good in its own Nature, is neceſſarily willed by God, and cannot be changed by him, becauſe of the tranſcendent eminency of his Nature, and righteouſneſs of his Will. As it is impoſſible for God to command his Creature to hate him, or to diſpence with a Creature for not loving him; for this would be to command a thing intrinſically Evil, the higheſt Ingratitude, the very Spirit of all Wickedneſs, which conſiſts in the hating God. Yet though God be thus neceſſarily Holy, he is not ſo by a bare and ſimple neceſſity, as the *Sun* ſhines, or the *Fire* burns; but by a free neceſſity, not compelled thereunto, but inclined from the fulneſs of the Perfection of his own Nature and Will; ſo as by no means he can be Unholy, becauſe he will not be Unholy; 'tis againſt his Nature to be ſo.

2. *God is only abſolutely Holy. There is none Holy as the Lord.* 'Tis the peculiar glory of his Nature. As there is none Good but God, ſo none Holy but God. No Creature can be eſſentially Holy, becauſe mutable: *Holineſs* is the ſubſtance of God; but a Quality and Accident in a Creature. God is Infinitely Holy, Creatures Finitely Holy. He is holy from Himſelf, Creatures are holy by derivation from him. He is not only Holy, but Holineſs; *Holineſs*, in the higheſt degree, is his ſole Prerogative. As the higheſt Heaven is called the *Heaven of*

1 Sam. 2. 2.

Heavens, becauſe it embraceth in its Circle all the Heavens, and contains the magnitude of them, and hath a greater vaſtneſs above all that it incloſeth; ſo is God the *Holy of Holies*, He contains the Holineſs of all Creatures put together, and infinitely more. As all the Wiſdom, Excellency, and Power of the Creatures, if compar'd with the Wiſdom, Excellency, and Power of God, is but folly, vileneſs, and weakneſs; ſo the higheſt created Purity, if ſet in parallel with God, is but impurity and uncleanneſs, *Revel.* 15.4. *Thou only art Holy*: 'Tis like the light of a *Glow-worm* to that of the *Sun* †; *The Heavens are not pure in his ſight, and his Angels he charged with folly*, Job 4.18. Though God hath Crowned the Angels with an unſpotted Sanctity, and placed them in a habitation of Glory; yet as Illuſtrious as they are, they have an Unworthineſs in their own Nature to appear before the Throne of ſo Holy a God; Their holineſs grows dim and pale in his Preſence. 'Tis but a weak ſhadow of that Divine Purity, whoſe Light is ſo glorious, that it makes them *cover their faces* out of weakneſs to behold it, and cover their Feet out of ſhame in themſelves. They are not *pure in his ſight*, becauſe though they love God (which is a Principle of Holineſs) as much as they can, yet not ſo much as he deſerves: They love him with the intenſeſt degree, according to their Power; but not with the intenſeſt degree, according to his own Amiableneſs: For they cannot infinitely love God, unleſs they were as Infinite as God, and had an underſtanding of his Perfections equal with himſelf, and as immenſe as his own Knowledge. God having an Infinite Knowledge of himſelf, can only have an Infinite love to himſelf, and conſequently an Infinite Holineſs without any defect; becauſe he loves himſelf according to the vaſtneſs of his own Amiableneſs, which no finite Being can. Therefore, though the Angels be exempt from Corruption and Soil, they cannot enter into compariſon with the Purity of God, without acknowledgement of a dimneſs in themſelves. Beſides, *He charges them with folly*, and *puts no truſt* in them; becauſe they have the power of ſinning, though not the act of ſinning: They have a poſſible folly in their own Nature to be charged with. *Holineſs* is a quality ſeparable from them, but it is inſeparable from God. Had they not at firſt a mutability in their Nature, none of them could have ſinned, there had been no *Devils*; but becauſe ſome of them ſinned, the reſt might have ſinned: And though the ſtanding Angels ſhall never be changed, yet they are ſtill changeable in their own Nature, and their ſtanding is due to Grace, not to Nature; and though they ſhall be for ever preſerved, yet they are not, nor ever can be Immutable by Nature, for then they ſhould ſtand upon the ſame bottom with God himſelf; but they are ſupported by Grace againſt that Changeableneſs of Nature which is eſſential to a Creature: The Creator *only hath Immortality*, that is, Immutability *.

† Job 15.15.

* 1 Tim. 3.16.

'Tis as certain a Truth, that no Creature can be naturally Immutable and Impeccable, as that God cannot create any thing actually polluted and imperfect. 'Tis as poſſible that the higheſt Creature may ſin, as it is poſſible that it may be annihilated: It may become not holy, as it may become not a Creature, but Nothing. The Holineſs of a Creature may be reduc'd into Nothing, as well as his Subſtance: But the Holineſs of the Creator cannot be diminiſh'd, dimm'd, or overſhadowed; *James* 1.17. *He is the Father of lights, with whom is no variableneſs or ſhadow of turning*. 'Tis as impoſſible his Holineſs ſhould be blotted, as that his Deity ſhould be extinguiſh'd: For whatſoever Creature hath eſſentially ſuch or ſuch qualities, cannot be ſtript of them, without being turn'd out of its Eſſence. As a Man is eſſentially Rational; and if he ceaſeth to be Rational, he ceaſeth to be Man. The Sun is eſſentially Luminous; if it ſhould become dark in its own Body, it would ceaſe to be the Sun. In regard of this abſolute and only Holineſs of God, 'tis thrice repeated by the *Seraphims*, Iſai. 6. 3. The *Threefold* Repetition of a word, notes the certainty or abſoluteneſs of the Thing, or the irreverſibleneſs of the Reſolve; as *Ezek.* 21. 27. *I will overturn, overturn, overturn*, notes the certainty of the Judgment; alſo *Rev.* 8. 8. *Woe, woe, woe*, Three times repeated, ſignifies the ſame. The *Holineſs* of God is ſo abſolutely peculiar to him, that it can no more be expreſt in Creatures, than his *Omnipotence*, whereby they may be able to create a World; or his *Omniſcience*, whereby they may be capable of knowing all things, and knowing God as he knows himſelf.

3. *God*

3. *God is ſo holy, that he cannot poſſibly approve of any Evil done by another, but doth perfectly abhor it*; it would not elſe be a *glorious* holineſs: Pſal. 5. 3. *He hath no pleaſure in wickedneſs.* He doth not only love that which is juſt, but abhor with a perfect hatred all things contrary to the Rule of Righteouſneſs. Holineſs can no more approve of ſin than it can commit it: To be delighted with the evil in anothers Act, contracts a Guilt, as well as the Commiſſion of it; for approbation of a thing is a conſent to it: Sometime the approbation of an evil in another, is a more grievous Crime than the Act it ſelf, as appears in *Rom.* 1. 32. who knowing the Judgment of God, *not only do the ſame, but have pleaſure in them that do it*: Where the (*not only*) manifeſts it to be a greater guilt to take pleaſure in them. Every ſin is aggravated by the delight in it; to take pleaſure in the evil of anothers Action, ſhews a more ardent affection and love to ſin, than the Committer himſelf may have. This therefore can as little fall upon God, as to do an evil act himſelf; yet as a man may be delighted with the Conſequences of anothers ſin, as it may occaſion ſome publick good, or private good to the guilty perſon; as ſometimes it may be an occaſion of his repentance, when the horridneſs of a Fact ſtares him in the face, and occaſions a ſelf-reflection for that and other crimes, which is attended with an indignation againſt them, and ſincere remorſe for them; ſo God is pleaſed with thoſe good things his Goodneſs and Wiſdom bring forth upon the occaſion of ſin. But in regard of his Holineſs, he cannot approve of the evil, whence his Infinite Wiſdom drew forth his own Glory, and his Creatures good: His pleaſure is not in the ſinful act of the Creature, but in the act of his own Goodneſs and Skill, turning it to another end than what the Creature aimed at.

1. *He abhors it neceſſarily.* Holineſs is the Glory of the Deity, therefore neceſſary. The Nature of God is ſo holy, that he cannot but hate it. Hab. 1. 13. *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canſt not look on iniquity*: He is more oppoſite to it, than Light to Darkneſs, and therefore it can expect no countenance from him: A love of holineſs cannot be without a hatred of every thing that is contrary to it: As God neceſſarily loves himſelf, ſo he muſt neceſſarily hate every thing that is againſt himſelf: And as he loves himſelf for his own Excellency and Holineſs, he muſt neceſſarily deteſt whatſoever is repugnant to his Holineſs, becauſe of the evil of it: Since he is infinitely good, he cannot but love goodneſs, as it is a reſemblance to himſelf, and cannot but abhor unrighteouſneſs, as being moſt diſtant from him, and contrary to him. If he have any eſteem for his own Perfections, he muſt needs have an implacable averſion to all that is ſo repugnant to him, that would, if it were poſſible, deſtroy him, and is a point directed not only againſt his Glory, but againſt his Life. If he did not hate it, he would hate himſelf: For ſince Righteouſneſs is his Image, and ſin would deface his Image; if he did not love his Image, and loath what is againſt his Image, he would loath himſelf, he would be an Enemy to his own Nature: † Nay, if it were poſſible for him to love it, it were poſſible for him not to be Holy, it were poſſible then for him to deny himſelf, and will that he were no God, which is a palpable contradiction. Yet this neceſſity in God of hating ſin, is not a brutiſh neceſſity, ſuch as is in meer Animals, that avoid by a natural Inſtinct, not of choice, what is prejudicial to them; but moſt free, as well as neceſſary, ariſing from an infinite knowledge of his own Nature, and of the evil nature of Sin, and the contrariety of it to his own Excellency, and the order of his works.

† Turretin. *de ſatisfact.* p. 35, 36.

2. Therefore *intenſely.* Nothing do men act for more than their glory. As he doth infinitely, and therefore perfectly know himſelf, ſo he infinitely, and therefore perfectly knows what is contrary to himſelf, and, as according to the manner and meaſure of his knowledge of himſelf, is his love to himſelf, as infinite as his knowledge, and therefore unexpreſſible and unconceivable by us: So from the perfection of his knowledge of the evil of Sin, which is infinitely above what any Creature can have, doth ariſe a diſpleaſure againſt it ſutable to that knowledge. In Creatures the degrees of affection to, or averſion from a thing, are ſuted to the ſtrength of their apprehenſions of the good or evil in them. God knows not only the workers of wickedneſs, but the wickedneſs of their works*, for *he knows vain men, he ſees wickedneſs alſo.* The vehemency of this hatred is expreſt variouſly in *Scripture*; he loaths it ſo, that he is impatient of beholding it; the very ſight

* Job 11. 11.

of it affects him with deteſtation, *Hab.* 1. 13. he hates the firſt ſpark of it in the *imagination*, Zach. 8. 17. with what variety of expreſſions doth he repeat his indignation at their polluted Services, *Amos* 5. 21, 22. *I hate, I deteſt, I deſpiſe, I will not ſmell, I will not accept, I will not regard; take away from me the noiſe of thy Songs, I will not hear.* So Iſai. 1. 14. *My Soul hates, they are a trouble to me, I am weary to bear them.* 'Tis the *abominable thing* that he *hates*, *Jer.* 44. 4. he is *vexed* and *fretted* at it, *Iſai.* 63. 10. *Ezek.* 16. 43. He abhors it ſo, that his hatred redounds upon the Perſon that commits it, *Pſalm* 5. 5. He *hates all workers of Iniquity.* Sin is the only primary Object of his Diſpleaſure: He is not diſpleas'd with the Nature of man as man, for that was derived from him; but with the Nature of man as ſinful, which is from the ſinner himſelf. When a man hath but one Object for the exerciſe of all his Anger, 'tis ſtronger than when diverted to many Objects: A mighty Torrent, when diverted into many Streams, is weaker than when it comes in a full Body upon one place only. The Infinite anger and hatred of God, which is as infinite as his love and mercy, has no other Object, againſt which he directs the mighty force of it, but only Unrighteouſneſs. He hates no Perſon for all the penal Evils upon him, though they were more by *ten thouſand* times than *Job* was ſtruck with, but only for his ſin. Again, Sin being only evil, and an unmixt evil, there is nothing in it that can abate the deteſtation of God, or ballance his hatred of it; there is not the leaſt grain of goodneſs in it, to encline him to the leaſt affection to any part of it. This hatred cannot but be intenſe, for as the more any Creature is ſanctified, the more is he advanc'd in the abhorrence of that which is contrary to Holineſs; therefore God being the Higheſt, moſt Abſolute and Infinite Holineſs, doth infinitely, and therefore intenſly, hate unholineſs; being infinitely righteous, doth infinitely abhor unrighteouſneſs; being infinitely true, doth infinitely abhor falſity, as it is the greateſt and moſt deformed evil. As it is from the righteouſneſs of his Nature, that he hath a content and ſatisfaction in Righteouſneſs: Pſal. 11. 7. *The righteous Lord loveth righteouſneſs.* So it is from the ſame righteouſneſs of his Nature, that he deteſts whatſoever is morally evil: As his Nature therefore is Infinite, ſo muſt his abhorrence be.

3. *Therefore univerſally, becauſe neceſſarily and intenſly.* He doth not hate it in one, and indulge it in another, but loaths it wherever he finds it; not one worker of Iniquity is exempt from it: *Pſal.* 5. 5. *Thou hateſt all workers of iniquity.* For it is not ſin, as in this or that perſon, or as great or little; but ſin, as ſin, is the Object of his hatred: And therefore let the Perſon be never ſo great, and have particular Characters of his Image upon him, it ſecures him not from God's hatred of any evil action he ſhall commit. He is a *jealous God*, jealous of his Glory *; a Metaphor taken from jealous Husbands, who will not indure the leaſt Adultery in their Wives, nor God the leaſt defection of man from his Law. Every act of ſin is a ſpiritual Adultery, denying God to be the chief Good, and giving that Prerogative by that Act to ſome vile thing. He loves it no more in his own people than he doth in his enemies; he frees them not from his Rod, the teſtimony of his loathing their Crimes: Whoſoever ſows Iniquity, ſhall reap Affliction. It might be thought that he affected their Droſs, if he did not refine them, and loved their filth, if he did not cleanſe them; becauſe of his deteſtation of their ſin, he will not ſpare them from the Furnace, though becauſe of love to their perſons in Chriſt, he will exempt them from *Tophet*. How did the Sword ever and anon drop down upon *David*'s Family after his unworthy dealing in *Uriah*'s Caſe, and cut off ever and anon ſome of the Branches of it? He doth ſometimes puniſh it more ſeverely in this Life in his own People, than in others: Upon *Jonah*'s Diſobedience a ſtorm purſues him, and a Whale devours him, while the prophane World lived in their Luſts without controul. *Moſes*, for one act of unbelief, is excluded from *Canaan*, when greater Sinners attained that happineſs. 'Tis not a light puniſhment, but a *vengeance* he takes on their Inventions *, to manifeſt that he hates ſin as ſin, and not becauſe the worſt perſons commit it. Perhaps, had a prophane Man touched the Ark, the hand of God had not ſo ſuddenly reach'd him: But when *Uzzah*, a man zealous for him, as may be ſuppoſed by his care for the ſupport of the tottering Ark, would ſtep out of his place, he ſtrikes him down for his diſobedient Action,

* Exod. 20. 5.

* Pſal. 99. 8.

by the ſide of the Ark, which he would indirectly (as not being a *Levite*) ſuſtain *. Nor did our Saviour ſo ſharply reprove the *Phariſees*, and turn ſo ſhort from them as he did from *Peter*, when he gave a carnal adviſe, and contrary to that wherein was to be the greateſt manifeſtation of God's Holineſs, *viz.* the Death of Chriſt †. He calls him *Satan*, a name ſharper than the Title of the Devil's children wherewith he marked the Phariſees, and given (beſides him) to none but *Judas*, who made a profeſſion of love to him, and was outwardly rank'd in the number of his Diſciples. A Gardiner hates a Weed the more, for being in the Bed with the moſt pretious Flowers. God's hatred is univerſally fixed againſt ſin, and he hates it as much in thoſe whoſe Perſons ſhall not fall under his eternal Anger, as being ſecured in the arms of a Redeemer, by whom the guilt is wip'd of, and the filth ſhall be totally waſhed away: Though he hates their ſin, and cannot but hate it, yet he loves their Perſons, as being united as Members to the Mediator and Myſtical Head. A Man may love a gangren'd Member, becauſe 'tis a Member of his own Body, or a Member of a dear Relation, but he loaths the Gangrene in it more than in thoſe wherein he is not ſo much concern'd.

* 2 Sam. 6. 7

† Matt. 16. 23

Though God's hatred of Believers Perſons is removed by Faith in the Satisfactory Death of Jeſus Chriſt; yet his Antipathy againſt ſin was not taken away by that Blood; nay, it was impoſſible it ſhould: It was never deſign'd, nor had it any capacity to alter the unchangeable Nature of God, but to manifeſt the unſpottedneſs of his Will, and his eternal Averſion to any thing that was contrary to the Purity of his Being, and the Righteouſneſs of his Laws.

4. *Perpetually*: This muſt neceſſarily follow upon the others. He can no more ceaſe to hate Impurity, than he can ceaſe to love Holineſs: If he ſhould in the leaſt inſtant approve of any thing that is filthy, in that moment he would diſapprove of his own Nature and Being; there would be an interruption in his love of himſelf, which is as Eternal as it is Infinite. How can he love any ſin, which is contrary to his Nature, but for one moment, without hating his own Nature, which is eſſentially contrary to ſin? Two Contraries cannot be loved at the ſame time; God muſt firſt begin to hate himſelf, before he can approve of any evil which is directly oppoſite to himſelf. We indeed are changed with a Temptation, ſometimes bear an affection to it, and ſometimes teſtifie an indignation againſt it; but God is always the ſame without any ſhadow of change, and *is angry with the wicked every day*, Pſal. 7. 11. that is, uninterruptedly in the nature of his Anger, though not in the effects of it. God indeed may be reconciled to the Sinner, but never to the ſin; for then he ſhould renounce himſelf, deny his own Eſſence and his own Divinity, if his inclinations to the love of Goodneſs, and his averſion from Evil, could be changed; if he ſuffered the Contempt of the one, and encouraged the Practiſe of the other.

4. *God is ſo Holy, that he cannot but love Holineſs in others.* Not that he owes any thing to his Creature, but from the unſpeakable holineſs of his Nature, whence affections to all things that bear a reſemblance of him do flow; as Light ſhoots out from the Sun, or any glittering Body: 'Tis eſſential to the infinite Righteouſneſs of his Nature, to love Righteouſneſs wherever he beholds it: *Pſal.* 11. 7. *The righteous Lord loveth righteouſneſs.* He cannot, becauſe of his Nature, but love that which bears ſome agreement with his Nature, that which is the curious Draught of his own Wiſdom and Purity: He cannot but be delighted with a copy of Himſelf: He would not have a holy Nature, if he did not love Holineſs in every Nature: His own Nature would be denied by him, if he did not affect every thing that had a ſtamp of his own Nature upon it. There was indeed nothing without God, that could invite him to manifeſt ſuch Goodneſs to Man, as he did in Creation: But after he had ſtampt that rational Nature with a Righteouſneſs convenient for it, it was impoſſible but that he ſhould ardently love that impreſſion of Himſelf, becauſe he loves his own Deity, and conſequently all things which are any Sparks and Images of it: And were the Devils capable of an act of Righteouſneſs, the Holineſs of his Nature would incline him to love it, even in thoſe dark and revolted Spirits.

5. God

5. *God is ſo holy, that he cannot poſitively will or encourage ſin in any.* How can he give any encouragement to that, which he cannot in the leaſt approve of, or look upon without loathing, not only the Crime but the Criminal? Light may ſooner be the cauſe of Darkneſs, than Holineſs it ſelf be the cauſe of Unholineſs, abſolutely contrary to it: 'Tis a Contradiction, that he that is the Fountain of Good, ſhould be the ſource of Evil; as if the ſame Fountain ſhould bubble up both ſweet and bitter Streams; ſalt and freſh*. Since whatſoever Good is in man, acknowledges God for its Author, it follows that men are Evil by their own fault. There is no need for men to be incited to that, to which the Corruption of their own Nature doth ſo powerfully bend them. Water hath a forcible principle in its own nature to carry it downward; it needs no force to haſten the motion: God *tempts no man, but every man is drawn away by his own Luſt*, James 1. 13, 14. All the preparations for glory are from God, *Rom.* 9. 23. But men are ſaid to *be fitted* to *deſtruction*, ver. 22. but God is not ſaid to fit them; they by their Iniquities fit themſelves for ruine, and he by his long-ſuffering keeps the deſtruction from them for a while.

* Jam. 3. 11.

1. Firſt, *God cannot command any Unrighteouſneſs.* As all Vertue is ſumm'd up in a love to God, ſo all Iniquity is ſumm'd up in an enmity to God: Every wicked Work declares a man an Enemy to God: Col. 1. 21. *Enemies in your minds by wicked Works.* If he could command his Creature any thing which bears an enmity in its Nature to himſelf, he would then implicitly command the hatred of himſelf, and he would be in ſome meaſure a hater of himſelf: He that commands another to deprive him of his Life, cannot be ſaid to bear any love to his own Life. God can never hate himſelf, and therefore cannot command any thing that is hateful to him, and tends to a hating of him, and driving the Creature further from him. In that very moment that God ſhould command ſuch a thing, he would ceaſe to be good. What can be more abſurd to imagine, than that infinite Goodneſs ſhould enjoyn a thing contrary to it ſelf, and contrary to the eſſential Duty of a Creature, and order him to do any thing that beſpeaks an enmity to the nature of the Creator, or a deflouring and diſparaging his Works? God cannot but love himſelf, and his own Goodneſs, he were not otherwiſe Good; and therefore cannot order the Creature to do any thing oppoſite to this Goodneſs, or any thing hurtful to the Creature it ſelf, as Unrighteouſneſs is.

2. *Nor can God ſecretly inſpire any Evil into us.* 'Tis as much againſt his Nature to incline the heart to ſin, as it is to command it: As it is impoſſible but that he ſhould love himſelf, and therefore impoſſible to enjoyn any thing that tends to a hatred of himſelf; by the ſame reaſon it is as impoſſible that he ſhould infuſe ſuch a Principle in the heart, that might carry a man out to any act of enmity againſt him. To enjoyn one thing, and incline to another, would be an Argument of ſuch inſincerity, unfaithfulneſs, contradiction to it ſelf, that it cannot be conceived to fall within the compaſs of the Divine Nature †, who is *a God without iniquity*, becauſe *a God of truth* and ſincerity, *juſt and right is he.* To beſtow excellent Faculties upon Man in Creation, and incline him by a ſuddain impulſion to things contrary to the true end of him, and induce an inevitable ruin upon that Work, which he had compoſed with ſo much Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and pronounced good with ſo much delight and pleaſure, is inconſiſtent with that love which God bears to the Creature of his own framing: To incline his Will to that which would render him the object of his hatred, the fuel for his Juſtice, and ſink him into deplorable Miſery, 'tis moſt abſurd and unchriſtian-like to imagine.

† Deut. 32. 4.

3. *Nor can God neceſſitate man to ſin.* Indeed ſin cannot be committed by force; there is no ſin but is in ſome ſort voluntary: Voluntary in the root, or voluntary in the branch; voluntary by an immediate act of the Will, or voluntary by a general or natural inclination of the Will. That is not a Crime to which a man is violenc'd, without any concurrence of the Faculties of the Soul to that act; 'tis indeed not an act, but a paſſion; a man that is forced, is not an Agent, but a Patient under the force: But what neceſſity can there be upon Man from God, ſince he hath implanted ſuch a Principle in him, that he cannot deſire any thing but what is good, either really or apparently; and if a man miſtakes the Object, 'tis his

own

own fault; for God hath endowed him with Reaſon to diſcern, and liberty of Will to chooſe upon that Judgment.

And though 'tis to be acknowledged that God hath an Abſolute Soveraign Dominion over his Creature, without any limitation, and may do what he pleaſes, and diſpoſe of it according to his own Will, as a *Potter doth with his veſſel*, Rom. 9. 21. according as the Church ſpeaks, Iſa. 64. 8. *We are the Clay, and thou our Potter, ; and we all are the work of thy hand*: Yet he cannot pollute any undefiled Creature by virtue of that Soveraign Power, which he hath to do what he will with it; becauſe ſuch an act would be contrary to the foundation and right of his Dominion, which conſiſts in the excellency of his Nature, his immenſe Wiſdom and unſpotted Purity: If God ſhould therefore do any ſuch act, he would expunge the right of his Dominion, by blotting out that nature which renders him fit for that Dominion, and the exerciſe of it *. Any Dominion which is exercis'd without the rules of Goodneſs, is not a true Soveraignty, but an inſupportable Tyranny. God would ceaſe to be a rightful Soveraign, if he ceaſed to be good; and he would ceaſe to be good, if he did command, neceſſitate, or by any poſitive operation incline inwardly the heart of a Creature, directly to that which were morally evil, and contrary to the eminency of his own Nature.

* Amyrald. *diſſert.* p. 103, 104.

But that we may the better conceive of this, let us trace Man in his *firſt Fall*, whereby he ſubjected himſelf, and all his Poſterity, to the Curſe of the Law and hatred of God; we ſhall find no foot-ſteps, either of Precept, outward force, or inward impulſion †. The plain ſtory of Mans Apoſtacy diſchargeth God from any intereſt in the Crime as an incouragement, and excuſeth him from any appearance of ſuſpicion, when he ſhewed him the Tree he had reſerved, as a mark of his Soveraignty, and forbad him to eat of the Fruit of it: He back'd the prohibition with the threatning the greateſt Evil, *viz. Death*; which could be underſtood to imply nothing leſs than the loſs of all his happineſs; and in that couch'd an aſſurance of the perpetuity of his Felicity, if he did not rebelliouſly reach forth his hand to take and *eat of the Fruit* *. 'Tis true, God had given that Fruit an excellency, *a goodneſs for food, and a pleaſantneſs to the eye* †. He had given Man an appetite, whereby he was capable of deſiring ſo pleaſant a Fruit; but God had by Creation rang'd it under the command of Reaſon, if Man would have kept it in its due Obedience; he had fixed a ſevere threatning to bar the unlawful Excurſions of it: He had allowed him a multitude of other Fruits in the Garden, and given him liberty enough to ſatisfie his Curioſity in all except this only. Could there be any thing more obliging to Man, to let God have his reſerve of that one Tree, than the grant of all the reſt: and more deterring from any diſobedient Attempt than ſo ſtrict a Command, ſpirited with ſo dreadful a Penalty? God did not ſollicite him to rebel againſt him: A ſollicitation to it, and a command againſt it, were inconſiſtent. The *Devil* aſſaults him, and God permitted it, and ſtands as it were a Spectator of the iſſue of the Combat. There could be no neceſſity upon Man to liſten to, and etertain the ſuggeſtions of the Serpent: He had a power to reſiſt him, and he had an anſwer ready for all the Devils Arguments, had they been multiplied to more than they were; the oppoſing the order of God, had been a ſufficient Confutation of all the Devils plauſible reaſonings: That Creator who hath given me my being, hath ordered me not to eat of it. Though the pleaſure of the Fruit might allure him, yet the force of his reaſon might have quell'd the liquoriſhneſs of his ſenſe: The perpetual thinking of, and ſounding out the command of God, had ſilenc'd both Satan and his own Appetite; had diſarm'd the Tempter, and preſerv'd his Senſitive part in its due ſubjection. What inclination can we ſuppoſe there could be from the Creator, when upon the very firſt offer of the Temptation, *Eve* oppoſes to the Tempter the Prohibition and Threatning of God, and ſtrains it to a higher peg than we find God had delivered it in? For in *Gen.* 2. 17. 'tis, *you ſhall not eat of it*; but ſhe adds, Gen. 3. 3. *neither ſhall you touch it*: which was a Remark that might have had more influence to reſtrain her. Had our firſt Parents kept this fixed upon their Underſtandings and Thoughts, that God had forbidden any ſuch act as the Eating of the Fruit, and that he was true to execute the Threatning he had uttered, of which Truth of God they could not but have a natural Notion, with what eaſe might they have withſtood the *Devils* attack

* Amyrald. *defenſ. de Calvin.* p. 151, 152.

* Gen. 2. 16, 17.
† Gen. 3. 6.

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attack'd, and defeated his Deſign? And it had been eaſie with them, to have kept their Underſtandings by the force of ſuch a thought, from entertaining any contrary Imagination. There is no ground for any jealouſie of any Encouragements, inward Impulſions, or neceſſity from God in this Affair. A diſcharge of God from this firſt ſin, will eaſily induce a freedom of him from all other ſins which follow upon it.

God doth not then Encourage, or Excite, or Incline to Sin. How can he excite to that, which when it is done, he will be ſure to condemn? How can he be a *Righteous Judge* to ſentence a Sinner to Miſery, for a Crime acted by a ſecret Inſpiration from himſelf? Iniquity would deſerve no reproof from him, if he were any way poſitively the Author of it. Were God the Author of it in us, what is the reaſon our own Conſciences accuſe us for it, and convince us of it? that, being God's Deputy, would not accuſe us of it, if the Soveraign Power by which it acts, did incline us to it: How can he be thought to excite to that which he hath enacted ſuch ſevere Laws to reſtrain, or encline Man to that which he hath ſo dreadfully puniſhed in his Son, and which it is impoſſible but the excellency of his Nature muſt encline him eternally to hate? We may ſooner imagine that a pure Flame ſhall engender Cold, and Darkneſs be the Off-ſpring of a Sun-beam, as imagine ſuch a thing as this. *What ſhall we ſay? Is there unrighteouſneſs with God? God forbid.* The *Apoſtle* execrates ſuch a thought; *Romans* 9. 14.

6. God cannot act any Evil, in or by himſelf. If he cannot approve of Sin in others, nor excite any to Iniquity, which is leſs, he cannot commit Evil himſelf, which is greater: What he cannot poſitively will in another, can never be willed in himſelf; he cannot do evil through Ignorance, becauſe of his infinite Knowledge; nor through Weakneſs, becauſe of his Infinite Power; nor through Malice, becauſe of his Infinite Rectitude. He cannot will any unjuſt thing, becauſe having an infinitely perfect Underſtanding, he cannot judge that to be true which is falſe; or that to be good, which is evil; his Will is regulated by his Wiſdom: If he could Will any unjuſt and irrational thing, his Will would be repugnant to his Underſtanding; there would be a diſagreement in God, Will againſt Mind, and Will againſt Wiſdom: He being the Higeſt Reaſon, the firſt Truth, cannot do an unreaſonable, falſe, defective Action. 'Tis not a defect in God that he cannot *do Evil*, but a fulneſs and excellency of Power: As it is not a weakneſs in the Light, but the perfection of it, that it is unable to produce Darkneſs: God is *the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableneſs*, James 1. 17. Nothing pleaſes him, nothing is acted by him, but what is beſeeming the Infinite Excellency of his own Nature: The voluntary neceſſity whereby God cannot be unjuſt, renders him a *God bleſſed for ever*: He would hate himſelf as the chief Good, if in any of his Actions he ſhould diſagree with his Goodneſs. He cannot do any unworthy thing, not becauſe he wants an Infinite Power, but becauſe he is poſſeſſed of an Infinite Wiſdom, and adorn'd with an Infinite Purity; and being infinitely pure, cannot have the leaſt mixture of impurity. As if you can ſuppoſe Fire infinitely hot, you cannot ſuppoſe it to have the leaſt mixture of Coldneſs: The better any thing is, the more unable it is to do evil: God being the only Goodneſs, can as little be changed in his Goodneſs, as in his Eſſence.

II. The Second thing.

2. The next Enquiry is, *The Proof that God is Holy, or the manifeſtation of it.* Purity is as requiſite to the Bleſſedneſs of God, as to the Being of God: As he could not be God without being Bleſſed, ſo he could not be Bleſſed without being Holy. He is called by the title of *Bleſſed*, as well as by that of *Holy*, Mark 14. 61. *Art thou the Chriſt, the Son of the Bleſſed?* Unrighteouſneſs is a miſery and turbulency in any Spirit wherein it is: For it is a privation of an excellency which ought to be in every intellectual Being, and what can follow upon the privation of an Excellency but unquietneſs and grief, the moth of Happineſs? An unrighteous Man, as an unrighteous Man, can never be Bleſſed, though he were in a local Heaven. Had God the leaſt Spot upon his Purity, it would render him as Miſerable in the midſt of his Infinite Sufficiency, as Iniquity

quity renders a man in the confluence of his earthly Enjoyments. The Holineſs and Felicity of God are inſeparable in him. The *Apoſtle* intimates, that the Heathen made an attempt to ſully his Bleſſedneſs, when they would liken him to corruptible, mutable, impure man; Rom. 1. 23. 25. *They changed the Glory of the Incorruptible God, into an image made like to Corruptible Man*: And after he entitles God, a *God bleſſed for ever*. The Goſpel is therefore called, *The glorious Goſpel of the bleſſed God*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 11. In regard of the holineſs of the Goſpel Precepts, and in regard of the Declaration of the holineſs of God in all the ſtreams and branches wherein his Purity, in which his Bleſſedneſs conſiſts, is as illuſtrious as any other perfection of the Divine Being. God hath highly manifeſted this Attribute in the ſtate of Nature; in the Legal Adminiſtration; in the diſpenſation of the Goſpel. His Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Power, are declared in Creation; his Soveraign Authority in his Law; his Grace and Mercy in the Goſpel; and his Righteouſneſs in all. Sutable to this *threefold* ſtate, may be that ternal Repetition of his Holineſs in the Prophecy, *Iſai.* 6. 3. *holy* as Creator and Benefactor; *holy* as Lawgiver and Judge; *holy* as Reſtorer and Redeemer.

1. His Holineſs appears *as he is Creator, in framing Man in a perfect Uprightneſs*. Angels, as made by God, could not be evil; for God beheld *his* own Works with pleaſure, and could not have pronounced them all good, had ſome been created pure, and others impure: Two Moral Contrarieties could not be good. The Angels had a *firſt eſtate*, wherein they were happy *; and had they not left their own habitation and ſtate, they could not have been miſerable. But becauſe the *Scripture* ſpeaks only of the Creation of Man, we will conſider, that the Humane Nature was well ſtrung and tun'd by God, according to the Note of his own Holineſs: *Eccl.* 7. 29. God hath made Man *upright*: He had declared his Power in other Creatures, but would declare in his Rational Creature, what he moſt valued in himſelf; and therefore created him upright, with a Wiſdom which is the rectitude of the Mind, with a Purity which is the rectitude of the Will and Affections. He had declared a purity in other Creatures, as much as they were capable of, *viz.* in the exact tuning them to anſwer one another. And that God, who ſo well tun'd and compos'd other Creatures, would not make Man a jarring Inſtrument, and place a crack'd Creature to be Lord of the reſt of his earthly Fabrick. God being holy, could not ſet his Seal upon any Rational Creature, but the Impreſſion would be like himſelf, pure and holy alſo: he could not be created with an error in his Underſtanding; that had been inconſiſtent with the goodneſs of God to his Rational Creature; if ſo, the erronious motion of the Will, which was to follow the dictates of the Underſtanding, could not have been imputed to him as his Crime, becauſe it would have been, not a voluntary, but a neceſſary effect of his Nature; had there been an error in the firſt Wheel, the error of the next could not have been imputed to the Nature of that, but to the irregular motion of the firſt Wheel in the Engine. The ſin of Men and Angels proceeded not from any natural defect in their Underſtandings, but from Inconſideration: He that was the Author of Harmony in his other Creatures, could not be the Author of Diſorder in the chief of his Works: Other Creatures were his Footſteps, but Man was his Image †; *Let us make man in our image, after our likeneſs*: Which though it ſeems to imply no more in that place, than an Image of his Dominion over the Creatures, yet the *Apoſtle* raiſes it a peg higher, and gives us a larger Interpretation of it, *Col.* 3. 10. And *have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the Image of him that created him*; making it to conſiſt in a reſemblance to his Righteouſneſs. *Image*, ſay ſome, notes the Form, as Man was a Spirit in regard of the Soul: *Likeneſs* notes the Quality implanted in his Spiritual Nature: The Image of God was drawn in him, both as he was a Rational, and as he was a holy Creature. The Creatures manifeſted the being of a Superior Power, as their Cauſe, but the Righteouſneſs of the firſt Man evidenced, not only a Soveraign Power, as the Donor of his Being; but a holy Power, as the Pattern of his Work: God appeared to be a holy God in the Righteouſneſs of his Creature, as well as an Underſtanding God in the Reaſon of his Creature, while he

* Jude 6.

† Gen. 1. 26, 27.

formed him with all neceſſary knowledge in his Mind, and all neceſſary uprightneſs in his Will: The Law of Love to God, with his *whole ſoul*, his *whole mind*, his *whole heart and ſtrength*, was originally writ upon his Nature: All the parts of his Nature were framed in a Moral Conformity with God, to anſwer this Law, and imitate God in his purity, which conſiſts in a love of himſelf, and his own Goodneſs and Excellency. Thus doth the clearneſs of the Stream point us to the purer Fountain, and the brightneſs of the Beam evidence a greater ſplendor in the Sun which ſhot it out.

2. *His Holineſs appears in his Laws, as he is a Law-giver and a Judge.* Since Man was bound to be ſubject to God, as a Creature, and had a capacity to be ruled by the Law, as an underſtanding and willing Creature, God gave him a Law taken from the depths of his holy Nature, and ſuted to the Original Faculties of Man. The Rules which God hath fixed in the World, are not the reſolves of bare Will, but reſult particularly from the goodneſs of his Nature: They are nothing elſe but the Tranſcripts of his Infinite deteſtation of ſin, as he is the unblemiſh'd Governor of the World. This being the moſt adorable Property of his Nature, he hath impreſs'd it upon that Law which he would have inviolably obſerved as a perpetual Rule for our Actions, that we may every moment think of this beautiful Perfection. God can command nothing, but what hath ſome ſimilitude with the rectitude of his own Nature: All his Laws, every Paragraph of them therefore ſcent of this, and glitter with it. Deut. 4.8. *What Nation hath Statutes and Judgments ſo righteous as all this Law I ſet before you this day?* and therefore they are compar'd to *fine Gold*, that hath no ſpeck or droſs *. * Pſal. 19. 10.

This *Purity* is evident

1. *In the Moral Law, or Law of Nature.*
2. *In the Ceremonial Law.*
3. *In the Allurements annex'd to it for keeping it, and the Affrightments to reſtrain from the breaking of it.*
4. *In the Judgments inflicted for the Violation of it.*

1. *In the Moral Law*: Which is therefore dignified with the title of *holy*, twice in one *Verſe*, Rom. 7. 12. *Wherefore the Law is holy, and the Commandment is holy, juſt, and good*: It being the expreſs Image of Gods Will, as our Saviour was of his Perſon, and bearing a reſemblance to the Purity of his Nature. The Tables of this Law were put into the Ark, that as the *Mercy Seat* was to repreſent the Grace of God, ſo the *Law* was to repreſent the *Holineſs* of God †. The *Pſalmiſt*, after he had ſpoken of the Glory of God in the Heavens, wherein the Power of God is expoſed to our view, introduceth the Law, wherein the Purity of God is evidenc'd to our Minds *; *perfect*, *pure*, *clean*, *righteous*, are the titles given to it. 'Tis clearer in Holineſs, than the Sun is in brightneſs; and more mighty in it ſelf to command the Conſcience, than the Sun is to run its Race. As the Holineſs of the Scripture demonſtrates the Divinity of its Author; ſo the Holineſs of the Law doth the Purity of the Law-giver. † Pſal. 19. 1. * Ver. 7, 8, &c.

1. The purity of this *Law* is ſeen *in the Matter of it*. It preſcribes all that becomes a Creature towards God, and all that becomes one Creature towards another of his own rank and kind. The Image of God is compleat in the Holineſs of the *firſt* Table, and the Righteouſneſs of the *ſecond*; which is intimated by the Apoſtle, *Eph.* 4. 24. the one being the Rule of what we owe to God; the other being the Rule of what we owe to man: There is no good but it enjoyns, and no evil but it diſowns. 'Tis not ſickly and lame in any part of it; not a good action, but it gives it its due praiſe; and not an evil action, but it ſets a condemning mark upon. The Commands of it are frequently in Scripture call'd *Judgments*, becauſe they rightly judge of good and evil, and are a clear light to inform the Judgment of Man in the knowledge of both. By this was the Underſtanding of *David* enlightned to know every *falſe* way, and to *hate* it *. There is no Caſe can happen, but may meet with a determination from it; It teaches Men the nobleſt manner of living, a life like God himſelf; honourably for the Law-giver, and joyfully for the ſubject. It directs us to the higheſt End; ſets us at a diſtance from all baſe and ſordid Practiſes; it propoſeth Light to the Underſtanding, and * Pſal. 119. 104.

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Goodneſs to the Will. It would tune all the Strings, ſet right all the Orders of Mankind: It cenſures the leaſt Mote, countenanceth not any ſtain in the Life. Not a *wanton Glance* can meet with any juſtification from it*: not a *raſh Anger*, but it frowns upon†. As the Law-giver wants nothing as an addition to his Bleſſedneſs; ſo his Law wants nothing as a ſupplement to its *perfection*, Deut. 4. 2. What our *Savior* ſeems to add, is not an addition to mend any defects; but a reſtoration of it from the corrupt Gloſſes, wherewith the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* had eclips'd the brightneſs of it: They had curtail'd it, and diminiſh'd part of its Authority, cutting off its empire over the leaſt Evil, and left its power only to check the groſſer Practiſes. But *Chriſt* reſtores it to the due extent of its Soveraignty, and ſhews it in thoſe dimenſions in which the Holy Men of God conſidered it, as *exceeding broad*, Pſal. 119. 96. reaching to all Actions, all Motions, all Circumſtances attending them; full of inexhauſtible Treaſures of Righteouſneſs. And though this Law, ſince the *Fall*, doth irritate Sin, 'tis no diſparagement, but a Teſtimony to the Righteouſneſs of it; which the *Apoſtle* manifeſts by his *Wherefore*, Rom. 7. 8. *Sin taking occaſion by the Commandment, wrought in me all manner of Concupiſcence*; and repeating the ſame ſenſe, *ver.* 11. ſubjoyns a *Wherefore*, verſe 12. *Wherefore the Law is holy.* The riſing of Mens ſinful hearts againſt the Law of God, when it ſtrikes with its Preceptive and Minatory parts upon their Conſciences, evidenceth the Holineſs of the Law and the Law-giver.

* Matt. 5. 28
† Matt. 5. 22.

In its own nature it is a Directing Rule, but the malignant nature of Sin is exaſperated by it; as an hoſtile quality in a Creature, will awaken it ſelf at the appearance of its Enemy. The Purity of this Beam, and Tranſcript of God, bears witneſs to a greater clearneſs and beauty in the *Sun* and Original. Undefiled Streams manifeſt an untainted Fountain.

2. It is ſeen *in the manner of its Precepts.* As it preſcribes all Good, and forbids all Evil; ſo it doth enjoyn the one, and baniſh the other as ſuch. The Laws of Men command Virtuous things; not as Virtuous in themſelves, but as uſeful for Humane Society; which the Magiſtrate is the Conſervator of, and the *Guardian of Juſtice* *. The Laws of Men contain not all the Precepts of Virtue, but only ſuch as are accommodated to their Cuſtoms, and are uſeful to preſerve the Ligaments of their Government. The deſign of them is not ſo much to render the Subjects good Men, as good Citizens: They order the Practice of thoſe Virtues that may ſtrengthen Civil Society, and diſcountenance thoſe Vices only which weaken the Sinews of it: But God, being the *Guardian of Univerſal Righteouſneſs*, doth not only enact the Obſervance of *all Righteouſneſs*, but the obſervance of it *as Righteouſneſs.* He commands that which is Juſt in it ſelf; enjoyns *Virtues* as *Virtues*, and prohibits *Vices* as *Vices*; as they are profitable or injurious to our ſelves, as well as to others.

* Ames *de Conſc. lib.* 5. *cap.* 1. *queſt.* 7.

Men command Temperance and Juſtice; not as *Virtues* in themſelves, but as they prevent Diſorder and Confuſion in a *Common-wealth*: And forbid Adultery and Theft; not as *Vices* in themſelves, but as they are Intrenchments upon Property: Not as hurtful to the Perſon that commits them, but as hurtful to the Perſon againſt whoſe Right they are committed. Upon this account perhaps *Paul* applauds the *Holineſs* of the Law of God in regard of its own Nature, as conſidered in it ſelf, more than he doth the Juſtice of it in regard of Man, and the goodneſs and conveniency of it to the World; *Rom.* 7. 12. the Law is *Holy* twice, and *Juſt and Good* but once.

3. *In the Spiritual extent of it.* The moſt *Righteous Powers* of the World, do not ſo much regard in their Laws what the *Inward Affections* of their Subjects are: The *External Acts* are only the Objects of their Decrees, either to encourage them if they be uſeful, or diſcourage them if they be hurtful to the Community. And indeed they can do no other, for they have no Power proportioned to Inward Affections, ſince the Inward diſpoſition falls not under their Cenſure; and it would be fooliſh for any Legiſlative Power to make ſuch Laws, which it is impoſſible for it to put in Execution. They can prohibit the Outward Acts of Theft and Murder, but they cannot command the *Love of God*, the *Hatred of Sin*, the *Contempt of the World*; they cannot prohibit *Unclean Thoughts*, and

the *Atheiſm* of the *Heart*. But the Law of God ſurmounts in *Righteouſneſs* all the Laws of the beſt regulated *Commonwealths* in the World: It reſtrains the Licentious Heart, as well as the Violent Hand; it damps the very firſt bubblings of corrupt Nature, orders a purity in the Spring; commands a clean Fountain, clean Streams, clean Veſſels. It would frame the Heart to an inward, as well as the Life to an outward Righteouſneſs, and make the inſide purer than the outſide. It forbids the firſt belchings of a Murderous or Adulterous intention: It obligeth Man as a Rational Creature, and therefore exacts a conformity of every Rational Faculty, and of whatſoever is under the Command of them. It commands the Private Cloſet to be free from the leaſt Cobweb, as well as the outward Porch to be clean from Mire and Dirt. It frowns upon all ſtains and pollutions of the moſt retired thoughts: Hence the *Apoſtle* calls it, a *Spiritual Law*, Rom. 7. 14. as not Political, but extending its force further than the Frontiers of the Man; placing its Enſigns in the *Metropolis* of the Heart and Mind, and curbing with its Scepter the inward motions of the Spirit, and commanding over the ſecrets of every Mans Breaſt.

4. In regard of *the perpetuity of it*. The purity and perpetuity of it are link'd together by the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. 19. 9. *The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever*; the fear of the Lord, that is, that Law which commands the fear and worſhip of God, and is the Rule of it. And indeed, God values it at ſuch a rate, that rather than part with a tittle, or let the honor of it lie in the duſt, he would not only let *Heaven and Earth paſs away*, but expoſe his Son to death for the reparation of the wrong it had ſuſtain'd. So holy it is, that the *Holineſs* and *Righteouſneſs* of God cannot diſpence with it, cannot abrogate it, without deſpoiling himſelf of his own Being: 'Tis a Copy of the Eternal Law. Can he ever abrogate the command of Love to himſelf, without ſhewing ſome contempt of his own Excellency and very Being? Before he can enjoyn a Creature not to love him, he muſt make himſelf unworthy of Love, and worthy of Hatred; this would be the higheſt *Unrighteouſneſs*, to order us to hate that which is only worthy of our higheſt Affections. † So God cannot change the firſt Command, and order us to worſhip *many Gods*; this would be againſt the Excellency and Unity of God: For God cannot conſtitute another God, or make any thing worthy of an Honor equal with himſelf. Thoſe things that are good, only becauſe they are commanded, are alterable by God: Thoſe things that are intrinſically and eſſentially good, and therefore commanded, are unalterable as long as the *Holineſs* and *Righteouſneſs* of God ſtand firm. The intrinſick Goodneſs of the Moral Law, the concern God hath for it; the perpetuity of the Precepts of the *Firſt Table*, and the care he hath had to imprint the Precepts of the *Second* upon the Minds and Conſciences of Men, as the Author of Nature for the preſervation of the world; manifeſts the *Holineſs* of the Law-maker and Governour.

† Suarez.

2. His *Holineſs* appears *in the Ceremonial Law*. In the variety of Sacrifices for Sin, wherein he writ his deteſtation of *Unrighteouſneſs* in bloody Characters. His *Holineſs* was more conſtantly expreſt in the continual Sacrifices, than in thoſe rarer ſprinklings of Judgments now and then upon the World; which often reached not the worſt, but the moſt moderate Sinners, and were the occaſions of the queſtioning of the Righteouſneſs of his Providence both by *Jews* and *Gentiles*. In Judgments his Purity was only now and then manifeſt: By his long Patience, he might be imagin'd by ſome reconcil'd to their Crimes, or not much concern'd in them; but by the Morning and Evening Sacrifice he witneſs'd a perpetual and uninterrupted Abhorrence of whatſoever was Evil.

Beſides thoſe, the occaſional Waſhings and Sprinklings upon *Ceremonial Defilements*, which polluted only the Body, gave an evidence, that every thing that had a reſemblance to Evil, was loathſom to him. Add alſo the Prohibitions of eating ſuch and ſuch Creatures that were filthy; as the *Swine* that wallowed in the Mire, a fit Emblem for the prophane and brutiſh Sinner; which had a Moral ſignification, both of the loathſomneſs of Sin to God, and the averſion themſelves ought to have to every thing that was filthy.

3. His

3. His *Holineſs* appears *in the Allurements annex'd to the Law for keeping it; and the Affrightments to reſtrain from the breaking of it.* Both Promiſes and Threatnings have their Fundamental Root in the *Holineſs of God*, and are both Branches of this peculiar Perfection. As they reſpect the Nature of God, they are Declarations of his hatred of Sin, and his love of Righteouſneſs; the one belong to his Threatnings, the other to his Promiſes; both joyn together to repreſent this Divine Perfection to the Creature, and to excite to an imitation in the Creature. In the one God would render Sin odious, becauſe dangerous; and curb the practice of Evil, which would otherwiſe be licentious: In the other, he would commend *Righteouſneſs*, and excite a love of it, which would otherwiſe be cold. By theſe God ſutes the *two* great Affections of Men, *Fear* and *Hope*; both the branches of Self-love in Man: The *Promiſes* and *Threatnings* are both the Branches of Holineſs in God. The end of the Promiſes, is the ſame with the Exhortation the *Apoſtle* concludes from them, 2 Cor. 7. 1. *Having theſe Promiſes, let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, perfecting Holineſs in the fear of God.* As the end of Precepts, is to direct; the end of Threatnings, is to deter from Iniquity; ſo that of the Promiſes, is to allure to Obedience. Thus God breaths out his Love to *Righteouſneſs* in every Promiſe, his Hatred of *Sin* in every Threatning. The Rewards offered in the one, are the Smiles of *pleaſed Holineſs*; and the Curſes thundred in the other, are the Sparklings of *enraged Righteouſneſs*.

4. His *Holineſs* appears *in the Judgments inflicted for the violation of this Law.* Divine Holineſs is the Root of Divine Juſtice, and Divine Juſtice is the Triumph of Divine Holineſs. Hence both are expreſſed in Scripture by one word of *Righteouſneſs*, which ſometimes ſignifies the rectitude of the Divine Nature, and ſometimes the vindicative ſtroak of his Arm; Pſal. 103. 6. *The Lord executeth Righteouſneſs and Judgment for all that are oppreſſed.* So *Dan.* 9. 7. *Righteouſneſs* (that is, Juſtice) *belongs to thee.* The Vials of his Wrath are filled from his implacable averſion to Iniquity. All Penal Evils ſhowred down upon the heads of wicked Men, ſpread their root in, and branch out from this Perfection. All the dreadful Storms and Tempeſts in the World are blown up by it. Why doth he *rain Snares, Fire and Brimſtone, and a horrible Tempeſt?* becauſe *the righteous Lord loveth Righteouſneſs*, Pſal. 11. 6, 7. And (as was obſerved before) when he was going about the dreadfulleſt Work that ever was in the World; the overturning the *Jewiſh* State, hardening the Hearts of that Unbelieving People, and caſhiering a Nation (once dear to him) from the honor of his Protection; His *Holineſs*, as the Spring of all this, is applauded by the *Seraphims*, Iſai. 6. 3. compared with *verſ.* 9, 10, 11, *&c.* Impunity argues the approbation of a Crime, and Puniſhment the abhorrency of it. The greatneſs of the Crime, and the Righteouſneſs of the Judge, are the firſt Natural Sentiments that ariſe in the minds of Men upon the appearance of Divine Judgments in the World, by thoſe that are near them †. As when Men ſee Gibbets erected, Scaffolds prepared, Inſtruments of Death and Torture provided, and grievous Puniſhments inflicted; the firſt reflection in the Spectators, is the Malignity of the Crime, and the deteſtation the Governors are poſſeſſed with.

† Amirant. *Moral. Tom.* 5. p. 388.

1. *How ſeverely hath he puniſh'd his moſt noble Creatures for it?* The once glorious Angels, upon whom he had been at greater coſt than upon other Creatures, and drawn more lively Lineaments of his own Excellency, upon the Tranſgreſſion of his Law, are thrown into the Furnace of Juſtice without any *Mercy* to pity them, *Jude* 6. And though there were but one ſort of Creatures upon the Earth that bore his Image, and were only fit to publiſh and keep up his Honor below the Heavens; yet upon their Apoſtacy (though upon a Temptation from a ſubtile and inſinuating Spirit) the *Man*, with all his Poſterity, is ſentenc'd to miſery in Life, and Death at laſt; and the *Woman*, with all her Sex, have ſtanding Puniſhments inflicted on them; which as they begun in their Perſons, were to reach as far as the laſt Member of their ſucceſſive Generations. So *Holy* is God, that he will not endure a Spot in his choiceſt Work. Men indeed, when there is a crack in an excellent piece of Work, or a ſtain upon a rich Garment, do not caſt it away; they value it for the remaining Excellency, more than hate it for the con-

contracted Spot: But God ſaw no Excellency in his Creature worthy regarding, after the Image of that which he moſt eſteemed in himſelf, was defaced.

2. *How deteſtable to him are the very Inſtruments of Sin*? For the ill uſe, the *Serpent* (an Irrational Creature,) was put to by the *Devil*, as an Inſtrument in the *Fall of Man*, the whole brood of thoſe Animals are Curſt, *Gen.* 3. 14. *Curſed above all Cattel, and above every Beaſt of the Field.* Not only the *Devils* Head is threatned to be for ever *bruiſed*, and (as ſome think) render'd irrecoverable upon this further Teſtimony of his Malice in the Seduction of Man; who perhaps without this new Act, might have been admitted into the Arms of Mercy, notwithſtanding his firſt Sin; [though the *Scripture* gives us no account of this, only this is the only Sentence we read of pronounc'd againſt the *Devil*, which puts him into an irrecoverable ſtate by a Mortal *bruiſing* of his *Head.*] But, I ſay, He is not only puniſh'd, but the Organ whereby he blew in his Temptation, is put into a worſe condition than it was before. Thus God hated the Spunge, whereby the *Devil* deform'd his beautiful Image: Thus God, to manifeſt his deteſtation of Sin, ordered the *Beaſt* whereby any Man was ſlain, to be ſlain as well as the Malefactor, *Levit.* 20. 15. The *Gold* and *Silver* that had been abuſed to Idolatry, and were the Ornaments of Images; though good in themſelves, and uncapable of a Criminal Nature, were not to be brought into their Houſes, but deteſted and abhorred by them, becauſe they were curſed, and an *abomination to the Lord.* See with what loathing Expreſſions this Law is enjoyn'd to them, *Deut.* 7. 25, 26. So contrary is the holy Nature of God to every Sin, that it curſeth every thing that is Inſtrumental in it.

3. *How deteſtable is every thing to him that is in the Sinners poſſeſſion*? The very Earth, which God had made *Adam* the Proprietor of, was *Curſed for his ſake*, Gen. 3. 17, 18. It loſt its Beauty, and lies languiſhing to this day; and notwithſtanding the Redemption by Chriſt, hath not recovered its health, nor is it like to do, till the compleating the Fruits of it upon the *Children of God*, Rom. 8. 20, 21, 22. The whole Lower Creation was made *ſubject to vanity*, and put into Pangs upon the Sin of Man, by the *Righteouſneſs* of God deteſting his Offence. How often hath his implacable averſion from Sin been ſhewn; not only in his Judgments upon the Offenders Perſon, but by wrapping up in the ſame Judgment thoſe which ſtood in a near relation to them? *Achan*, with his Children and Cattle, are overwhelmed with *Stones*, and burned together, *Joſh.* 7. 24, 25. In the deſtruction of *Sodom*; not only the grown Malefactors, but the young Spawn, the Infants (at preſent uncapable of the ſame Wickedneſs) and their Cattle were burned up by the ſame *Fire from Heaven*; and the place where their Habitations ſtood, is at this day partly a heap of *Aſhes*, and partly an Infectious *Lake*, that choaks any Fiſh that ſwim into it from *Jordan*, and ſtifles (as is related) by its vapor, any Bird that attempts to fly over it. Oh, how deteſtable is *Sin* to God, that cauſes him to turn a pleaſant Land, as the *Garden of the Lord* (as it is ſtiled *Gen.* 13. 10.) into a Lake of Sulphur; to make it both in his Word and Works, as a laſting Monument of his abhorrence of Evil!

4. *What Deſign hath God in all theſe Acts of Severity and Vindictive Juſtice, but to ſet off the luſtre of his Holineſs?* He teſtifies himſelf concerned for thoſe Laws, which he hath ſet as Hedges and Limits to the *Luſts* of Men; and therefore when he breaths forth his fiery Indignation againſt a People, he is ſaid to get himſelf *Honor*: As when he intended the *Red Sea* ſhould ſwallow up the *Egyptian* Army, *Exod.* 14. 17, 18. which *Moſes* in his Triumphant Song eccho's back again, *Exod.* 15. 1. *Thou haſt triumphed glorioufly*; glorioufly in his *Holineſs*, which is the glory of his Nature; as *Moſes* himſelf interprets it in the *Text.* When Men will not own the *Holineſs* of God in a way of Duty, God will vindicate it in a way of Juſtice and Puniſhment. In the deſtruction of *Aarons* Sons, that were Will-worſhippers, and would take ſtrange Fire, *Sanctified* and *Glorified* are coupled, *Lev.* 10. 3. He glorified himſelf in that Act, in vindicating his *Holineſs* before all the People, declaring, that he will not endure Sin and Diſobedience. He doth therefore in this Life more ſeverely puniſh the Sins of his People, when they preſume upon any act of Diſobedience; for a Teſtimony, that the nearneſs

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and dearneſs of any Perſon to him, ſhall not make him unconcern'd in his *Holineſs*, or be a plea for Impurity. The end of all his Judgments, is to witneſs to the World his abominating of Sin. To puniſh and witneſs againſt Men, are one and the ſame thing, *Micah* 1. 2. *The Lord ſhall witneſs againſt you*; and it is the Witneſs of Gods *Holineſs*, Hoſ. 5. 5. *And the pride of Iſrael doth teſtifie to his face*: One renders it, the *excellency of Iſrael*, and underſtands it of *God*; the word גאון which is here in our tranſlation *Pride*, is rendred *Excellency*, Amos 8. 7. *The Lord God hath ſworn by his Excellency*; which is interpreted *Holineſs*, Amos 4. 2. *The Lord God hath ſworn by his Holineſs*. What is the iſſue or end of this ſwearing by *Holineſs*, and of his *Excellency* teſtifying againſt them? In all thoſe places you will find them to be ſweeping Judgments: In one, *Iſrael* and *Ephraim* ſhall *fall in their iniquity*; in another, He will *take them away with hooks*, and *their poſterity with fiſh-hooks*; and in another, He would *never forget any of their works*. He that puniſheth wickedneſs in thoſe he before uſed with the greateſt Tenderneſs, furniſheth the World with an undeniable evidence of the deteſtableneſs of it to him. Were not Judgments ſometimes poured out upon the World, it would be believed, that God were rather an approver, than an enemy to Sin.

To *Conclude*, Since God hath made a ſtricter Law to guide Men; annex'd Promiſes above the merit of Obedience, to allure them; and Threatnings, dreadful enough to affright Men from Diſobedience. He cannot be the cauſe of Sin, nor a lover of it. How can he be the Author of that which he ſo ſeverely forbids; or love that which he delights to puniſh; or be fondly indulgent to any evil, when he hates the ignorant Inſtruments in the Offences of his reaſonable Creatures?

III. The *Holineſs* of God, appears *in our Reſtoration*. 'Tis in the Glaſs of the *Goſpel* we behold the *Glory of the Lord* *, that is, the Glory of the Lord, into whoſe Image we are changed; but we are changed into nothing, as the Image of God, but into *Holineſs*: We bore not upon us by Creation, nor by Regeneration, the Image of any other Perfection: We cannot be changed into his *Omnipotence*, *Omniſcience*, *&c.* but into the Image of his *Righteouſneſs*. This is the pleaſing and glorious ſight the Goſpel *Mirror* darts in our eyes. The whole Scene of *Redemption*, is nothing elſe but a diſcovery of Judgment and Righteouſneſs, Iſai. 1. 27. *Zion ſhall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteouſneſs.*

* 2 Cor. 3. 18

1. This *Holineſs* of God, appears *in the manner of our Reſtoration*, viz. *by the death of Chriſt*. Not all the Vials of Judgments, that have, or ſhall be poured out upon the wicked World, nor the flaming Furnace of a Sinners Conſcience, nor the irreverſible Sentence pronounc'd againſt the Rebellious *Devils*, nor the groans of the *damned Creatures*, give ſuch a demonſtration of Gods hatred of ſin, as the wrath of God let looſe upon his *Son*. Never did Divine Holineſs appear more beautiful and lovely, than at the time our *Saviours* Countenance was moſt marr'd in the midſt of his dying Groans. This himſelf acknowledges in that Prophetical *Pſalm*, *Pſal.* 22. 1, 2. when God had turned his ſmiling Face from him, and thruſt his ſharp Knife into his heart, which forced that terrible cry from him, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* he adores this perfection of *holineſs*, ver. 3. *But thou art holy*: Thy *Holineſs* is the ſpring of all this ſharp Agony, and for this thou *inhabiteſt*, and ſhalt for ever inhabit the *Praiſes* of all thy *Iſrael*. *Holineſs* drew the Vail between Gods countenance and our Saviours Soul. *Juſtice* indeed gave the ſtroke, but *Holineſs* order'd it. In this his Purity did ſparkle, and his irreverſible Juſtice manifeſted, that all thoſe that *commit ſin are worthy of death*; this was the perfect Index of his *Righteouſneſs* †, that is, of his *Holineſs* and *Truth*; then it was that God that is *Holy*, was *ſanctified in Righteouſneſs*, Iſai. 5. 16.

† Rom. 3. 25

It appears the more, if you conſider,

1. *The Dignity of the Redeemers Perſon.* One that had been from Eternity; had laid the *Foundations of the world*; had been the Object of the Divine Delight: He that was *God bleſſed for ever*, becomes a *Curſe*: He who was bleſſed by *Angels*, and by whom God bleſſed the World, muſt be ſeiz'd with Horror: The *Son of Eternity* muſt bleed to death. Where did ever Sin appear ſo irreconcilable to God? Where did God ever break out ſo furiouſly in his deteſtation of Iniquity? The Father would have the moſt Excellent Perſon, one next in order to himſelf,

* Phil. 2. 6. ſelf, and *equal to him* in all the glorious Perfections of his Nature*, Dye on a diſgraceful *Croſs*, and be expoſed to the flames of Divine Wrath, rather than Sin ſhould live, and his *Holineſs* remain for ever diſparaged by the Violations of his Law.

2. *The near Relation he ſtood in to the Father.* He was his *own Son that he delivered up*, Rom. 8. 32. His Eſſential Image, as dearly beloved by him as himſelf; yet he would abate nothing of his hatred of thoſe Sins imputed to one ſo dear to him, and who never had done any thing contrary to his Will. The *ſtrong cries* uter'd by him, could not cauſe him to cut off the leaſt Fringe of this Royal Garment, nor part with a Thred the Robe of his *Holineſs* was woven with. The torrent of *Wrath* is open'd upon him, and the Fathers Heart beats not in the leaſt notice of tenderneſs to Sin, in the midſt of his Sons Agonies. † God ſeems to lay aſide the Bowels of a Father, and put on the garb of an Irreconcileable Enemy. Upon which account, probably, our Saviour in the midſt of his Paſſion gives him the Title of *God*; not of *Father*, the Title he uſually before Addreſt to him with, *Matth.* 27. 46. *My God, my God*; not, My Father, my Father, *why haſt thou forſaken me?* He ſeems to hang upon the *Croſs* like a diſ-inherited Son, while he appear'd in the garb and rank of a Sinner. Then was his head loaded with *Curſes*, when he ſtood under that Sentence of, *Curſed is every one that hangs upon a tree*, Gal. 3. 13. and look'd as one forlorn and rejected by the Divine Purity and Tenderneſs. God dealt not with him, as if he had been one in ſo near a Relation to him. He left him not the Will only of the Inſtruments of his Death, he would have the chiefeſt blow himſelf of bruiſing of him, *Iſai.* 53. 10. *It pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him*: the *Lord*, becauſe the power of Creatures could not ſtrike a blow ſtrong enough, to ſatisfie and ſecure the Rights of Infinite *Holineſs*. It was therefore a Cup temper'd and put into his hands by his Father; a Cup given him to drink. In other Judgments he lets out his Wrath againſt his Creatures; in this he lets out his Wrath (as it were) againſt Himſelf, againſt his Son, One as dear to him as himſelf. As in his making Creatures, his Power over Nothing to bring it into Being appear'd; but in pardoning Sin he hath power over himſelf; ſo in puniſhing Creatures, his *Holineſs* appears in his Wrath againſt Creatures, againſt Sinners by inherency: But by puniſhing Sin in his *Son*, his Holineſs ſharpens his Wrath againſt him who was his Equal, and only a reputed Sinner: As if his Affection to his own *Holineſs*, ſurmounted his Affection to his *Son*: For he choſe to ſuſpend the breakings out of his Affections to his Son, and ſee him plunged in a ſharp and Ignominious Miſery, without giving him any viſible Token of his Love; rather than ſee his *Holineſs* lie groaning under the Injuries of a Tranſgreſſing World.

† Lingend. *Tom.* 3. *p.* 699, 700.

3. The Value he puts upon his *Holineſs* appears further, *in the advancement of this Redeeming Perſon after his death.* Our Saviour was advanc'd, not barely for his Dying, but for the reſpect he had in his Death to this Attribute of God. Heb. 1. 9. *Thou haſt loved righteouſneſs, and hated Iniquity: therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oyl of gladneſs*, &c. By *Righteouſneſs* is meant this Perfection, becauſe of the oppoſition of it to *Iniquity*. Some think [*Therefore*] to be the final Cauſe; as if this were the ſenſe, *Thou art anointed with the oyl of gladneſs, that thou mighteſt love righteouſneſs and hate iniquity.* But the Holy Ghoſt ſeeming to ſpeak in this Chapter, not only of the Godhead of Chriſt, but of his Exaltation; the Doctrine whereof he had begun in *Verſe* 3. and proſecutes in the following Verſes; I would rather underſtand [*Therefore,*] *For this cauſe, or reaſon, hath God anointed thee*; not, *to this end.* Chriſt indeed had an Unction of Grace, whereby he was fitted for his Mediatory work; He had alſo an Unction of Glory, whereby he was rewarded for it. In the *firſt* regard, it was a qualifying him for his Office; in the *ſecond* regard, it was a ſolemn Inaugurating him in his Royal Authority. And the Reaſon of his being ſetled upon a *Throne for ever and ever*, is, *becauſe he loved Righteouſneſs.* He ſuffered himſelf to be pierced to Death, that *Sin*, the Enemy of Gods Purity, *might be deſtroy'd*; and the Honor of the Law, the Image of Gods *Holineſs*, might be repair'd and fulfill'd in the Fallen Creature. He reſtored the credit of Divine Holineſs in the World, in manifeſting by his Death, God, an irreconcileable Enemy to all Sin; in aboliſhing the Empire of Sin, ſo hateful to God, and reſtoring the rectitude of Nature, and new framing the Image of God in his choſen Ones.

And

And God ſo valued this Vindication of his *Holineſs*, that he confers upon him; in his humane Nature, an Eternal Royalty and Empire over Angels and Men. *Holineſs* was the great Attribute reſpected by Chriſt in his dying, and manifeſted in his death; and for his love to this, God would beſtow an Honor upon his Perſon, in that Nature wherein he did vindicate the Honor of ſo dear a Perfection. In the death of Chriſt, he ſhewed his Reſolution to preſerve its Rights. In the exaltation of Chriſt, he evidenced his mighty pleaſure for the vindication of it. In both, the Infinite value he had for it, as dear to him as his Life and Glory.

4. It may be further conſidered, that *in this way of Redemption, his Holineſs in the hatred of Sin, ſeems to be valued above any other Attribute.* He proclaims the value of it above the Perſon of his Son; ſince the Divine Nature of the Redeemer is diſguiſed, obſcur'd and vail'd, in order to the reſtoring the Honor of it. And Chriſt ſeems to value it above his own Perſon, ſince he ſubmitted himſelf to the Reproaches of Men, to clear this perfection of the Divine Nature, and make it Illuſtrious in the eyes of the World. You heard before, at the beginning of the handling this Argument; It was the Beauty of the Deity, the Luſtre of his Nature, the Link of all his Attributes, his very Life; he values it equal with Himſelf, ſince he ſwears by it, as well as by his Life. And none of his Attributes would have a due *decorum* without it: 'Tis the glory of Power, Mercy, Juſtice, Wiſdom, that they are all holy. So that though God had an Infinite tenderneſs and compaſſion to the fallen Creature, yet it ſhould not extend it ſelf in his relief to the prejudice of the Rights of his Purity: He would have this triumph in the tenderneſs of his Mercy, as well as the ſeverities of his Juſtice. His Mercy had not appeared in its true colours, nor attain'd a regular End, without vengeance on Sin. It would have been a Compaſſion, that would (in ſparing the Sinner) have encourag'd the Sin, and affronted *Holineſs* in the Iſſues of it: Had he diſperſed his Compaſſions about the World without the regard to his hatred of Sin, his Mercy had been too cheap, and his Holineſs had been contemn'd. His Mercy would not have triumph'd in his own Nature, whil'ſt his Holineſs had ſuffered: He had exerciſed a Mercy with the impairing his own Glory.

But now in this way of Redemption, the Rights of both are ſecured, both have their due luſtre: The odiouſneſs of Sin is equally diſcovered with the greateſt of his Compaſſions; an infinite abhorrence of Sin, and an infinite love to the World march hand in hand together: Never was ſo much of the irreconcileableneſs of Sin to him, ſet forth, as in the moment he was opening his Bowels in the reconciliation of the Sinner. *Sin* is made the chiefeſt mark of his Diſpleaſure, while the poor Creature is made the higheſt object of Divine Pity. There could have been no motion of Mercy, with the leaſt injury to Purity and Holineſs. In this way *Mercy* and *Truth*, *Mercy* to the miſery of the Creature, and *Truth* to the purity of the Law, *have met together*; the Righteouſneſs of God, and the Peace of the Sinner, *have kiſſed each other*, Pſal. 85. 10.

II. The *Holineſs* of God in his hatred of Sin, appears *in our Juſtification, and the conditions he requires of all that would enjoy the benefit of Redemption.* His Wiſdom hath ſo temper'd all the Conditions of it, that the honor of his *Holineſs* is as much preſerved, as the ſweetneſs of his *Mercy* is experimented by us. All the conditions are Records of his exact Purity, as well as of his condeſcending Grace. Our *Juſtification* is not by the imperfect Works of Creatures, but by an exact and infinite Righteouſneſs, as great as that of the Deity, which had been offended: It being the *Righteouſneſs* of a Divine Perſon, upon which account it is call'd the *Righteouſneſs of God*; not only in regard of Gods appointing it, and Gods accepting it, but as it is a *Righteouſneſs* of that Perſon that was God, and is God. *Faith* is the Condition God requires to Juſtification; but *not a dead*, but an active Faith, ſuch *a Faith as purifies the heart* †. He calls for *Repentance*, which is a Moral retracting our Offences, and an approbation of contemn'd Righteouſneſs and a violated Law; an endeavor to regain what is loſt, and to pluck out the heart of that Sin we have committed. He requires *Mortification*, which is called *Crucifying*; whereby a Man would ſtrike as full and deadly a blow at his Luſts, as was ſtruck at *Chriſt* upon the *Croſs*, and make them as certainly die, as the *Redeemer* did.

† James 2. 20. Acts 15. 9.

Our own Righteouſneſs muſt be condemned by us, as impure and imperfect: We muſt diſown every thing that is our *own*, as to Righteouſneſs, in reverence to the *Holineſs* of God, and the valuation of the *Righteouſneſs* of Chriſt. He hath reſolved, not to beſtow the Inheritance of Glory, without the Root of Grace. None are partakers of the Divine Bleſſedneſs, that are not partakers of the Divine Nature: There muſt be a *renewing* of his Image, before there be a *viſion of his face* *. He will not have Men brought only into a Relative ſtate of Happineſs by Juſtification, without a Real ſtate of Grace by Sanctification. And ſo reſolved he is in it, that there is no admittance into Heaven of a ſtarting, but a perſevering Holineſs; Rom. 2.7. *a patient continuance in well doing*: Patient under the ſharpneſs of Affliction, and continuing under the pleaſures of Proſperity. Hence it is that the Goſpel, the reſtoring Doctrine, hath not only the motives of Rewards to allure us to Good, and the danger of Puniſhments to ſcare us from Evil, as the Law had; but they are ſet forth in a higher ſtrain, in a way of ſtronger engagement, the Rewards are Heavenly, and the Puniſhments Eternal: And more powerful Motives beſides, from the choicer Expreſſions of Gods Love in the Death of his Son. The whole Deſign of it is to re-inſtate us in a reſemblance to this Divine Perfection; whereby he ſhews what an Affection he hath to this Excellency of his Nature, and what a deteſtation he hath of Evil, which is contrary to it.

* Heb. 12.14.

3. It appears *in the actual Regeneration of the Redeemed Souls, and a carrying it on to a full perfection.* (As Election is the effect of Gods Soveraignty, our Pardon the fruit of his Mercy, our Knowledge a ſtream from his Wiſdom, our ſtrength an impreſſion of his Power; ſo our Purity is a beam from his Holineſs.) The whole work of Sanctification, and the preſervation of it, our Saviour begs for his Diſciples of his Father, under this Title, *John* 17.11,17. *Holy Father, keep them through thy own name*, and *ſanctifie them through thy truth*; as the proper ſource whence Holineſs was to flow to the Creature: As the Sun is the proper Fountain whence Light is derived, both to the Stars above, and bodies here below. Whence He is not only called Holy, but the *Holy One of Iſrael*, Iſai. 43. 15. *I am the Lord your Holy One, the Creator of Iſrael*: Diſplaying his Holineſs in them, by a new Creation of them as his *Iſrael*. As the rectitude of the Creature at the firſt Creation was the effect of his Holineſs; ſo the Purity of the Creature by a New Creation, is a draught of the ſame Perfection. He is called the *Holy One of Iſrael* more in *Iſaiah*, that Evangelical Prophet, in erecting *Zion*, and forming a People for himſelf, than in the whole Scripture beſides. As he ſent *Jeſus Chriſt* to ſatisfie his Juſtice for the expiation of the guilt of Sin; ſo he ſends the *Holy Ghoſt* for the cleanſing the filth of Sin, and over-maſtering the Power of it: Himſelf is the Fountain, the Son is the Patern, and the Holy Ghoſt the immediate Imprinter of this ſtamp of Holineſs upon the Creature. God hath ſuch a value for this Attribute, that he deſigns the glory of this in the renewing the Creature, more than the happineſs of the Creature; though the one doth neceſſarily follow upon the other, yet the one is the principal Deſign, and the other the conſequent of the former: Whence our Salvation is more frequently ſet forth, in Scripture, by a Redemption from Sin, and Sanctification of the Soul, than by a poſſeſſion of Heaven †.

† Tit. 2. 11, 12, 13, 14. *and many other places.*

Indeed, as God could not create a Rational Creature, without intereſting this Attribute in a ſpecial manner; ſo he cannot reſtore the Fallen Creature without it. As in creating a Rational Creature, there muſt be *Holineſs* to adorn it, as well as *Wiſdom* to form the deſign, and *Power* to effect it; ſo in the reſtoration of the Creature, as he could not make a Reaſonable Creature unholy; ſo he cannot reſtore a Fallen Creature, and put him in a meet poſture to take pleaſure in him, without communicating to him a reſemblance of himſelf. As God cannot be bleſſed in himſelf without this perfection of *Purity*; ſo neither can a Creature be bleſſed without it. As God would be Unlovely to Himſelf without this Attribute; ſo would the Creature be unlovely to God, without a ſtamp and mark of it upon his Nature. So much is this Perfection one with God, valued by him, and intereſted in all his Works and Ways.

The

The *third Thing* I am to do, is to lay down *ſome Propoſitions in the defence of Gods holineſs in all his acts, about or concerning ſin.* It was a prudent and pious advice of *Camero*, Not to be too buſie and raſh in Inquiries and Concluſions about the reaſon of God's Providence in the matter of Sin. The *Scripture* hath put a bar in the way of ſuch Curioſity, by telling us, That the *ways* of God's Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs in his Judgments are *unſearchable* *: Much more the ways of Gods Holineſs, as he ſtands in relation to Sin, as a Governor of the World; we cannot conſider thoſe things without danger of ſlipping: Our Eyes are too weak to look upon the *Sun* without being dazled: Too much Curioſity met with a juſt check in our firſt Parent. To be deſirous to know the reaſon of all Gods proceedings in the matter of Sin, is to ſecond the Ambition of *Adam*, to be as wiſe as God, and know the reaſon of his actings equally with himſelf. 'Tis more eaſie, as the ſame *Author* ſaith, to give an account of Gods Providence ſince the revolt of Man, and the Poyſon that hath univerſally ſeiz'd upon Human Nature, than to make gueſſes at the manner of the fall of the firſt Man. The *Scripture* hath given us but a ſhort account of the manner of it, to diſcourage too curious Inquiries into it. III.

* Rom. 11. 33.

'Tis certain that God made Man *upright*; and when Man ſinned in *Paradice*, God was active in ſuſtaining the ſubſtantial nature and act of the Sinner while he was ſinning, though not in ſupporting the ſinfulneſs of the Act: He was permiſſive in ſuffering it: He was Negative in withholding that Grace which might certainly have prevented his Crime, and conſequently his Ruin; though he withheld nothing that was ſufficient for his reſiſtance of that Temptation wherewith he was aſſaulted. And ſince the Fall of Man, God, as a wiſe Governor, is directive of the events of the Tranſgreſſion, and draws the choiceſt Good out of the blackeſt Evil, and limits the ſins of Men, that they creep not ſo far as the evil Nature of Men would urge them to; and as a righteous Judge, he takes away the talent from idle Servants, and the Light from wicked ones, whereby they ſtumble and fall into Crimes, by the inclinations and proneneſs of their own corrupt Natures, leaves them to the byas of their own vitious Habits, denies that Grace which they have forfeited, and have no right to challenge; and turns their ſinful actions into puniſhments, both to the committers of them, and others.

1. Propoſition. *Gods Holineſs is not chargeable with any blemiſh for his creating man in a mutable ſtate.* 'Tis true, Angels and Men were created with a changeable Nature; and though there was a rich and glorious ſtamp upon them by the hand of God, yet their Natures were not uncapable of a baſe and vile ſtamp from ſome other Principle. As the Silver which bears upon it the Image of a great Prince, is capable of being melted down, and imprinted with no better an Image than that of ſome vile and monſtrous Beaſt. Though God made Man upright, yet he was capable of ſeeking *many inventions*, Eccl. 7. 29. yet the hand of God was not defiled by Forming Man with ſuch a Nature. It was ſutable to the Wiſdom of God to give the Rational Creature, whom he had furniſh'd with a power of acting Righteouſly, the liberty of Choice, and not fix him in an unchangeable State, without a trial of him in his natural; that if he did obey, his obedience might be the more valuable; and if he did freely offend, his offence might be more inexcuſable.

† 1. *No Creature can be capable of immutability by Nature.* Mutability is ſo eſſential to a Creature, that a Creature cannot be ſuppoſed without it: You muſt ſuppoſe it a Creator, not a Creature, if you allow it to be of an Immutable Nature. Immutability is the property of the Supream Being. God *only hath immortality*, 1 Tim. 6. 16. Immortality, as oppoſed not only to a natural, but to a ſinful death; the word *only* appropriates every ſort of Immortality to God, and excludes every Creature, whether Angel or Man, from a Partnerſhip with God in this by Nature. Every Creature therefore is capable of a Death in ſin. *None is good but God*, and none is naturally free from change but God; which excludes every Creature from the ſame Prerogative; and certainly if one Angel ſinned, all might have ſinned, becauſe there was the ſame root of Mutability in one as well

as another. 'Tis as poſſible for a Creature to be Creator, as for a Creature to have naturally an incommunicable property of the Creator. All things, whether Angels or Men, are made of nothing, and therefore capable of defection* ; becauſe a Creature being made of nothing, cannot be good *per eſſentiam*, or eſſentially good, but by participation from another. Again, every rational Creature, being made of nothing, hath a Superior which created him and governs him, and is capable of a Precept; and conſequently capable of Diſobedience as well as Obedience to the Precept, to tranſgreſs it as well as obey it. God cannot ſin, becauſe he can have no Superior to impoſe a Precept on him. A Rational Creature, with a liberty of Will and power of Choice, cannot be made by Nature of ſuch a mould and temper, but he muſt be as well capable of chuſing wrong, as of chuſing right; and therefore the ſtanding Angels, and glorified Saints, though they are immutable, 'tis not by Nature they are ſo, but by Grace, and the good pleaſure of God; for though they are in Heaven, they have ſtill in their nature a remote power of ſinning, but it ſhall never be brought into act, becauſe God will always incline their Wills to love him, and never concur with their Wills to any evil act. Since therefore Mutability is eſſential to a Creature, as a Creature, this changeableneſs cannot properly be charged upon God as the *Author* of it; for it was not the term of Gods creating act, but did neceſſarily reſult from the nature of the Creature, as unchangeableneſs doth reſult from the Eſſence of God. The brittleneſs of a Glaſs is no blame to the Art of him that blew up the Glaſs into ſuch a faſhion; that imperfection of brittleneſs is not from the Workman, but the Matter: So though changeableneſs be an Imperfection, yet it is ſo neceſſary a one, that no Creature can be naturally without it: Beſides, though Angels and Men were mutable by Creation, and capable to exerciſe their Wills, yet they were not neceſſitated to evil; and this mutability did not infer a neceſſity that they ſhould fall; becauſe ſome Angels, which had the ſame root of changeableneſs in their natures with thoſe that fell, did not fall, which they would have done, if capableneſs of changing, and neceſſity of changing were one and the ſame thing.

* Suarez. *Vol.* 2. *p.* 548.

† 2. *Though God made the Creature mutable, yet he made him not evil.* There could be nothing of evil in him that God created after his own Image, and pronounced *good*, *Gen.* 1. 27, 31. Man had an ability to ſtand, as well as a capacity to fall: He was created with a principle of acting freely, whereby he was capable of loving God as his chief Good, and moving to him as his laſt end; there was a beam of Light in Mans underſtanding to know the Rule he was to conform to, a harmony between his Reaſon and his Affections, an original Righteouſneſs: So that it ſeem'd more eaſie for him to determine his Will to continue in Obedience to the Precept, than to ſwerve from it; to adhere to God as his chief Good, than to liſten to the Charms of *Satan*. God created him with thoſe advantages, that he might with more facility have kept his eyes fix'd upon the Divine Beauty, than turn his back upon it; and with greater eaſe have kept the Precept God gave him, than have broken it. The very firſt thought darted, or impreſſion made by God upon the Angelical or Human Nature, was the knowledge of himſelf as their Author, and could be no other than ſuch whereby both Angels and Men might be excited to a love of that adorable Being that had framed them ſo glorioufly out of nothing: And if they turned their Wills and Affections to another Object, it was not by the direction of God, but contrary to the impreſſion God had made upon them, or the firſt thought he flaſh'd into them: They turn'd themſelves to the admiring their own Excellency, or affecting an advantage diſtinct from that which they were to look for only from God. 1 *Tim.* 3. 6. *Pride* was the cauſe of the Condemnation of the Devil. Though the Wills of Angels and Men were created mutable, and ſo were imperfect, yet they were not created evil. Though they might ſin, yet they might not ſin, and therefore were not evil in their own nature. What reflection then could this mutability of their nature be upon God? So far is it from any, that he is fully cleared, by ſtoring up in the nature of Man ſufficient proviſion againſt his departure from him. God was ſo far from creating him evil, that he fortified him with a knowledge in his Underſtanding, and a ſtrength in his Nature to withſtand any Invaſion. The Knowledge was exerciſed by *Eve* in the very moment of the Serpents aſſaulting her; Gen. 3. 3. *Eve ſaid to the Serpent,*

God

God hath ſaid, ye ſhall not eat of it: And had her thoughts been intent upon this *God hath ſaid*, and not diverted to the motions of the Senſitive Appetite and Liquoriſh Palate, it had ben ſufficient to put by all the paſſes the Devil did, or could have made at her. So that you ſee, though God made the Creature mutable, yet he made him not evil. This clears the Holineſs of God.

3. Therefore it follows, *That though God created man changable, yet he was not the cauſe of his change by his fall.* Though Man was created defectible, yet he was not determin'd by God, influencing his Will by any poſitive act to that change and apoſtacy. God placed him in a free poſture, ſet Life and Happineſs before him on the one hand, Miſery and Death on the other: As he did not draw him into the arms of perpetual Bleſſedneſs, ſo he did not drive him into the gulph of his Miſery*: He did not incline him to Evil. It was repugnant to the Goodneſs of God to corrupt the Righteouſneſs of thoſe Faculties he had ſo lately beautified him with. It was not likely he ſhould deface the beauty of that Work he had compos'd with ſo much Wiſdom and Skill. Would he by any Act of his own make that bad, which but a little before he had acquieſced in as good? Angels and Men were left to their liberty and conduct of their Natural Faculties; and if God inſpir'd them with any motions, they could not but be motions to Good, and ſuted to that righteous Nature he had endued them with. But it is moſt probable that God did not in a Supernatural way act inwardly upon the mind of Man, but left him wholly to that power which he had in Creation furniſh'd him with. The Scripture frees God fully from any blame in this, and lays it wholly upon *Satan* as the Tempter, and upon Man as the Determiner of his own Will. Gen. 3. 6. Eve *took of the Fruit, and did eat*; *and* Adam *took from her of the Fruit, and did eat*. And *Solomon, Eccl.* 7. 29. diſtinguiſheth Gods Work in the Creation of Man *upright*, from Mans Work in ſeeking out thoſe ruining *inventions*. God created Man in a righteous ſtate, and Man caſt himſelf into a forlorn ſtate. As he was a mutable Creature, he was from God; as he was a changed and corrupted Creature, it was from the Devil ſeducing, and his own pliableneſs in admitting. As Silver, and Gold, and other Metals, were created by God in ſuch a form and figure, yet capable of receiving other forms by the induſtrious Art of Man: When the Image of a Man is put upon a piece of Metal, God is not ſaid to create that Image, though he created the Subſtance with ſuch a Property, that it was capable of receiving it: This Capacity is from the nature of the Metal by Gods Creation of it, but the carving the Figure of this or that Man, is not the act of God, but the act of Man. As *Images* in *Scripture* are called the Work of Mens hands, in regard of the Imagery, though the Matter, Wood or Stone, upon which the Image was carv'd, was a Work of Gods Creative Power. When an Artificer frames an excellent Inſtrument, and a Muſician exactly tunes it, and it comes out of their hands without a blemiſh, but capable to be untun'd by ſome rude hand, or receive a crack by a ſuddain fall, if it meet with a Diſaſter; is either the Workman or Muſician to be blam'd? The ruin of a Houſe, cauſed by the waſtfulneſs or careleſsneſs of the Tenant, is not to be imputed to the Workman that built it ſtrong, and left it in a good poſture.

* Amyral. *Moral. Tom.* 1. *p.* 615, 616.

2. Propoſition. *Gods Holineſs is not blemiſh'd by enjoyning Man a Law, which he knew he would not obſerve.*

1. *The Law as not above his ſtrength.* Had the Law been impoſſible to be obſerved, no Crime could have been imputed to the Subject, the fault had lain wholly upon the Governor; the Non-obſervance of it had been from a want of ſtrength, and not from a want of will. Had God commanded *Adam* to fly up to the Sun, when he had not given him Wings, *Adam* might have a will to obey it, but his power would be too ſhort to perform it. But the Law ſet him for a Rule, had nothing of impoſſibility in it; it was eaſie to be obſerved; the Command was rather below, than above his ſtrength; and the ſanction of it was more apt to reſtrain and ſcare him from the breach of it, than encourage any daring attempts againſt it: He had as much power, or rather more, to conform to it, than to warp from it; and greater arguments and intereſt to be obſervant of it, than to violate it; his All was ſecured by the one, and his Ruin aſcertained by the other.

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*1 Joh. 5. 3. *The Commands of God are not *grievous*; from the firſt to the laſt Command, there is nothing impoſſible, nothing hard to the original and created Nature of Man, which were all ſumm'd up in a love to God, which was the pleaſure and delight of Man, as well as his Duty, if he had not by inconſiderateneſs neglected the dictates and reſolves of his own Underſtanding. The Law was ſuted to the ſtrength of Man, and fitted for the Improvement and Perfection of his Nature: In which reſpect the *Apoſtle* calls it *good*, as it refers to Man, as well as *holy*, as it refers to God †. Now ſince God created Man a Creature capable to be governed by a Law, and as a rational Creature endued with Underſtanding and Will, not to be govern'd according to his Nature without a Law; was it congruous to the Wiſdom of God to reſpect only the future ſtate of Man, which from the depth of his Infinite Knowledge, he did infallibly foreſee would be miſerable, by the wilful defection of Man from the Rule? Had it been agreeable to the Wiſdom of God to reſpect only this future ſtate, and not the preſent ſtate of the Creature; and therefore leave him lawleſs, becauſe he knew he would violate the Law? Should God forbear to act like a wiſe Governor, becauſe he foreſaw that Man would ceaſe to act like an obedient Subject? Shall a righteous Magiſtrate forbear to make juſt and good Laws, becauſe he foreſees, either from the diſpoſitions of his Subjects, their ill humour, or ſome Circumſtances which will intervene, that Multitudes of them will incline to break thoſe Laws, and fall under the penalty of them? No blame can be upon that Magiſtrate who minds the Rule of Righteouſneſs, and the neceſſary Duty of his Government, ſince he is not the Cauſe of thoſe turbulent Affections in Men, which he wiſely foreſees will riſe up againſt his juſt Edicts.

† Rom. 7. 12.

2. *Though the Law now be above the ſtrength of Man, yet is not the holineſs of God blemiſh'd by keeping it up.* 'Tis true, God hath been graciouſly pleaſed to mitigate the ſeverity and rigour of the Law by the entrance of the Goſpel; yet where men refuſe the terms of the Goſpel, they continue themſelves under the condemnation of the Law, and are juſtly guilty of the breach of it, though they have no ſtrength to obſerve it. The Law, as I ſaid before, was not above Mans ſtrength, when he was poſſeſſed of Original Righteouſneſs, though it be above Mans ſtrength, ſince he was ſtript of Original Righteouſneſs. The Command was dated before Man had contracted his Impotency, when he had a power to keep it as well as to break it. Had it been enjoyned to Man only after the Fall, and not before, he might have had a better pretence to excuſe himſelf, becauſe of the impoſſibility of it; yet he would not have had ſufficient excuſe, ſince the impoſſibility did not reſult from the Nature of the Law, but from the corrupted Nature of the Creature. It was *weak through the fleſh*, Rom. 8. 3. but it was promulg'd when Man had a ſtrength proportion'd to the Commands of it. And now ſince Man hath unhappily made himſelf uncapable of obeying it, muſt God's Holineſs in his Law be blemiſh'd for enjoyning it? Muſt he abrogate thoſe Commands, and prohibit what before he enjoyned, for the ſatisfaction of the corrupted Creature? would not this be his *ceaſing to be holy*, that his Creature might be unblameably unrighteous? Muſt God ſtrip himſelf of his Holineſs, becauſe Man will not diſcharge his Iniquity? He cannot be the cauſe of ſin, by keeping up the Law, who would be the cauſe of all the unrighteouſneſs of Men, by removing the Authority of it. Some things in the Law that are intrinſecally good in their own nature are indiſpenſable, and it is repugnant to the Nature of God not to command them. If he were not the Guardian of his indiſpenſable Law, he would be the cauſe and countenancer of the Creatures Iniquity. So little reaſon have Men to charge God with being the cauſe of their ſin, by not repealing his Law to gratifie their Impotence, that he would be unholy if he did. God muſt not loſe his Purity, becauſe Man hath loſt his, and caſt away the right of his Soveraignty, becauſe Man hath caſt away his Power of Obedience.

3. *God's foreknowledge that his Law would not be obſerv'd, lays no blame upon him.* Though the foreknowledge of God be infallible, yet it doth not neceſſitate the Creature in acting. It was certain from Eternity, that *Adam* would fall, that Men would do ſuch and ſuch Actions, that *Judas* would betray our Saviour; God foreknew all thoſe things from Eternity; but it is as certain that this

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foreknowledge did not neceſſitate the will of *Adam*, or any other Branch of his Poſterity, in the doing thoſe Actions that were ſo foreſeen by God; they voluntarily run into ſuch Courſes, not by any impulſion. Gods Knowledge was not ſuſpended between certainty and uncertainty: He certainly foreknew that his Law would be broken by *Adam*; he foreknew it in his own Decree of not hindering him, by giving *Adam* the efficacious Grace which would infallibly have prevented it; yet *Adam* did freely break this Law, and never imagin'd that the foreknowledge of God did neceſſitate him to it: He could find no cauſe of his own ſin, but the liberty of his own will: He charges the occaſion of his ſin upon the *woman*, and conſequently upon God in giving the woman to him *. He could not be ſo ignorant of the Nature of God, as to imagine him without a foreſight of future things, ſince his knowledge of what was to be known of God by Creation, was greater than any mans ſince, in all probability. But however, if he were not acquainted with the Notion of Gods foreknowledge, he could not be ignorant of his own act; there could not have been any neceſſity upon him, any kind of conſtraint of him in his action that could have been unknown to him; and he would not have omitted a Plea of ſo ſtrong a nature, when he was upon his trial for Life or Death; eſpecially when he urgeth ſo weak an Argument to impute his Crime to God, as the gift of the Woman; as if that which was deſign'd him for a help, were intended for his ruine. If Gods preſcience takes away the liberty of the Creature, there is no ſuch thing as a free action in the World, (for there is nothing done but is foreknown by God, elſe we render God of a limited underſtanding,) nor ever was, no not by God himſelf *ad extra*: For whatſoever he hath done in Creation, whatſoever he hath done ſince the Creation, was foreknown by him; he reſolved to do it, and therefore foreknew that he would do it: Did God do it therefore neceſſarily, as neceſſity is oppos'd to liberty? As he freely decrees what he will do, ſo he effects what he freely decreed. Foreknowledge is ſo far from intrenching upon the liberty of the will, that predetermination, which in the notion of it ſpeaks ſomething more, doth not diſſolve it: God did not only foreknow, but *determine* the ſuffering of Chriſt †. It was *neceſſary* therefore that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, that God might not be miſtaken in his foreknowledge, or come ſhort of his determinate decree: But did this take away the liberty of Chriſt in ſuffering? Eph. 5. 2. *Who offered himſelf up to God*; that is, by a voluntary act, as well as deſign'd to do it by a determinate Counſel. It did infallibly ſecure the event, but did not annihilate the liberty of the Action, either in Chriſts willingneſs to ſuffer, or the Crime of the *Jews* that made him ſuffer. [Gods preſcience is Gods previſion of things ariſing from their proper Cauſes:] As a Gardiner foreſees in his Plants the Leaves and the Flowers that will ariſe from them in the Spring, becauſe he knows the ſtrength and nature of their ſeveral Roots which lye under ground, but his foreſight of theſe things is not the cauſe of the riſe and appearance of thoſe Flowers. If any of us ſee a Ship moving towards ſuch a Rock or Quick-ſand, and know it to be govern'd by a negligent Pilot, we ſhall certainly foreſee that the Ship will be torn in pieces by the Rock, or ſwallowed up by the Sands; but is this foreſight of ours from the Cauſes, any cauſe of the effect, or can we from hence be ſaid to be the Authors of the miſcarriage of the Ship, and the loſs of the Paſſengers and Goods? The fall of *Adam* was foreſeen by God to come to paſs by the conſent of his Freewill in the choice of the propoſed Temptation: God foreknew *Adam* would ſin, and if *Adam* would not have ſinned, God would have foreknown that he would not ſin. *Adam* might eaſily have detected the Serpents fraud, and made a better Election; God foreſaw that he would not do it; Gods foreknowledge did not make *Adam* guilty or innocent; whether God had foreknown it or no, he was guilty by a free choice, and a willing neglect of his own Duty. *Adam* knew that God foreknew that he might eat of the Fruit, and fall and dye, becauſe God had forbidden him; the foreknowledge that he would do it, was no more a cauſe of his Action, than the foreknowledge that he might do it. *Judas* certainly knew that his Maſter foreknew that he ſhould betray him, for Chriſt had acquainted him with it, *John* 13. 21, 26. yet he never charg'd this foreknowledge of Chriſt with any guilt of his Treachery.

* Gen. 3. 12.

† Acts 4. 27, 28.

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3. The third Propoſition. *The Holineſs of God is not blemiſh'd by decreeing the eternal Rejection of ſome men.* Reprobation in its firſt Notion is an act of preterition, or paſſing by. A man is not made wicked by the act of God; but it ſuppoſeth him wicked; and ſo 'tis nothing elſe but Gods leaving a man in that guilt and filth wherein he beholds him. In its ſecond Notion 'tis an Ordination, not to a Crime, but to a puniſhment; Jude 4. *An ordaining to condemnation.* And though it be an eternal act of God, yet in order of Nature it follows upon the foreſight of the Tranſgreſſion of Man, and ſuppoſeth the Crime. God conſiders *Adam's* Revolt, and views the whole maſs of his corrupted Poſterity, and chuſes ſome to reduce to himſelf by his Grace, and leaves others to lye ſinking in their Ruins. Since all Mankind fell by the fall of *Adam*, and have Corruption conveyed to them ſucceſſively by that Root whereof they are Branches: All men might juſtly be left wallowing in that miſerable Condition to which they were reduced by the Apoſtacy of their common Head; and God might have paſs'd by the whole Race of Man, as well as he did the fallen Angels without any hope of Redemption. He was no more bound to reſtore Man, than to reſtore Devils, nor bound to repair the Nature of any one Son of *Adam*; and had he dealt with Men as he dealt with the Devils, they had had all of them as little juſt ground to complain of God; for all Men deſerved to be left to themſelves, for *all were concluded under ſin*: But God calls out ſome to make Monuments of his Grace, which is an act of the Soveraign mercy of that dominion whereby *he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy*, Rom. 9. 18. Others he paſſes by, and leaves them remaining in that Corruption of Nature wherein they were born. If Men have a power to diſpoſe of their own Goods, without any unrighteouſneſs, why ſhould not God diſpoſe of his own Grace, and beſtow it upon whom he pleaſes, ſince it is a debt to none, but a free gift to any that enjoy it? * God is not the cauſe of ſin in this, becauſe his operation about this is Negative; 'tis not an action, but a denial of action, and therefore cannot be the cauſe of the evil actions of Men. God acts nothing, but withholds his Power; he doth not enlighten their minds, nor encline their wills ſo powerfully, as to expel their darkneſs, and root out thoſe evil habits which poſſeſs them by Nature. God could, if he would, ſavingly enlighten the minds of all men in the World, and quicken their hearts with a new Life by an invincible Grace; but in not doing it, there is no poſitive act of God, but a ceſſation of Action: We may with as much reaſon ſay, that God is the cauſe of all the ſinful Actions that are committed by the Corporation of Devils, ſince their firſt Rebellion, becauſe he leaves them to themſelves, and beſtows not a new Grace upon them: As ſay God is the Cauſe of the ſins of thoſe that he overlooks and leaves in that ſtate of guilt wherein he found them. God did not paſs by any without the conſideration of ſin; ſo that this act of God is not repugnant to his Holineſs, but conformable to his Juſtice.

* Amyrald. *de-fenſ. de* Calv. p. 145.

4. Propoſition. *The Holineſs of God is not blemiſh'd by his ſecret will to ſuffer ſin to enter into the world.* God never willed ſin by his preceptive Will. It was never founded upon, or produced by any Word of his, as the Creation was. He never ſaid, Let there be ſin under the Heaven, as he ſaid, *Let there be Water under the Heaven.* Nor doth he Will it by infuſing any Habit of it, or ſtirring up Inclinations to it; no, *God tempts no man*, James 1. 13. Nor doth he Will it by his approving Will; 'tis deteſtable to him, nor ever can be otherwiſe: He cannot approve it either before Commiſſion or after.

1. *The Will of God is in ſome ſort concurrent with ſin.* He doth not properly Will it, but he Wills not to hinder it, to which by his Omnipotence he could put a bar. If he did poſitively Will it, it might be wrought by himſelf, and ſo could not be evil. If he did in no ſort Will it, it would not be committed by his Creature: Sin entred into the World, either God willing the permiſſion of it, or not willing the permiſſion of it. The latter cannot be ſaid;

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for then the Creature is more powerful than God, and can do that which God will not permit. God can, if he be pleaſed, baniſh all ſin in a moment out of the World: He could have prevented the Revolt of Angels, and the Fall of Man; they did not ſin whether he would or no: He might by his Grace have ſtept in the firſt moment, and made a ſpecial impreſſion upon them of the Happineſs they already poſſeſſed, and the Miſery they would incur by any wicked attempt. He could as well have prevented the ſin of the fallen Angels, and confirmed them in Grace, as of thoſe that continued in their happy ſtate: He might have appeared to Man, informed him of the Iſſue of his Deſign, and made ſecret Impreſſions upon his Heart, ſince he was acquainted with every avenue to his Will. God could have kept all ſin out of the World, as well as all Creatures from breathing in it; he was as well able to bar ſin for ever out of the World, as to let Creatures lye in the Womb of nothing, wherein they were firſt wrapped. To ſay God doth will ſin as he doth other things, is to deny his Holineſs; to ſay it entred without any thing of his Will, is to deny his Omnipotence. If he did neceſſitate *Adam* to fall, what ſhall we think of his Purity? If *Adam* did fall without any concern of Gods Will in it, what ſhall we ſay of his Soveraignty? The one taints his Holineſs, and the other clips his Power. If it came without any thing of his Will in it, and he did not foreſee it, where is his Omniſcience? If it entred whether he would or no, where is his Omnipotence? *Rom.* 9. 19. *Who hath reſiſted his will?* There cannot be a luſtful act in *Abimelech*, if God will withhold his Power; Gen. 20. 6. *I withheld thee*: Nor a curſing word in *Balaam*'s Mouth, unleſs God give power to ſpeak it; Numb. 22. 38. *Have I now any power at all to ſay any thing? The Word that God puts in my mouth, that ſhall I ſpeak.* As no Action could be ſinful if God had not forbidden it; ſo no ſin could be committed, if God did not will to give way to it.

2. *God doth not will ſin directly, and by an efficacious Will.* He doth not directly will it, becauſe he hath prohibited it by his Law, which is a diſcovery of his Will: So that if he ſhould directly will ſin, and directly prohibit it, he would will good and evil in the ſame manner, and there would be Contradictions in Gods Will: To will ſin abſolutely, is to work it, Pſal. 115. 3. *God hath done whatſoever he pleaſed.* God cannot abſolutely will it, becauſe he cannot work it. * God wills good by a poſitive Decree, becauſe he hath decreed to effect it. He wills evil by a privative Decree, becauſe he hath decreed not to give that Grace which would certainly prevent it. († God doth not will ſin ſimply, for that were to approve it, but he wills it, in order to that Good his Wiſdom will bring forth from it. He wills not ſin for it ſelf, but for the event.) To will ſin as ſin, or as purely evil, is not in the capacity of a Creature, neither of Man nor Devil. The Will of a Rational Creature cannot will any thing but under the appearance of good, of ſome good in the ſin it ſelf, or ſome good in the iſſue of it. Much more is this far from God, * who being infinitely good, cannot will evil as evil; and being infinitely knowing, cannot will that for good which is evil. Infinite Wiſdom can be under no Error or Miſtake: To will ſin as ſin, would be an unanſwerable blemiſh on God; but to will to ſuffer it in order to good, is the glory of his Wiſdom: It could never have peep'd up its head, unleſs there had been ſome Decree of God concerning it. And there had been no Decree of God concerning it, had he not intended to bring Good and Glory out of it. (If God did directly will the Diſcovery of his Grace and Mercy to the World, he did in ſome ſort will ſin, as that without which there could not have been any appearance of Mercy in the World: For an Innocent Creature is not the Object of Mercy, but a Miſerable Creature; and no Rational Creature but muſt be ſinful before it be miſerable.)

* Riſpolis.

† Bradward. *lib.* 1. *cap.* 34. *God wills it* ſecundum quid.

* Aquin. *cont. Gent. l.* 1. *c.* 95.

3. *God Wills the permiſſion of Sin.* He doth not poſitively will Sin, but he poſitively Wills to permit it. And though he doth not approve of ſin, yet he approves of that act of his Will, whereby he permits it. For ſince that

ſin could not enter into the World without ſome concern of Gods Will about it, that act of his Will that gave way to it, could not be diſpleaſing to him: God could never be diſpleaſed with his own act: *He is not as man, that he ſhould repent*, 1 *Sam.* 15. 29. What God cannot repent of, he cannot but approve of: 'Tis contrary to the Bleſſedneſs of God to diſapprove of, and be diſpleaſed with any act of his own Will. If he hated any act of his own Will, he would hate himſelf, he would be under a torture: Every one that hates his own acts, is under ſome diſturbance and torment for them. That which is permitted by him, is in it ſelf, and in regard of the evil of it, hateful to him: But as the proſpect of that good which he aims at in the permiſſion of it is pleaſing to him; ſo that act of his Will whereby he permits it, is uſhered in by an approving act of his Underſtanding. Either God approved of the permiſſion, or not; if he did not approve his own act of permiſſion, he could not have decreed an act of permiſſion. 'Tis unconceivable that God ſhould decree ſuch an act which he deteſted, and poſitively will that which he hated. Though God hated ſin, as being againſt his Holineſs, yet he did not hate the permiſſion of ſin, as being ſubſervient by the immenſity of his Wiſdom to his own Glory. He could never be diſpleaſed with that which was the reſult of his Eternal Counſel, as this decree of permitting ſin was, as well as any other Decree reſolved upon in his own Breaſt. For as God acts nothing in Time, but what he Decreed from Eternity, ſo he permits nothing in Time, but what he Decreed from Eternity to permit. To ſpeak properly therefore, God doth not Will ſin, but he Wills the permiſſion of it, and this Will to permit is Active and Poſitive in God.

4. *This act of permiſſion is not a meer and naked permiſſion, but ſuch an one as is attended with a certainty of the event.* The Decrees of God to make uſe of the ſin of Man for the glory of his Grace in the Miſſion and Paſſion of his Son, hung upon this entrance of ſin. Would it conſiſt with the Wiſdom of God to Decree ſuch great and ſtupendous things, the event whereof ſhould depend upon an uncertain Foundation which he might be miſtaken in? God would have ſat in Councel from Eternity to no purpoſe, if he had only permitted thoſe things to be done, without any knowledge of the event of this permiſſion: God would not have made ſuch proviſion for Redemption to no purpoſe, or an uncertain purpoſe, which would have been, if Man had not fallen; or if it had been an uncertainty with God whether he would fall or no. Though the Will of God about ſin was permiſſive, yet the Will of God about that Glory he would promote by the defect of the Creature, was poſitive; and therefore he would not ſuffer ſo many poſitive acts of his Will to hang upon an uncertain Event; and therefore he did wiſely and righteouſly order all things to the accompliſhment of his great and gracious Purpoſes.

5. *This act of permiſſion doth not taint the holineſs of God.* That there is ſuch an act as permiſſion, is clear in Scripture, *Acts* 14. 16. *Who in times paſt ſuffered all nations to walk in their own ways.* But that it doth not blemiſh the Holineſs of God will appear,

1. *From the nature of this permiſſion.*

1. *'Tis not a moral permiſſion, a giving liberty of toleration by any Law to commit ſin with impunity*; when what one Law did forbid, another Law doth leave indifferent to be done or not, as a man ſees good in himſelf. As when there is a Law made among Men, That no Man ſhall go out of ſuch a City or Country without Licenſe; To go out without Licenſe is a Crime by the Law; but when that Law is repealed by another, that gives liberty for Men to go and come at their pleaſure: It doth not make their going or coming neceſſary, but leaves thoſe which were before bound, to do as they ſee good in themſelves. Such a permiſſion makes a Fact lawful, though not neceſſary; a Man is not oblig'd to do it, but he is left to his own diſcretion to do as he pleaſes, without being chargeable with a crime for doing it. Such a permiſſion there was granted by God to *Adam* of eating of the fruits of the Garden, to chooſe any of them

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for Food, except the Tree of *Knowledge of Good and Evil.* It was a Precept to him, not to *eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*; but the other was a Permiſſion, whereby it was lawful for him to feed upon any other that was moſt agreeable to his Appetite: But there is not ſuch a permiſſion in the caſe of Sin; this had been an Indulgence of it, which had freed Man from any Crime, and conſequently from Puniſhment; becauſe by ſuch a permiſſion by Law, he would have had authority to Sin, if he pleaſed. God did not remove the Law, which he had before placed as a Bar againſt Evil, nor ceas'd that Moral Impediment of his Threatning: Such a Permiſſion as this, to make Sin lawful or indifferent, had been a blot upon Gods *Holineſs.*

2. But *this Permiſſion of God in the caſe of Sin, is no more than the not hindering a ſinful Action, which he could have prevented.* 'Tis not ſo much an Action of God, as a Suſpenſion of his Influence, which might have hindred an Evil Act, and a forbearing to reſtrain the Faculties of Man from Sin; 'tis properly the not exerting that Efficacy, which might change the Counſels that are taken, and prevent the Action intended. As when one Man ſees another ready to fall, and can preſerve him from falling by reaching out his hand; he permits him to fall, that is, he hinders him not from falling. So God deſcribes his Act about *Abimelech*, Gen. 20. 6. *I withheld thee from ſinning againſt me, therefore ſuffered I thee not to touch her.* If *Abimelech* had ſinned, he had ſinned by Gods permiſſion; that is, by Gods not hindring, or not reſtraining him, by making any Impreſſions upon him. So that Permiſſion is only a withholding that Help and Grace, which (if beſtowed) would have been an effectual Remedy to prevent a Crime: And it is rather a Suſpenſion or Ceſſation, then properly a permiſſion; and Sin may be ſaid to be committed not without Gods permiſſion, rather than by his permiſſion.

Thus in the *Fall* of Man, God did not hold the Reins ſtrict upon *Satan* to reſtrain him from laying the Bait, nor reſtrain *Adam* from ſwallowing the Bait: He kept to himſelf that Efficacious Grace, which he might have darted out upon Man to prevent his Fall. God left *Satan* to his malice of Tempting, and *Adam* to his liberty of Reſiſting, and his own ſtrength, to uſe that ſufficient Grace he had furniſh'd him with, whereby he might have reſiſted and overcome the Temptation. As he did not drive Man to it, ſo he did not ſecretly reſtrain him from it. So in the *Jews* Crucifying our Saviour; God did not imprint upon their minds by his Spirit, a Conſideration of the greatneſs of the Crime, and the horror of his Juſtice due to it: And being without thoſe Impediments, they run furiouſly of their own accord to the commiſſion of that Evil. As when a Man lets a Wolf or Dog out upon his Prey, he takes off the Chain which held them, and they preſently act according to their Natures †. In the *Fall* of Angels and Men, Gods Act was a leaving them to their own ſtrength: In ſins after the *Fall*, 'tis Gods giving them up to their own Corruption. The firſt is a pure ſuſpenſion of Grace; the other hath the nature of a Puniſhment, Pſal. 81. 12. *So I gave them up to their own hearts luſts.* The firſt Object of this permiſſive Will of God was, to leave Angels and Men to their own liberty, and the uſe of their Free-will, which was Natural to them *, not adding that Supernatural Grace which was neceſſary, not that they ſhould not at all ſin, but that they ſhould infallibly not ſin: They had a ſtrength ſufficient to avoid ſin, but not ſufficient infallibly to avoid ſin; a Grace ſufficient to preſerve them, but not ſufficient to confirm them.

† Lawſon, pag. 64.

* Suarez, Vol. 4. p. 414.

3. *Now this permiſſion is not the cauſe of ſin, nor doth blemiſh the Holineſs of God.* It doth not intrench upon the Freedom of Men, but ſuppoſeth it, eſtabliſheth it, and leaves Man to it. God acted nothing, but only ceaſed to Act; and therefore could not be the efficient Cauſe of Mans ſin. As God is not the Author of good, but by willing and effecting it; ſo he is not the Author of evil but by willing and effecting it: But he doth not poſitively Will evil, nor effect it by any Efficacy of his own. Permiſſion is no Action, nor the cauſe of that Action which is permitted; but the will of that Perſon who is permitted to do ſuch an Action, is the cauſe *. God can no more be ſaid to be the cauſe of Sin, by ſuffering a Creature to act as it will; than he can be ſaid to be the cauſe of the not Being of any Crea-

* Suarez, de Legib. p. 43.

Creature, by denying it Being, and letting it remain Nothing: 'Tis not from God that it is Nothing, 'tis Nothing in it ſelf. Though God be ſaid to be the Cauſe of Creation, yet he is never by any ſaid to be the Cauſe of that Nothing which was before Creation. This permiſſion of God is not the Cauſe of Sin, but the Cauſe of not hindering Sin. Man and Angels had a Phyſical Power of ſinning from God, as they were created with Free-will, and ſupported in their natural ſtrength; but the Moral power to ſin was not from God: He counſell'd them not to it, laid no Obligation upon them to uſe their natural power for ſuch an end. He only left them to their freedom, and not hinder'd them in their acting what he was reſolved to permit.

2. The *Holineſs* of God is not tainted by this, *becauſe he was under no obligation to hinder their Commiſſion of Sin.* Ceaſing to act, whereby to prevent a Crime or Miſchief, brings not a Perſon permitting it, under guilt, unleſs where he is under an Obligation to prevent it: But God, in regard of his abſolute Dominion, cannot be charged with any ſuch Obligation. One Man that doth not hinder the Murder of another, when it is in his power, is guilty of the Murder in part; but it is to be conſidered, that he is under a tye by Nature, as being of the ſame kind, and being the others Brother by a communion of Blood; alſo under an Obligation of the Law of Charity, enacted by the Common Soveraign of the World: But what tye was there upon God? ſince the Infinite Tranſcendency of his Nature, and his Soveraign Dominion frees him from any ſuch Obligation; *Job* 9. 12. *If he takes away, who ſhall ſay, What doſt thou?* God might have prevented the *Fall* of Men and Angels, he might have confirm'd them all in a ſtate of perpetual Innocency; but where is the Obligation? He had made the Creature a Debtor to Himſelf, but he ow'd nothing to the Creature. Before God can be charged with any guilt in this caſe, it muſt be proved, not only that he could, but that he was bound to hinder it. No Perſon can be juſtly charged with anothers Fault, meerly for not preventing it, unleſs he be bound to prevent it; elſe not only the Firſt ſin of Angels and Man would be imputed to God, as the Author, but all the ſins of Men. He could not be obliged by any Law, becauſe he had no Superior to impoſe any Law upon him; and it will be hard to prove, that he was obliged from his own Nature to prevent the entrance of Sin, which he would uſe as an occaſion to declare his own *Holineſs* ſo tranſcendent a Perfection of his Nature, more than ever it could have been manifeſted by a total excluſion of it, *viz.* in the Death of Chriſt. He is no more bound in his own Nature, to preſerve by Supernatural Grace his Creature from Falling, after he had framed him with a ſufficient ſtrength to ſtand; than he was obliged in his own Nature to bring his Creature into Being, when it was Nothing. He is not bound to create a Rational Creature, much leſs bound to create him with Supernatural gifts; though ſince God would make a Rational Creature, he could not but make him with a Natural Uprightneſs and Rectitude.

If ſimple circumſtances include all the perfections of God, could ſin have been permitted?

God did as much for Angels and Men, as became a Wiſe Governor. He had publiſh'd his Law, back'd it with ſevere Penalties, and the Creature wanted not a Natural ſtrength to obſerve and obey it. Had not Man a power to obey all the Precepts of the Law, as well as one? How was God bound to give him more Grace, ſince what he had already was enough to ſhield him, and keep up his Reſiſtance againſt all the power of Hell? It had been enough to have pointed his Will againſt the Temptation, and he had kept off the force of it. Was there any Promiſe paſt to *Adam* of any further Grace, which he could plead as a tye upon God? No ſuch voluntary Limit upon Gods Supream Dominion appears upon Record. Was any thing due to Man, which he had not? Any thing promis'd him, which was not perform'd? What Action of Debt then can the Creature bring againſt God? Indeed, when Man began to neglect the light of his own Reaſon, and became Inconſiderate of the Precept, God might have enlightned his Underſtanding by a ſpecial Flaſh, a ſupernatural Beam, and Imprinted upon him a particular conſideration of the neceſſity of his Obedience, the Miſery he was approaching to by his Sin, the folly of any ſuch apprehenſion of an equality in Knowledge; he might have convinc'd him of the falſity of the *Serpents* Arguments, and uncas'd to him the Venom that lay under thoſe Baits. But how doth it

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appear that God was bound to thoſe Additional Acts, when he had already lighted up in him a *Spirit, which was the Candle of the Lord*, Prov. 20. 27. whereby he was able to diſcern all, if he had attended to it. It was enough that God did not neceſſitate Man to ſin, did not counſel him to it; that he had given him ſufficient warning in the Threatning, and ſufficient ſtrength in his Faculties, to fortifie him againſt Temptation. He gave him what was due to him as a Creature of his own framing; he withdrew no help from him, that was due to him as a Creature, and what was not due he was not bound to impart. Man did not beg Preſerving Grace of God, and God was not bound to offer it, when he was not Petition'd for it eſpecially: Yet if he had begg'd it, God having before furniſh'd him ſufficiently, might by the right of his Soveraign Dominion have denyed it without any Impeachment of his *Holineſs* and *Righteouſneſs*. Though he would not in ſuch a caſe have dealt ſo bountifully with his Creature, as he might have done; yet he could not have been impleaded, as dealing unrighteouſly with his Creature. The ſingle word that God had already utter'd, when he gave him his Precept, was enough to oppoſe againſt all the *Devils* wiles, which tended to invalidate that Word: The Underſtanding of Man could not imagine, that the Word of God was vainly ſpoken; and the very ſuggeſtion of the *Devil*, as if the Creator ſhould envy his Creature, would have appear'd ridiculous, if he had attended to the Voice of his own Reaſon. God had done enough for him, and was obliged to do no more, and dealt not Unrighteouſly in leaving him to act according to the Principles of his Nature.

To *Conclude*, If Gods permiſſion of Sin were enough to charge it upon God, or if God had been obliged to give *Adam* Supernatural Grace: *Adam*, that had ſo capacious a Brain, could not be without that Plea in his Mouth, *Lord, thou mighteſt have prevented it; the commiſſion of it by me could not have been without thy permiſſion of it*: Or, *Thou haſt been wanting to me, as the Author of my Nature.* No ſuch Plea is brought by *Adam* into the Court, when God Tried and Caſt him: No ſuch Pleas can have any ſtrength in them. *Adam* had reaſon enough to know, that there was ſufficient Reaſon to over-rule ſuch a Plea.

Since the Permiſſion of Sin caſts no Durt upon the *Holineſs* of God, as I think hath been cleared, we may under this Head conſider Two things more.

1. That *Gods Permiſſion of Sin, is not ſo much as his Reſtraint or Limitation of it.* Since the entrance of the *Firſt ſin* into the World by *Adam*, God is more a hinderer than a permitter of it. If he hath permitted that which he could have prevented, he prevents a World more, that he might, if he pleaſed, permit: The Hedges about Sin are larger than the Outlets; they are but a few Streams that glide about the World, in compariſon of that mighty Torrent he dams up both in Men and Devils. He that underſtands, what a Lake of *Sodom* is in every Mans Nature, ſince the univerſal Infection of Humane Nature, as the *Apoſtle* deſcribes it, *Rom.* 3. 9, 10, *&c.* muſt acknowledge, That if God ſhould caſt the Reins upon the necks of ſinful Men, they would run into Thouſands of abominable Crimes more than they do: The Impreſſion of all Natural Laws would be raz'd out, the World would be a publick Stews, and a more bloody Slaughter-houſe; Humane Society would ſink into a *Chaos*; no Star-light of commendable Morality would be ſeen in it; the World would be no longer an Earth, but an Hell, and have lain deeper in Wickedneſs than it doth. If God did not limit Sin, as he doth the Sea, and put Bars to the Waves of the Heart, as well as thoſe of the Waters, and ſay of them, *Hitherto you ſhall go, and no further*; Man hath ſuch a furious Ocean in him, as would over-flow the Banks; and where it makes a breach in one place, it would in a Thouſand, if God ſhould ſuffer it to act according to its impetuous Current.

As the *Devil* hath Luſt enough to deſtroy all Mankind, if God did not bridle him; deal with every man as he did with *Job*, ruine their Comforts, and deform their Bodies with *Scabs*; infect Religion with a Thouſand more Errors; fling Diſorders into Commonwealths, and make them as a Fiery Furnace, full of nothing but Flame. If he were not Chain'd by that Powerful Arm, that might let him

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looſe to fulfil his Malicious Fury; what Rapines, Murders, Thefts, would be committed, if he did not ſtint him? *Abimelech* would not only Luſt after *Sarah*, but deflower her; *Laban* not only purſue *Jacob*, but rifle him; *Saul* not only hate *David*, but Murder him; *David* not only threaten *Nabal*, but root him up, and his Family, did not God *girdle* in the *wrath of Man**: A greater remainder of Wrath is pent in, than flames out, which yet ſwells for an Outlet. God may be concluded more Holy in preventing Mens ſins, than the Author of Sin in permitting ſome; ſince were it not for his reſtraints by the pull-back of Conſcience, and infus'd Motions and outward Impediments, the World would ſwarm more with this Curſed Brood.

* Pſal. 76. 10. *as the word* Re'train *ſignifies.*

2. *His Permiſſion of Sin is in order to his own Glory, and a greater Good.* 'Tis no reflection upon the Divine Goodneſs to leave Man to his own Conduct, whereby ſuch a Deformity as *Sin* ſets foot in the World; ſince he makes his Wiſdom illuſtrious in bringing Good out of Evil, and a Good greater than that Evil he ſuffer'd to ſpring up †. God did not permit Sin, as Sin, or permit it barely for it ſelf. As Sin is not lovely in its own Nature; ſo neither is the permiſſion of Sin intrinſically good or amiable for it ſelf, but for thoſe ends aimed at in the permiſſion of it. God permitted Sin, but approved not of the Object of that permiſſion, *Sin*; becauſe, that conſidered in its own nature is ſolely Evil: Nor can we think, that God could approve of the Act of Permiſſion, conſidered only in it ſelf as an Act; but as it reſpected that Event which his Wiſdom would order by it. We cannot ſuppoſe that God ſhould permit Sin, but for ſome great and glorious End: for it is the manifeſtation of his own glorious Perfections he intends in all the Acts of his Will. Prov. 16. 4. *The Lord hath made all things for himſelf*; לְמַעֲנֵהוּ hath *wrought* all things; which is not only his act of Creation, but Ordination: [*For Himſelf*,] that is, for the diſcovery of the Excellency of his Nature, and the communication of himſelf to his Creature. Sin indeed in its own nature hath no tendency to a good End, the Womb of it teems with nothing but Monſters; 'tis a ſpurn at Gods Soveraignty, and a ſlight of his Goodneſs: It both deforms and torments the Perſon that acts it; 'tis black and abominable, and hath not a mite of Goodneſs in the Nature of it. If it ends in any good, 'tis only from that Infinite Tranſcendency of skill, that can bring Good out of Evil, as well as Light out of Darkneſs.

† Majus bonum, *ſaith* Bradward.

Therefore God did not permit it as Sin, but as it was an occaſion for the manifeſtation of his own Glory. Though the *Goodneſs* of God would have appear'd in the preſervation of the World, as well as it did in the Creation of it; yet his *Mercy* could not have appear'd without the entrance of Sin, becauſe the Object of Mercy is a *Miſerable Creature*; but Man could not be Miſerable as long as he remained Innocent. The Reign of *Sin* opened a door for the Reign and Triumph of *Grace*, Rom. 5. 21. *As ſin hath reigned unto death, ſo might grace reign through righteouſneſs to eternal life*: Without it, the Bowels of *Mercy* had never ſounded, and the raviſhing Muſick of *Divine Grace* could never have been heard by the Creature. *Mercy*, which renders God ſo amiable, could never elſe have beam'd out to the World. Angels and Men upon this occaſion beheld the ſtirrings of Divine Grace, and the tenderneſs of Divine Nature, and the glory of the Divine Perſons in their ſeveral Functions about the Redemption of Man, which had elſe been a Spring ſhut up and a Fountain ſealed; the Song of *Glory to God, and good will to Men*, in a way of Redemption had never been ſung by them. It appears in his dealings with *Adam*, that he permitted his Fall, not only to ſhew his Juſtice in puniſhing, but principally his Mercy in reſcuing; ſince he proclaims to him firſt the Promiſe of a Redeemer, to *bruiſe the Serpents head*, before he ſetled the Puniſhment he ſhould ſmart under in the World †. And what fairer proſpect could the Creature have of the *Holineſs* of God, and his *hatred* of Sin, than in the edge of that Sword of *Juſtice*, which puniſhed it in the Sinner; but glitter'd more in the Puniſhment of a Surety ſo near Allied to him. Had not Man been Criminal, he could not have been Puniſhable, nor any been puniſhable for him: And the Pulſe of *Divine Holineſs* could not have beaten ſo quick, and been ſo viſible, without an exerciſe of his Vindicative Juſtice. He left Mans mutable Nature, to fall under *Unrighteouſneſs*, that thereby he might commend the *Righ-*

† Gen. 3. 15, 16, 17.

Righteouſneſs of his own Nature *. *Adams* Sin in its Nature tended to the ruine of the World, and God takes an occaſion from it for the glory of his Grace in the Redemption of the World: He brings forth thereby a new Scene of Wonders from Heaven, and a ſurprizing Knowledge on Earth: As the *Sun* breaks out more ſtrongly after a Night of Darkneſs and Tempeſt. As God in Creation framed a *Chaos* by his Power, to manifeſt his Wiſdom in bringing Order out of Diſorder, Light out of Darkneſs, Beauty out of Confuſion and Deformity; when he was able by a word to have made all Creatures ſtand up in their Beauty, without the precedency of a *Chaos*; So God permitted a Moral *Chaos*, to manifeſt a greater Wiſdom in the repairing a broken Image, and reſtoring a deplorable Creature, and bringing out thoſe Perfections of his Nature, which had elſe been wrapt up in a perpetual Silence in his own Boſom †. It was therefore very congruous to the *Holineſs* of God, to permit that which he could make ſubſervient for his own glory, and particularly for the manifeſtation of this Attribute of *Holineſs*, which ſeems to be in oppoſition to ſuch a permiſſion.

* Rom. 3. 7.

† *But of the Wiſdom of God in the permitting Sin in order to Redemption, I have handled in the* Attribute of Wiſdom.

5. Propoſition: *The Holineſs of God is not blemiſh'd by his concurrence with the Creature in the material part of a ſinful Act.* Some, to free God from having any hand in Sin, deny his concurrence to the Actions of the Creature; becauſe, if he concurs to a ſinful Action, he concurs to the Sin alſo: Not underſtanding, how there can be a diſtinction between the Act, and the ſinfulneſs or viciouſneſs of it; and how God can concur to a *Natural* Action, without being ſtain'd by that *moral* Evil which cleaves to it.

For the underſtanding of this, obſerve,

1. *There is a concurrence of God to all the acts of the Creature*; Acts 17. 28. *In him we live, and move, and have our being.* We depend upon God in our Acting, as well as in our Being: There is as much an efficacy of God in our Motion, as in our Production; as none have life without his Power in producing it, ſo none have any operation without his Providence concurring with it. *In him*, or *by him*, that is, by his Virtue preſerving and governing our Motions, as well by his Power bringing us into Being. Hence Man is compared to an *Ax*, *Iſai.* 10. 15. an Inſtrument that hath no action, without the cooperation of a Superior Agent handling it: And the Actions of the Second Cauſes are aſcrib'd to God; the *Graſs*, that is the product of the Sun, Rain, and Earth, he is ſaid to make to *grow upon the mountains*, *Pſal.* 147. 8. and the *skin* and *fleſh*, which is by Natural generation, he is ſaid to *cloath us with*, Job 10. 5. in regard of his co-working with *Second Cauſes*, according to their Natures. As nothing can exiſt, ſo nothing can operate without him; let his concurrence be removed, and the Being and Action of the Creature ceaſe: Remove the *Sun* from the Horizon, or a *Candle* from a Room, and the Light which flowed from either of them ceaſeth. Without Gods preſerving and concurring Power, the courſe of Nature would ſink, and the Creation be in vain. * All Created things depend upon God as Agents, as well as Beings, and are ſubordinate to him in a way of Action, as well as in a way of Exiſting. If God ſuſpend his Influence from their Action, they would ceaſe to Act, (as the *Fire* did from *burning the three children*) as well as if God ſuſpend his Influence from their Being, they would ceaſe to be. God ſupports the Nature whereby Actions are wrought, the Mind where Actions are conſulted, and the Will where Actions are determin'd, and the Motive Power whereby Actions are produced. The Mind could not contrive, nor the Hand act a Wickedneſs, if God did not ſupport the Power of the one in deſigning, and the Strength of the other in executing a wicked Intention. Every faculty in its Being, and every faculty in its Motion, hath a dependance upon the Influence of God. To make the Creature Independent upon God in any thing which ſpeaks Perfection, as Action conſidered as Action is, is to make a Creature a Soveraign Being. Indeed we cannot imagine the Concurrence of God to the *good Actions* of Men ſince the Fall, without granting a concurrence of God to *evil Actions*; becauſe there is no Action ſo purely Good, but hath a mixture of Evil in it, though it takes its denomination of *Good* from the better part, *Eccleſ.* 7. 20. *There is no man that doth good and ſins not.*

* Suarez, *Metaph. part.* 1. *p.* 552.

2. *Though*

2. *Though the Natural virtue of doing a ſinful Action be from God, and ſupported by him, yet this doth not blemiſh the Holineſs of God; while God concurs with them in the Act, he inſtils no evil into Men.*

1. *No Act in regard of the ſubſtance of it is Evil.* Moſt of the Actions of our Faculties, as they are Actions, might have been in the ſtate of Innocency. Eating is an act *Adam* would have uſed, if he had ſtood firm, but not Eating to exceſs. Worſhip was an act that ſhould have been perform'd to God in Innocence, but not hypocritically. Every Action is good by a phyſical goodneſs, as it is an act of the mind or hand, which have a Natural goodneſs by Creation; but every Action is not Morally good: The *Phyſical* goodneſs of the Action depends on God, the *Moral* Evil on the Creature.* There is no Action, as a Corporeal action, is prohibited by the Law of God; but as it ſprings from an Evil diſpoſition, and is tainted by a venemous temper of mind. There is no action ſo bad, as attended with ſuch Objects and Circumſtances; but if the Objects and Circumſtances were changed, might be a brave and commendable Action: So that the *Moral* goodneſs or badneſs of an act is not to be eſteemed from the ſubſtance of the act, which hath always a *Phyſical* goodneſs; but from the Objects, Circumſtances, and Conſtitution of the Mind in the doing of it. Worſhip is an act good in it ſelf, but the worſhip of an Image is bad in regard of the Object. Were that act of worſhip directed to God, that is paid to a Statue, and offered up to him with a ſincere frame of Mind, it would be morally good. The act in regard of the ſubſtance is the ſame in both, and conſidered as ſeparated from the object to which the worſhip is directed, hath the ſame real goodneſs in regard of its ſubſtance; but when you conſider this action in relation to the different Objects, the one hath a Moral *Goodneſs*, and the other a Moral *Evil.* So in Speaking; *Speaking* being a motion of the Tongue in the forming of words, is an excellency belonging to a reaſonable Creature; an Endowment beſtow'd, continued, and ſupported by God. Now if the ſame Tongue forms words whereby it curſeth God this minute, and forms words whereby it bleſſes and praiſes God the next minute; the faculty of Speaking is the ſame, the motion of the Tongue is the ſame in pronouncing the Name of God either in a way of Curſing or Bleſſing, *James* 3. 9, 10. 'tis the *ſame mouth that bleſſeth and curſeth*; and the motion of it is *naturally* good in regard of the ſubſtance of the Act in both; 'tis the uſe of an excellent Power God hath given, and which God preſerves in the uſe of it. But the eſtimation of the *Moral* Goodneſs or Evil is not from the act it ſelf, but from the diſpoſition of the Mind. Once more, Killing as an act is good, nor is it unlawful as an act: For if ſo, God would never have commanded his People *Iſrael* to wage any War, and Juſtice could not be done upon Malefactors by the Magiſtrate. A Man were bound to ſacrifice his life to the fury of an Invader, rather then ſecure it by diſpatching that of an Enemy. But killing an Innocent, or killing without Authority, or out of revenge, is bad. 'Tis not the Material part of the act, but the Object, Manner and Circumſtance, that makes it *good* or *evil.* 'Tis no blemiſh to Gods *Holineſs* to concur to the ſubſtance of an Action, without having any hand in the Immorality of it, becauſe whatſoever is real in the ſubſtance of the action, might be done without Evil. 'Tis not Evil as it is an act, as it is a motion of the Tongue or Hand, for then every motion of the Tongue or Hand would be Evil.

* Amyrald. de Libero arbit. p. 98, 99.

2. Hence it follows, that *an Act as an Act is one thing, and the Viciouſneſs another.* † The Action is the efficacy of the Faculty, extending it ſelf to ſome outward Object; but the Sinfulneſs of an act conſiſts in a privation of that Comlineſs and Righteouſneſs, which ought to be in an Action; in a want of conformity of the act with the Law of God, either written in Nature, or revealed in the Word. Now the Sinfulneſs of an Action is not the act it ſelf, but is conſidered in it as it is related to the Law, and is a deviation from it; and ſo it is ſomething cleaving to the Action, and therefore to be diſtinguiſh'd from the act it ſelf, which is the Subject of the Sinfulneſs. When we ſay, ſuch an Action is ſinful, the Action is the Subject, and the Sinfulneſs of the Action is that which adheres to it. The Action is not the Sinfulneſs, nor the Sinfulneſs the Action; they are diſtinguiſh'd as the Member, and a diſeaſe in the Member, the Arm and the Palſie in it: The Arm is not the Palſie, nor is the Palſie the Arm; but the Palſie is a Diſeaſe that cleaves to the Arm: So Sinfulneſs is a deformity that cleaves to an Action.

† Amyrald. p. 321, 322.

The

The Evil of an Action is not the effect of an Action, nor attends it as it is an Action, but as it is an Action ſo circumſtantiated, and converſant about this or that object; for the ſame Action done by two ſeveral Perſons, may be good in one, and bad in the other. As when *two Judges* are in joynt Commiſſion for the Trial of a Malefactor, both upon the appearance of his Guilt condemn him. This Action in both, conſidered *as an Action*, is good: for it is an adjudging a Man to death, whoſe Crime deſerves ſuch a puniſhment. But this ſame Act, which is but one joynt Act of both, may be morally good in one Judge, and Morally evil in the other: Morally good in him that condemns him out of an unbyaſſed conſideration of the Demerit of his Fact, Obedience to the Law, and Conſcience of the Duty of his place; and Morally evil in the other, who hath no reſpect to thoſe Conſiderations, but joyns in the act of Condemnation, principally moved by ſome private Animoſity againſt the Priſoner, and deſire of revenge for ſome injury he hath really received, or imagines that he hath received from him. The Act in it ſelf is the ſame materially in both; but in one it is an Act of Juſtice, and in the other an Act of Murder, as it reſpects the Principles and Motives of it in the two Judges; take away the reſpect of private Revenge, and the Action in the Ill Judge had been as laudable as the Action of the other. The ſubſtance of an Act, and the ſinfulneſs of an Act, are ſeparable and diſtinguiſhable; and God may concur with the ſubſtance of an Act, without concurring with the ſinfulneſs of the Act: As the good Judge, that Condemned the Priſoner out of Conſcience, concurred with the evil Judge, who condemned the Priſoner out of private revenge; not in the Principle and Motive of Condemnation, but in the *Material* part of Condemnation. So God aſſiſts in that Action of a Man wherein Sin is placed, but not in that which is the *Formal* reaſon of Sin, which is a privation of ſome Perfection the Action ought Morally to have.

3. It will appear further in this, that *hence it follows, that the Action and the viciouſneſs of the Action, may have two diſtinct Cauſes.* That may be a cauſe of the one, that is not the cauſe of the other, and hath no hand in the producing of it. God concurs to the Act of the Mind as it Counſels, and to the external Action upon that Counſel, as he preſerves the Faculty, and gives ſtrength to the Mind to conſult, and the other parts to execute; yet he is not in the leaſt tainted with the Viciouſneſs of the Action. Though the Action be from God as a concurrent Cauſe, yet the ill quality of the Action is ſolely from the Creature with whom God concurs. The *Sun* and the *Earth* concur to the production of all the Plants, that are formed in the womb of the one, and Midwiv'd by the other: The *Sun* diſtributes Heat, and the *Earth* communicates Sap; 'tis the ſame Heat diſperſed by the one, and the ſame Juyce beſtowed by the other: It hath not a ſweet Juyce for one, and a ſour Juyce for another. This general Influx of the *Sun* and *Earth* is not the immediate cauſe that one Plant is poyſonous, and another wholſom; but the Sap of the Earth is turned by the Nature and quality of each Plant: If there were not ſuch an Influx of the *Sun* and *Earth*, no Plant could exert that Poyſon which is in its Nature; but yet the *Sun* and *Earth* are not the cauſe of that poyſon which is in the Nature of the Plant. If God did not concur to the Motions of Men, there could be no ſinful Action, becauſe there could be no Action at all; yet this Concurrence is not the cauſe of that Venom that is in the Action, which ariſeth from the Corrupt Nature of the Creature, no more than the *Sun* and *Earth* are the cauſe of the Poyſon of the Plant, which is purely the effect of its own Nature upon that general Influx of the *Sun* and *Earth*. The Influence of God pierceth through all Subjects; but the Action of Man done by that Influence is vitiated according to the Nature of its own Corruption. As the Sun equally ſhines through all the Quarrels in the Window; if the Glaſs be bright and clear, there is a pure ſplendor; if it be Red or Green, the ſplendor is from the Sun, but the diſcolouring of that Light upon the Wall, is from the quality of the Glaſs. †But to be yet plainer; the Soul is the Image of God, and by the Acts of the Soul, we may come to the knowledge of the Acts of God; the Soul gives motion to the Body and every Member of it, and no Member could move without a concurrent virtue of the Soul; if a Member be Paralitick or Gouty, whatſoever motion that Gouty Member hath, is derived to it from the Soul; but the Goutyneſs of the Member, was not the Act of the Soul,

† Zanch. *Tom. 2. lib. 3. cap. 4. qu. 4. p. 226.*

but the fruit of Ill humors in the Body; the lameneſs of the Member, and the motion of the Member, have two diſtinct cauſes, the motion is from one cauſe and the Ill motion from another. As the Member could not move irregularly without ſome Ill humour or cauſe of that diſtemper; ſo it could not move at all without the activity of the Soul: So though God concur to the act of Underſtanding, Willing, and Execution, why can he not be as free from the Irregularity in all thoſe, as the Soul is free from the Irregularity of the motion of the Body, while it is the cauſe of the motion it ſelf? There are two Illuſtrations generally uſed in this caſe, that are not unfit; the motion of the *Pen* in writing is from the hand that holds it, but the Blurs by the Pen are from ſome fault in the Pen it ſelf: And the Muſick of the *Inſtrument* is from the hand that touches it, but the jarring from the faultineſs of the Strings; both are the cauſes of the motion of the *Pen* and *Strings*, but not the *blurs* or *jarrings*.

4. *'Tis very congruous to the Wiſdom of God, to move his Creatures according to their particular Natures; but this Motion makes him not the cauſe of Sin.* Had our Innocent Nature continued, God had moved us according to that Innocent Nature; but when the ſtate was changed for a Corrupt one, God muſt either forbear all concourſe, and ſo annihilate the World, or move us according to that Nature he finds in us. If he had overthrown the World upon the entrance of Sin, and created another upon the ſame terms, Sin might have as ſoon defac'd his *ſecond* Work, as he did the *firſt*; and then it would follow, that God would have been alway building and demoliſhing. It was not fit for God to ceaſe from acting as a Wiſe Governour of his Creature, becauſe Man did ceaſe from his Loyalty as a Subject. Is it not more agreeable to Gods Wiſdom as a Governour, to concur with his Creature according to his Nature, than to deny his concurrence upon every evil determination of the Creature? God concurr'd with *Adams* mutable Nature in his firſt act of Sin; he concurr'd to the act and left him to his Mutability. If *Adam* had put out his hand to eat of any other unforbidden Fruit, God would have ſupported his Natural faculty then, and concurr'd with him in his motion.

When *Adam* would put out his hand to take the Forbidden Fruit, God concurr'd to that Natural action; but left him to the choice of the Object, and to the uſe of his mutable Nature: And when Man became Apoſtate, God concurs with him according to that condition wherein he found him, and cannot move him otherwiſe, unleſs he ſhould alter that Nature Man had contracted. God moving the Creature as he found him, is no cauſe of the Ill motion of the Creature: As when a Wheel is broken the ſpace of a Foot, it cannot but move ill in that part till it be mended. He that moves it, uſes the ſame motion (as it is his Act) which he would have done had the Wheel been ſound; the motion is good in the Mover, but bad in the Subject: 'Tis not the fault of him that moves it, but the fault of that Wheel that is moved, whoſe breaches came by ſome other cauſe. A Man doth not uſe to lay aſide his Watch for ſome Irregularity, as long as it is capable of motion, but winds it up: Why ſhould God ceaſe from concurring with his Creature in its vital Operations and other actions of his Will, becauſe there was a flaw contracted in that Nature, that came right and true out of his hand? And as he that winds up his diſordered Watch, is in the ſame manner the cauſe of its motion then, as he was when it was regular; yet by that act of his, he is not the cauſe of the falſe motion of it, but that is from the *deficiency* of ſome part of the Watch it ſelf: So though God concurs to that action of the Creature, whereby the Wickedneſs of the Heart is drawn out: yet is not God therefore as Unholy as the Heart.

5. *God hath one End in his Concurrence, and Man another in his Action.* So that there is a Righteous, and often a gracious End in God, when there is a baſe and unworthy End in Man. God concurs to the ſubſtance of the Act; Man produceth the circumſtance of the Act, whereby it is Evil. God orders both the Action wherein he concurs, and the Sinfulneſs over which he preſides, as a Governour, to his own Ends. In *Joſephs* caſe, Man was ſinful, and God merciful; his *Brethren* acted *Envy*, and *God* deſign'd *Mercy*, *Gen.* 45. 4, 5. They would be rid of him as an Eyeſore, and God concurr'd with their Action to make him their Preſerver, *Gen.* 50. 20. *Ye thought evil againſt me, but God meant it unto good.*

God

God concur'd to *Judas* his action of betraying our *Saviour*; he ſupported his Nature while he contracted with the Prieſts, and ſupported his Members while he was their Guid to apprehend him; God's end was the manifeſtation of his choiceſt love to Man, and *Judas* his end was the gratification of his own Covetouſneſs. The *Aſſyrian* did a Divine Work againſt *Hieruſalem*, but not with a Divine end *. He had a mind to enlarge his *Empire*, enrich his Coffers with the Spoil, and gain the Title of a Conqueror; he is deſirous to Invade his Neighbours, and God employs him to puniſh his Rebels; but *he means not ſo, nor doth his heart think ſo*: He intended not as God intended. The *Axe* doth not think what the Carpenter intends to do with it. But God uſed the rapine of an ambitious Nature as an Inſtrument of his juſtice: As the expoſing Malefactors to wild beaſts was an antient puniſhment, whereby the Magiſtrate intended the execution of Juſtice, and to that purpoſe uſed the natural fierceneſs of the Beaſts to an end different from what thoſe ravaging Creatures aim'd at. God concur'd with *Satan* in ſpoiling *Job* of his Goods, and ſcarifying his Body; God gave *Satan* licenſe to do it, and *Job* acknowledges it to be God's act: But their ends were different; God concurred with *Satan* for the clearing the integrity of his Servant, when *Satan* aim'd at nothing but the provoking him to Curſe his Creator. The *Phyſician* applies Leeches to ſuck the ſuperfluous blood, but the Leeches ſuck to glut themſelves, without any regard to the intention of the Phyſician, and the welfare of the Patient. In the ſame act where men intend to hurt, God intends to correct; ſo that his concurrence is in a holy manner, while men commit unrighteous actions. A Judge comands the Executioner to execute the Sentence of Death which he hath juſtly pronounced againſt a Malefactor, and admoniſheth him to do it out of love to Juſtice; the Executioner hath the Authority of the Judge for his Commiſſion, and the protection of the Judge for his Security: The Judge ſtands by to countenance and ſecure him in the doing of it; but if the Executioner hath not the ſame intention as the Judge, *viz.* a love to Juſtice in the performance of his Office, but a private hatred to the Offender; the Judge, though he commanded the fact of the Executioner, yet did not command this Error of his in it; and though he protects him in the Fact, yet he owns not this corrupt diſpoſition in him in the doing of what was enjoyn'd him, as any act of his own.

* Iſai. 10. 5, 6, 7.

Job. 1. 12, 21.

To *Conclude* this. Since the Creature cannot act without God, cannot lift up a Hand, or move his Tongue, without God's preſerving and upholding the Faculty and preſerving the power of Action, and preſerving every Member of the Body in its actual Motion, and in every circumſtance of its Motion, we muſt neceſſarily ſuppoſe God to have ſuch a way of concurrence as doth not intrench upon his Holineſs. We muſt not equal the Creature to God, by denying its dependence on him: Nor muſt we imagine ſuch a concurrence to the ſinfulneſs of an act, as ſtains the Divine Purity, which is I think, ſufficiently ſalv'd by diſtinguiſhing the *matter* of the act from the *evil* adhering to it: For ſince all evil is founded in ſome good; the evil is diſtinguiſhable from the good, and the *deformity* of the action from the *action it ſelf*, which as it is *a created act*, hath a dependence on the Will and Influence of God: And as it is a *ſinful act*, is the product of the Will of the Creature.

6. Propoſition. *The holineſs of God is not blemiſht by propoſing Objects to a man, which he makes uſe of to ſin.* There is no Object propos'd to man, but is directed by the Providence of God, which influenceth all motions in the World; and there is no Object propos'd to man, but his active Nature may, according to the goodneſs or badneſs of his diſpoſition, make a good or an ill uſe of. That *two men*, one of a charitable, the other of a hard-hearted diſpoſition, meet with an indigent and neceſſitous Object, is from the Providence of God; yet this indigent perſon is relieved by the one, and neglected by the other. There could be no action in the World, but about ſome Object; there could be no Object offer'd to us but by Divine Providence; the active Nature of man would be in vain, if there were not Objects about which it might be exercis'd. Nothing could preſent it ſelf to man as an Object, either to excite his Grace, or awaken his Corruption, but by the

conduct of the Governour of the World. That *David* ſhould walk upon the Battlements of his Palace, and *Bathſheba* be in the Bath at the ſame time, was from the Divine Providence which orders all the affairs of the World*; and ſo ſome underſtand *Jer.* 6. 21. *Thus ſaith the Lord, I will lay ſtumbling blocks before this People, and the Fathers and Sons together ſhall fall upon them.* Since they have offered Sacrifices without thoſe due qualifications in their hearts, which were neceſſary to render them acceptable to me, I will lay in their way ſuch Objects, which their Corruption will uſe ill to their further ſin and ruine; ſo *Pſal.* 105. 25. *He turned their heart to hate his people*; that is, by the multiplying his People, he gave occaſion to the *Egyptians* of hating them, inſtead of careſſing them as they had formerly done.

* 2 Sam. 11. 7.

But God's Holineſs is not blemiſht by this; for

1. *This propoſing or preſenting of Objects invades not the liberty of any man*: The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil ſet in the midſt of the Garden of *Eden*, had no violent influence on man to force him to eat of it; his liberty to eat of it, or not, was reſerved intire to himſelf; no ſuch Charge can be brought againſt any Object whatſoever. If a Man meet accidentally at a Table with Meat that is grateful to his Palate, but hurtful to the preſent temper of his Body; doth the preſenting this ſort of Food to him ſtrip him of his liberty to decline it, as well as to feed of it? Can the Food have any internal influence upon his Will, and lay the freedom of it aſleep whether he will or no? Is there any Charm in that, more than in other ſorts of Diet? No; but it is the habit of love which he hath to that particular Diſh, the curioſity of his Fancy, and the ſtrength of his own Appetite, whereby he is brought into a kind of ſlavery to that particular Meat, and not any thing in the food it ſelf. When the Word is propoſed to two perſons, 'tis embrac'd by the one, rejected by the other; is it from the word it ſelf, which is the Object that theſe two perſons perform different acts? The Object is the ſame to both, but the manner of acting about the Object is not the ſame: Is there any invaſion of their liberty by it? Is the one forced by the word to receive it, and the other forced by the word to reject it? Two ſuch contrary effects cannot proceed from one and the ſame Cauſe: Outward things have only an *objective* influence, not an inward: † If the meer propoſal of things did ſuſpend or ſtrike down the liberty of Man, no Angels in Heaven, no Man upon Earth, no not our Saviour himſelf, could do any thing freely, but by force: Objects that are ill uſed are of God's Creation, and though they have allurements in them, yet they have no compulſive power over the Will. The Fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was pleaſing to the ſight; it had a quality to allure, there had not elſe needed a Prohibition to bar the eating of it; but it could not have ſo much power to allure as the Divine threatning to deter.

† Amyral. *de libero arbit.* p. 324.

2. *The Objects are good in themſelves, but the ill uſe of them is from mans corruption.* *Bathſheba* was by God's Providence preſented to *David*'s ſight, but it was *David*'s diſpoſition moved him to ſo evil an act: What if God knew that he would uſe that Object ill? yet he knew he had given him a power to refrain from any ill uſe of it: The *Objects* are innocent, but our Corruption poiſons them. The ſame Object hath been uſed by one to holy purpoſes and holy improvements, that hath been uſed by another to ſinful ends; when a charitable Object is preſented to a good man and a cruel man, one relieves him, the other reviles him: The Object was rather an occaſion to draw out the Charity of one, as well as the other; but the refuſing to reach out a helping hand, was not from the perſon in Calamity, but the diſpoſition of the Refuſer to whom he was preſented: 'Tis not from the nature of the Object that Men do good or evil, but from the diſpoſition of the perſon; what is good in it ſelf, is made bad by our Corruption. As the ſame Meat which nouriſhes and ſtrengthens a ſound Conſtitution, cheriſheth the Diſeaſe of another that eats at the ſame Table, not from any unwholſom quality in the Food, but the vitious quality of the humours lodging in the Stomach, which turn the Diet into fuel for themſelves, which in its own nature was apt to engender a wholſome juyce. Some are perfected by the ſame things whereby others are ruin'd. Riches are uſed by ſome, not only for their own, but the advantage of others in the World; by

others

others only for themſelves, and ſcarcely ſo much as their neceſſities require. Is this the fault of the Wealth, or the diſpoſitions of the Perſons who are covetous inſtead of being generous? 'Tis a Calumny therefore upon God to charge him with the ſin of man upon this account: The Rain that drops from the Clouds upon the Plants, is ſweet in it ſelf, but when it moiſtens the root of any venemous Plant, 'tis turn'd into the juyce of the Plant, and becomes venemous with it. The Miracles that our Saviour wrought, were applauded by ſome, and envied by the *Phariſees*; the ſin aroſe not from the nature of the Miracles, but the Malice of their ſpirits: The Miracles were fitter in their own nature to have induced them to an adoration of our Saviour, than to excite ſo vile a Paſſion againſt one that had ſo many marks from Heaven to dignifie him, and proclaim him worthy of their reſpect. The Perſon of Chriſt was an Object propoſed to the *Jews*; ſome worſhip him, others condemn and crucifie him, and according to their ſeveral vices and baſe ends they uſe this object. *Judas* to content his Covetouſneſs, the *Phariſees* to glut their revenge, *Pilate* for his Ambition, to preſerve himſelf in his Government, and avoid the Articles the People might charge him with of Countenancing an Enemy to *Ceſar*. * God at that time put into their minds a rational and true Propoſition which they apply to ill purpoſes. *Caiphas* ſaid, that *it was expedient for one man to die for the people*, which *he ſpake not of himſelf*, *Joh.* 11. 50, 51. God put it into his mind, but he might have applied it better than he did, and conſidered, though the Maxim was commendable, whether it might juſtly be applied to Chriſt, or whether there was ſuch a neceſſity that he muſt dye, or the Nation be deſtroy'd by the *Romans*: The Maxim was ſound and holy, decreed by God; but what an ill uſe did the High Prieſt make of it to put Chriſt to death as a ſeditious Perſon, to ſave the Nation from the *Roman* Fury?

* Arg rald. *Ironic.* p. 337.

3. *Since the natural Corruption of men will uſe ſuch Objects ill, may not God without tainting himſelf, preſent ſuch Objects to them in ſubſerviency to his gracious Decrees?* Whatſoever God ſhould preſent to men in that ſtate, they would make an ill uſe of; hath not God then the Sovereign Prerogative to preſent what he pleaſes, and ſuppreſs others? To offer that to them which may ſerve his holy purpoſe, and hide other things from them which are not ſo conducing to his gracious ends, which would be as much the occaſions of exciting their ſin, as the others which he doth bring forth to their view? The *Jews* at the time of Chriſt, were of a turbulent and ſeditious humour, they expected a *Meſſiah*, a Temporal King, and would readily have embraced any occaſion to have been up in Arms to have delivered themſelves from the *Roman* yoke; to this purpoſe the People attempted once to make him King: And probably the expectation they had that he had ſuch a Deſign to Head them, might be one reaſon of their *Hoſannas*, becauſe without ſome ſuch conceit it was not probable they ſhould ſo ſoon change their note, and vote him to the Croſs in ſo ſhort a time, after they had applauded him as if he had been upon a Throne; but their being defeated of ſtrong expectations, uſually ended in a more ardent Fury. This turbulent and ſeditious humour God directs in another Chanel, ſuppreſſeth all Occurrences that might excite them to a Rebellion againſt the *Romans*, which if he had given way to, the crucifying Chriſt, which was God's deſign to bring about at that time, had not probably been effected, and the Salvation of Mankind been hindred or ſtood at a ſtay for a time. God therefore orders ſuch Objects and Occaſions, that might direct this ſeditious Humour to another Chanel, which would elſe have run out in other Actions, which had not been conducing to the great Deſign he had then in the World. Is it not the right of God, and without any blemiſh to his Holineſs, to uſe thoſe Corruptions which he finds ſown in the Nature of his Creature by the hand of *Satan*, and to propoſe ſuch Objects as may excite the exerciſe of them for his own Service? Sure God hath as much right to ſerve himſelf of the Creature of his own framing, and what Natures ſoever they are poſſeſſed with, and to preſent Objects to that purpoſe, as a Faulconer hath to offer this or that Bird to his Hawk to exerciſe his courage, and excite his ravenouſneſs, without being termed the Author of that ravenouſneſs in the Creature. God planted not thoſe Corruptions in the *Jews*, but finds them in thoſe Perſons over whom he hath an abſolute

absolute Soveraignty in the right of a Creator, and that of a Judge for their sins: And by the right of that Soveraignty may offer such Objects and Occasions, which, though innocent in themselves, he knows they will make use of to ill purposes, but which by the same decree that he resolves to present such occasions to them, he also resolves to make use of them for his own Glory. * 'Tis not conceivable by us what way that death of Christ, which was necessary for the satisfaction of Divine Justice, could be brought about without ordering the evil of some mens hearts by special Occasions to effect his purpose; we cannot suppose that Christ can be guilty of any Crime that deserved Death by the *Jewish* Law; had he been so a Criminal, he could not have been a Redeemer: A perfect Innocence was necessary to the design of his coming. Had God himself put him to that Death, without using Instruments of Wickedness in it, by some remarkable hand from Heaven, the Innocence of his Nature had been for ever eclipsed, and the voluntariness of his Sacrifice had been obscur'd: The strangeness of such a Judgment would have made his Innocence incredible; he could not reasonably have been propos'd as an Object of Faith; What, to believe in one that was struck dead by a hand from Heaven? The propagation of the Doctrine of Redemption had wanted a Foundation; and though God might have raised him again, the certainty of his Death had been as questionable as his Innocence in dying, had he not been raised. But God orders every thing so, as to answer his own most wise and holy ends, and maintain his Truth, and the fulfilling the Predictions of the minutest Concerns about them, and all this by presenting Occasions innocent in themselves; which the Corruptions of the *Jews* took hold of, and whereby God, unknown to them, brought about his own Decrees: And may not this be conceived without any taint upon God's Holiness; for when there are Seeds of all sin in mans Nature, why may not God hinder the sprouting up of this or that kind of Seed, and leave liberty to the growth of the other, and shut up other ways of sinning, and restrain men from them, and let them loose to that Temptation which he intends to serve himself of, hiding from them those Objects which were not so serviceable to his purpose, wherein they would have sinned, and offer others, which he knew their Corruption would use ill, and were serviceable to his ends; since the depravation of their Natures would necessarily hurry them to evil without restraining Grace, as a Scale will necessarily rise up when the weight in it, which kept it down, is taken away?

* *This I have spoken of before but it is necessary now.*

7. Proposition. *The Holiness of God is not blemisht by withdrawing his Grace from a sinful Creature, whereby he falls into more sin.* That God withdraws his Grace from men, and gives them up sometimes to the fury of their Lusts, is as clear in Scripture as any thing; *Deut.* 29. 4. *Yet the Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear,* &c. *Judas* was delivered to *Satan* after the Sop, and put into his power for despising former Admonitions. He often leaves the Reins to the Devil, that he may use what efficacy he can in those that have offended the Majesty of God; he withholds further influences of Grace, or withdraws what before he had granted them. Thus he withheld that Grace from the Sons of *Eli*, that might have made their Fathers pious Admonitions effectual to them, 1 *Sam.* 2. 25. *They hearkned not to the voice of their Father, because the Lord would slay them.* He gave Grace to *Eli* to reprove them, and withheld that Grace from them, which might have enabled them against their natural Corruption and obstinacy to receive that Reproof.

But the *Holiness* of God is not blemisht by this.

1. *Because the act of God in this is only negative* †. Thus God is said to *harden* men: Not by positive hardning, or working any thing in the Creature, but by not working, not softning, leaving a man to the hardness of his own heart, whereby it is unavoidable by the depravation of mans Nature, and the fury of his Passions, but that he should be further hardned, and *increase unto more ungodliness*, as the Expression is 2 *Tim.* 2. 16. As a man is said to give another his life, when he doth not take it away when it lay at his mercy; so God is said to *harden* a man, when he doth not mollifie him when it was in his power, and inwardly quicken

† Testard. *de natur. & grat. Thes.* 150, 151. Amy. *on diverse Texts.* p. 311.

quicken him with that Grace, whereby he might infallibly avoid any further provoking of him. God is ſaid to harden men, when he removes not from them the Incentives to ſin, curbs not thoſe Principles, which are ready to comply with thoſe Incentives, withdraws the common aſſiſtances of his Grace, concurs not with counſels and admonitions to make them effectual; flaſheth not in the convincing light which he darted upon them before. If hardneſs follows upon God's withholding his ſoftening Grace, 'tis not by any poſitive act of God, but from the natural hardneſs of Man. If you put Fire near to Wax or Roſin, both will melt, but when that Fire is removed, they teturn to their natural quality of hardneſs and brittleneſs; the poſitive act of the Fire is to melt and ſoften, and the ſoftneſs of the Roſin is to be aſcribed to that, but the hardneſs is from the Roſin it ſelf, wherein the Fire hath no influence, but only a negative act by a removal of it: So when God hardens a man, he only leaves him to that ſtony heart which he derived from *Adam*, and brought with him into the World. All mens underſtandings being blinded, and their wills perverted in *Adam*, God's withdrawing his Grace, is but a leaving them to their natural pravity, which is the cauſe of their further ſinning, and not God's removal of that ſpecial light he before afforded them, or reſtraint he held over them. As when God withdraws his preſerving Power from the Creature, he is not the *efficient*, but *deficient* cauſe of the Creatures deſtruction; ſo in this caſe, God only ceaſeth to bind and damn up that ſin which elſe would break out.

2. *The whole poſitive cauſe of this hardneſs is from mans corruption.* God infuſeth not any ſin into his Creatures, but forbears to infuſe his Grace and reſtrain their Luſts, which upon the removal of his Grace work impetuouſly: God only gives them up to that, which he knows will work ſtrongly in their hearts. And therefore the *Apoſtle* wipes off from God any poſitive act in that uncleanneſs the *Heathens* were given up to (*Rom.* 1. 24. *Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanneſs, through the luſts of their own Hearts*: And *verſe* 26. God gave them up to *vile affections*; but they were their own affections, none of Gods inſpiring) by adding *through the luſts of their own Hearts*: God's giving them up was the Logical cauſe, or a cauſe by way of *Argument*; their own Luſts were the true and *natural* cauſe; their own they were, before they were given up to them; and belonging to none as the Author, but themſelves after they were given up to them. The Luſt in the Heart, and the temptation without, eaſily cloſe and mix intereſts with one another: As the Fire in a Coal-pit will with the Fuel, if the ſtreams derived into it for the quenching it, be damp'd up: The natural Paſſions will run to a temptation, as the Waters of a River tumble towards the Sea. When a man that hath bridled in a high-metled Horſe from running out, gives him the Reins; or a Huntſman takes off the ſtring that held the Dog, and lets him run after the Hare; are they the immediate cauſe of the motion of the one, or the other? no, but the mettle and ſtrength of the Horſe, and the natural inclination of the Hound, both which are left to their own motions to purſue their own natural inſtincts. Man doth as naturally tend to ſin as a ſtone to the Center, or as a weighty thing inclines to a motion to the Earth: 'Tis from the propenſion of man's nature that he *drinks up iniquity like water*; and God doth no more when he leaves a man to ſin, by taking away the Hedge which ſtopt him, but leave him to his natural Inclination. As a man that breaks up a damm he hath placed, leaves the Stream to run in their natural Chanel; or one that takes away a prop from a Stone to let it fall, leaves it only to that nature which inclines it to a deſcent; both have their motion from their own Nature, and man his Sin from his own Corruption.* The withdrawing the Sun-beams is not the cauſe of Darkneſs, but the Shadineſs of the Earth; nor is the departure of the Sun the cauſe of Winter, but the coldneſs of the Air and Earth, which was temper'd and beaten back into the bowels of the Earth by the vigor of the Sun, upon whoſe departure they return to their natural ſtate: The Sun only leaves the Earth and Air as it found them at the beginning of the Spring, or the beginning of the Day. If God do not give a man Grace to melt him, yet he cannot be ſaid to communicate to him that nature which hardens him, which man hath from himſelf. As God was not the cauſe of the firſt ſin of *Adam*, which was the root of all other, ſo he is not the cauſe of the following ſins, which as branches ſpring from that

* Amyrald. *de predeſt.* p. 107.

that root; mans free-will was the cause of the first sin, and the corruption of his nature by it the cause of all succeeding sins. God doth not immediately harden any man, but doth propose those things, from whence the natural Vice of man takes an occasion to strengthen and nourish it self: Hence God is said to *harden Pharaoh's Heart* *, by concurring with the *Magicians* in turning their rods into Serpents, which stiffned his Heart against *Moses*, conceiving him by reason of that to have no more power than other men, and was an occasion of his further hardning: And *Pharaoh* is said to *harden himself* *, that is, in regard of his own natural Passion.

* Exod. 7. 13.

* Exod. 8. 32.

3. *God is holy and righteous, because he doth not withdraw from man, till man deserts him*: To say that God withdrew that Grace from *Adam*, which he had afforded him in Creation, or any thing that was due to him, till he had abused the Gifts of God, and turned them to an end contrary to that of Creation, would be a reflection upon the Divine Holiness: God was first deserted by man before man was deserted by God; and man doth first contemn and abuse the common Grace of God, and those reliques of natural light that *enlighten every man that comes into the World* †, before God leaves him to the hurry of his own Passions. *Ephraim was* first *joyned to Idols*, before God pronounced the fatal sentence, *Let him alone* *: And the *Heathens* first *changed the glory of the incorruptible God*, before God withdrew his common Grace from the corrupted creature*; and they first *served the creature more than the Creator*, before the Creator gave them up to the slavish Chains of their vile affections†. *Israel* first cast off God before God cast off them, but then *he gave them up to their own Hearts Lusts, and they walked in their own Counsels*, *Psal.* 81. 11, 12. Since sin entred into the World by the fall of *Adam*, and the blood of all his posterity was tainted, Man cannot do any thing that is formally good; not for want of faculties, but for the want of a righteous habit in those faculties, especially in the Will; yet God discovers himself to man in the works of his hands; he hath left in him footsteps of natural reason, he doth attend him with common motions of his Spirit, corrects him for his faults with gentle Chastisements. He is near unto all in some kind of Instructions: He puts many times providential bars in their way of sinning; but when they will rush into it as the *Horse into the battle*, when they will rebell against the light, God doth often leave them to their own course, sentenc him that is *filthy to be filthy still* *, which is a righteous act of God, as he is Rector and Governour of the World. Man's not receiving, or not improving what God gives, is the cause of Gods not giving further, or taking away his own, which before he had bestowed This is so far from being repugnant to the Holiness and Righteousness of God, that it is rather a commendable act of his Holiness and Righteousness, as the Rector of the World, not to let those gifts continue in the hand of a man who abuses them contrary to his glory. Who will blame a Father, that after all the good Counsels he hath given his Son to reclaim him, all the Corrections he hath inflicted on him for his irregular practice, leaves him to his own courses and withdraws those assistances which he scoft at and turned the deaf Ear unto? Or who will blame the *Physician* for deserting the Patient, who rejects his Counsel, will not follow his Prescriptions, but dasheth his Physick against the Wall? No man will blame him, no man will say that he is the cause of the Patients death, but the true cause is the fury of the Distemper, and the obstinacy of the diseased Person, to which the Physician left him. And who can justly blame God in this case, who yet never denied supplies of Grace to any that sincerely sought it at his hands; and what man is there, that lies under a hardness, but first was guilty of very provoking sins? What unholiness is it to deprive men of those assistances because of their sin, and afterwards to direct those counsels and practises of theirs which he hath justly given them up unto, to serve the ends of his own glory in his own methods?

† John. 1. 9.

* Hos. 4. 17.

* Rom. 1. 23, 24.

† *Verse* 25, 26.

Rev. 22. 11.

4. Which will appear further by considering, that *God is not oblig'd to continue his Grace to them*. It was at his liberty whither he could give any renewing Grace to *Adam* after his fall, or to any of his Posterity: He was at his own liberty to withold it or communicate it: But if he were under any Obligation then, surely he must be under less now, since the multiplication of Sin by his Creatures: But

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if the Obligation were none juſt after the fall, there is no pretence now to faſten any ſuch Obligation on God. That God had no Obligation at firſt hath been ſpoken to before: He is leſs obliged to continue his Grace after a repeated refuſal, and a peremptory abuſe, than he was bound to profer it after the firſt Apoſtacy. God cannot be charg'd with unholineſs in withdrawing his Grace after we have received it, unleſs we can make it appear that his Grace was a thing due to us, as we are his Creatures, and as he is Governor of the World. What Prince looks upon himſelf as oblig'd to reſide in any particular place of his Kingdom? But ſuppoſe he be bound to inhabit in one particular City, yet after the City rebells againſt him, is he bound to continue his Court there, ſpend his Revenue among Rebels, endanger his own Honour and Security, enlarge their Charter, or maintain their Ancient Priviledges? Is it not moſt juſt and righteous for him to withdraw himſelf and leave them to their own Tumultuouſneſs and Sedition, whereby they ſhould eat the fruit of their own doings? If there be an Obligation God as a Governour, it would rather lye on the ſide of Juſtice, to leave Man to the Power of the Devil whom he courted, and the prevalency of thoſe Luſts he hath ſo often careſſed, and wrap up in a Cloud all his common Illuminations, and leave him deſtitute of all common workings of his Spirit.

8. Propoſition. *Gods Holineſs is not blemiſht, by his commanding thoſe things ſometimes which ſeem to be againſt Nature, or thwart ſome other of his Precepts.* As when God commanded *Abraham* with his own hand to Sacrifice his Son*, there was nothing of Unrighteouſneſs in it. God hath a *Sovereign Dominion* over the lives and beings of his Creatures, whereby as he creates one day, he might annihilate the next; and by the ſame right that he might demand the life of *Iſaac*, as being his Creature, he might demand the Obedience of *Abraham* in a ready return of that to him, which he had ſo long enjoy'd by his grant. 'Tis true, killing is unjuſt when it is done without cauſe, and by a private Authority: But the Authority of God ſurmounts all private and publick Authority whatſoever. Our lives are due to him when he calls for them, and they are more than once forfeit to him by reaſon of Tranſgreſſion. But howſoever the caſe is, God commanded him to do it for the tryal of his Grace, but ſuffered him not to do it in favour to his ready Obedience: But had *Iſaac* been actually ſlain and offer'd, how had it been unrighteous in God, who enacts Laws for the Regulation of his Creature, but never intended them to the prejudice of the Rights of his Sovereignty? Another Caſe is that of the *Iſraelites borrowing Jewels* of the *Egyptians* by the order of God †. Is not God Lord of mans goods, as well as their lives? What have any, they have not received? and that not as proprietors independent on God, but his Stewards, and may not he demand a portion of his Steward to beſtow upon his Favourite? He that had power to diſpoſe of the *Egyptians* Goods, had power to order the *Iſraelites* to ask them. Beſides, God acted the part of a *juſt Judge* in ordering them their wages for their Service in this method, and making their Task-maſters give them ſome recompence for their unjuſt oppreſſion ſo many years: It was a Command from God therefore, rather for the preſervation of Juſtice, (the Baſis of all thoſe Laws which link human Society) than any infringement of it. It was a material recompence in part, though not a formal one in the intention of the *Egyptians*: It was but in part a recompence; It muſt needs come ſhort of the damage the poor Captives had ſuſtained by the tyranny of their Maſters, who had inſlav'd them contrary to the rules of hoſpitality; and could not make amends for the lives of the poor Infants of *Iſrael*, whom they had drowned in the River. He that might for the unjuſt oppreſſion of his People have taken away all their Lives, deſtroy'd the whole Nation, and put the *Iſraelites* into the poſſeſſion of their Lands, could without any unrighteouſneſs diſpoſe of part of their Goods: And it was rather an act of Clemency to leave them ſome part, who had doubly forfeited all. Again, the *Egyptians* were as ready to lend by Gods influence, as the *Iſraelites* were to ask by Gods order: And though it was a loan, God as Sovereign of the World, and Lord of the Earth and the fulneſs thereof, alienated the property by aſſuming them to the uſe of the Tabernacle, to which ſervice moſt, if not all of them, were afterwards dedicated. God who is Law-giver hath power

* Gen. 22. 2.

† Exod. 11. 2, 3. Exod. 12. 36.

to diſpence with his own Law, and make uſe of his own Goods and diſpoſe of them as he pleaſes. 'Tis no unholineſs in God to diſpoſe of that which he hath a right unto. Indeed God cannot command that which is in its own nature intrinſically evil; as to command a rational Creature not to love him, not to worſhip him, to call God to witneſs to a Lye; theſe are intrinſically evil; but for the diſpoſing of the Lives and Goods of his Creatures, which they have from him in right, and not in abſolute propriety, is not evil in him, becauſe there is no repugnancy in his own Nature to ſuch acts, nor is it any thing inconſiſtent with the natural duty of a Creature, and in ſuch caſes he may uſe what inſtruments he pleaſe.

The *Point* was, That *Holineſs is a glorious perfection of the nature of God.* We have ſhew'd the *Nature* of this Holineſs in God; what it is, and we have demonſtrated it, and proved that God is holy, and muſt needs be ſo; and alſo the *purity* of his Nature *in all his acts* about ſin: Let us now improve it by way of *Uſe.*

Uſe. Is *Holineſs a tranſcendent Perfection belonging to the Nature of God?* The *Firſt Uſe* ſhall be of *Inſtruction* and *Information.*

1. *How great and how frequent is the contempt of this eminent Perfection in the Deity?* Since the fall, this Attribute, which renders God moſt amiable in himſelf, renders him moſt hateful to his Apoſtate Creature. 'Tis impoſſible that he that loves iniquity, can effect that which is irreconcileably contrary to the iniquity he loves. Nothing ſo contrary to the ſinfulneſs of man as the Holineſs of God, and nothing is thought of by the ſinner with ſo much deteſtation. How do Men account that which is the moſt glorious perfection of the Divinity, unworthy to be regarded as an accompliſhment of their own Souls? And when they are preſſed to an imitation of it, and a deteſtation of what is contrary to it, have the ſame ſentiments in their Heart which the Devil had in his Language to Chriſt, Why *art thou come to torment us before our time?* What an enmity the World naturally hath to this perfection, I think is viſible in the practiſe of the Heathen, who among all their Heroes which they deified, elevated none to that dignity among them for this or that moral Virtue that came neareſt to it, but for their valour or ſome uſefulneſs in the concerns of this Life. *Æſculapius* was deified for his skill in the cure of Diſeaſes; *Bacchus* for the uſe of the Grape; *Vulcan* for his operations by Fire; *Hercules* for his deſtroying of Tyrants and Monſters; but none for their meer Virtue: As if any thing of Purity were unworthy their conſideration in the frame of a Deity, when it is the glory of all other Perfections: So eſſential it is, that when Men reject the imitation of this, God regards it as a total rejection of himſelf, though they own all the other attributes of his Nature; *Pſal.* 81. 11. *Iſrael would none of me*; why? becauſe *they walked not in his ways*, Verſe 13. thoſe ways wherein the purity of the Divine nature was moſt conſpicuous: They would own him in his Power, when they ſtood in need of a Deliverance; they would own him in his Mercy, when they were plung'd in Diſtreſs; but they would not imitate him in his Holineſs. This being the luſtre of the Divine Nature, the contempt of it is an obſcuring all his other Perfections, and a daſhing a blot upon his whole Scutcheon. To own all the reſt, and deny him this, is to frame him as an unbeautiful Monſter, a deformed power. Indeed, all ſin is againſt this attribute; all ſin aims in general at the Being of God, but in particular at the Holineſs of his Being: All ſin is a violence to this Perfection: There is not an Iniquity in the World, but directs its venemous ſting againſt the Divine purity: Some ſins are directed againſt his Omniſcience, as ſecret Wickedneſs; ſome againſt his Providence, as diſtruſt; ſome againſt his Mercy, as unbelief; ſome againſt his Wiſdom, as neglecting the means inſtituted by him, cenſuring his ways and actings; ſome againſt his Power, as truſting in means more than in God, and the immoderate fear of Men more than of God; ſome againſt his Truth, as diſtruſting his Promiſe, or not fearing his Threatning; but all agree together in their enmity againſt this, which is the peculiar glory of the Deity, every one of them is a receding from the Divine Image; and the blackneſs of every one is the deeper, by how much the diſtance of it from the Holineſs of God is the greater. This contrariety to the Holineſs of God is the cauſe of all the abſolute Atheiſm (if there be any ſuch) in the world; what was the reaſon *the fool hath ſaid in his heart there is no God?* but becauſe the Fool

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is *corrupt, and hath done abominable works**, If they believe the being of a God, their own Reaſon will inforce them to imagine him holy: Therefore rather than fancy a holy God, they would fain fancy none at all. * Pſal. 14. 1.

In particular,

1. *The Holineſs of God is injur'd, in unworthy repreſentations of God; and imaginations of him in our own minds.* The Heathen fell under this guilt, and aſcribed to their Idols thoſe Vices which their own Senſuality inclin'd them to, unworthy of a man, much more unworthy of a God, that they might find a protection of their Crimes in the practice of their Idols. But is this only the notion of the Heathens? may there not be many among us whoſe love to their Luſts, and deſires of ſinning without controul, move them to ſlander God in their thoughts rather than reform their Lives, and are ready to frame by the power of their imaginative faculty, a God not only winking, but ſmiling at their Impurities? I am ſure God charges the Impieties of men upon this ſcore, in that *Pſalm*, (*Pſal.* 50. 21.) which ſeems to be a repreſentation of the day of Judgment, as ſome gather from *Verſe* 6. When God ſums up all together, *Theſe things haſt thou done, and I kept ſilence thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch an one as thy ſelf*; not a deteſter, but approver of thy *crimes*. And the *Pſalmiſt* ſeems to expreſs Gods loathing of ſin in ſuch a manner, as intimates it to be contrary to the Ideas and reſemblances Men make of him in their minds, *Pſal.* 5. 4. *For thou art not a God that haſt pleaſure in wickedneſs.* As we ſay in vindication of a man, he is not ſuch a man as you imagine him to be; Thou art not ſuch a God as the World commonly imagines Thee to be, a God taking pleaſure in iniquity. 'Tis too common for men to fancy God not as he is, but as they would have him; ſtrip him of his excellency for their own ſecurity. As God made man after his Image, man would dreſs God after his own Modes, as may beſt ſute the content of his Luſts, and incourage him in a courſe of ſinning; For when they can frame ſuch a notion of God, as if he were a countenancer of ſin, they will derive from thence a reputation to their Crimes, commit Wickedneſs with an unbounded licentiouſneſs, and crown their Vices with the name of Virtues, becauſe they are ſo like to the Sentiments of that God they fancy: From hence as the *Pſalmiſt* in the *Pſalm* before mention'd, ariſeth that maſs of Vice in the World; ſuch Conceptions are the Mother and Nurſe of all impiety, I queſtion not but the firſt Spring is ſome wrong notion of God in regard of his holineſs: We are as apt to imagine God as we would have him, as the black *Ethiopians* were to draw the Image of their gods after their own dark hue, and paint him with their own Colour: As a Philoſopher in *Theodoret* ſpeaks; if Oxen and Lions had hands, and could paint as Men do, they would frame the Images of their gods according to their own likeneſs and complexion: Such notions of God render him a Swiniſh Being, and worſe than the vileſt Idols ador'd by the *Egyptians*, when Men fancy a God indulgent to their Appetites, and moſt ſordid Luſts.

2. *In defacing the Image of God in our Souls.* God in the firſt draught of man conform'd him to his own Image, or made him an Image of himſelf: Becauſe we find that in Regeneration this Image is renewed, *Eph.* 4. 24. *The new Man, which after God is created in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs.* He did not take Angels for his Pattern in the firſt poliſhing the Soul, but himſelf. In defacing this Image we caſt dirt upon the Holineſs of God, which was his pattern in the framing of us; and rather chuſe to be conformed to *Satan*, who is Gods grand Enemy, to have God's Image wip'd out of us, and the Devils pictur'd in us: Therefore natural men in an unregenerate ſtate may juſtly be called Devils, ſince our Saviour called the worſt man, *Judas*, ſo*, and *Peter*, one of the beſt †: And if this Title be given by an infallible Judge to one of the worſt, and one of the beſt, it may without wrong to any be aſcrib'd to all men that wallow in their ſin, which is directly contrary to that illuſtrious Image God did imprint upon them. How often is it ſeen that men controul the light of their own Nature, and ſtain the cleareſt beams of that Candle of the Lord in their own ſpirits, that fly in the face of their own Conſciences, and ſay to them, as *Ahab* to *Micaiah*, thou didſt *never prophecy good to me*; thou didſt never incourage me in thoſe things that are pleaſing to the Fleſh; and uſe it at the ſame rate as the wicked King did the *Prophet, impriſon it in unrighteouſneſs* *; becauſe it ſtarts up in them ſometimes Sentiments of the Holineſs of God, which it *Joh. 6. 1. † Mat. 16. 23. * Rom. 1. 18.

repreſents in the Soul of man. How jolly are many men when the exhalations of their Senſitive part riſe up to Cloud the exacteſt Principle of moral Nature in their minds, and render the monſtrous Principles of the Law of Corruption more lively? Whence ariſeth the wickedneſs which hath been committed with an open face in the World, and the applauſe that hath been often given to the worſt of villanies? Have we not known among our ſelves, men to glory in their ſhame, and eſteem that a moſt gentile accompliſhment of man, which is the greateſt blot upon his nature, and which if it were upon God, would render him no God, but an impure Devil, ſo that to be a Gentleman among us hath been the ſame as to be an incarnate Devil? and to be a man, was to be no better, but worſe than a Bruit? Vile wretches! Is not this a contempt of Divine holineſs to kill that Divine Seed which lies languiſhing in the midſt of corrupted Nature; to cut up any ſprouts of it as weeds unworthy to grow in their gardens, & cultivate what is the Seed of Hell? prefer the rotten fruits of *Sodom*, markt with a Divine curſe, before thoſe relicks of the fruits of *Eden*, of Gods own planting?

3. The *Holineſs* of God is injur'd *in charging our ſin upon God.* Nothing is more, natural to men than to ſeek excuſes for their ſin, & transfer it from themſelves to the next at hand; and rather than fail, ſhift it upon God himſelf; and if they can bring God into a ſociety with them in ſin, they will hug themſelves in a ſecurity that God cannot puniſh that guilt, wherein he is a partner: *Adam*'s Children are not of a different diſpoſition from *Adam* himſelf, who after he was Arraign'd and brought to his Trial, boggles not at flinging his dirt in the face of God his Creator, and accuſeth him as if he had given him the Woman, not to be his help but his ruine, *Gen.* 3. 12. *And the man ſaid, the woman whom thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me of the Tree and I did eat.* He never ſupplicates for Pardon, nor ſeeks a remedy, but reflects his Crime upon God; Had I been alone, as I was firſt created, I had not eaten, but the woman whom I received as a ſpecial gift from thee, hath proved my tempter and my bane. When man could not be like God in Knowledge, he endeavour'd to make God like him in his Crime; and when his Ambition failed of equalizing himſelf with God, he did with an inſolence too common to corrupted Nature, attempt by the imputation of his ſin, to equal the Divinity with himſelf. Some think *Cain* had the ſame ſentiment in his anſwer to Gods demand, where his brother was, *Gen.* 2. 9. *Am I my brother's keeper?* Art not thou the Keeper and Governor of the world, why didſt not thou take care of him, and hinder my killing him, and drawing this guilt upon my ſelf, and terror upon my Conſcience? *David* was not behind, when after the murder of *Uriah*, he ſweeps the dirt from his own door to Gods, *Sam.* 2. 11. 25. *The ſword devoureth one as well as another*; Fathering that ſolely upon Divine Providence, which was his own wicked Contrivance: Though afterwards he is more ingenuous in clearing God, and charging himſelf, *Pſal.* 51. 4. *Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned*; and he clears God in his Judgment too. 'Tis too common for *the fooliſhneſs of man to pervert his way*, and then *his heart frets againſt the Lord*, *Prov.* 19. 3. He ſtudies miſchief, runs in a way of ſin, and when he hath conjur'd up troubles to himſelf by his own folly, he excuſeth himſelf, and with indignation charges God as the Author both of his ſin and miſery, and ſets his mouth againſt the Heavens. 'Tis a more horrible thing to accuſe God as a Principal or Acceſſory in our guilt, than to conceive him to be a favourer of our iniquity; yet both are bad enough.

4. The Holineſs of God is injured, *when men will ſtudy Arguments from the holy word of God to Colour and ſhelter their Crimes.* When men will ſeek for a ſhelter for their Lies, in that of the Midwives to preſerve the Children, or in that of *Rahab* to ſave the Spies; as if becauſe God rewarded their fidelity, he countenanc'd their ſin. How often is Scripture wreſted to be a plea for unbecoming practiſes, that God in his Word may be imagin'd a Patron for their Iniquity? 'Tis not unknown that ſome have maintain'd their quaffing and carowſing from *Eccleſ.* 8. 11. *That a man hath no better thing under the Sun, than to eat and drink and be merry*: And their Gluttony from *Matth.* 5. 11. *That which goes into the belly defiles not a man.* The *Jeſuits morals* are a tranſcript of this. How often hath the Paſſion of our Saviour, the higheſt expreſſion of Gods holineſs, been employed to ſtain it, & encourage the moſt debauched practiſes? Grace hath been turn'd into wantonneſs, & the abundance of grace been us'd as a blaſt to increaſe the flames of ſin; as if God had no other aim in that work of Redemption, but to diſcover himſelf more indulgent to our Senſual Appetites,

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and by his Severity with his Son, become more gracious to our Luſts: This is to feed the Roots of Hell with the Dews of Heaven, to make Grace a Pandor for the abuſe of it, and to employ the expreſſions of his Holineſs in his Word to be a Sword againſt the eſſential Holineſs of his Nature: As if a man ſhould draw an Apology for his Treaſon out of that Law that was made to forbid, not to protect his Rebellion. Not the meaneſt Inſtrument in the Temple was to be alienated from the uſe it was by Divine Order appointed to, nor was it to be imployed in any common uſe; and ſhall the Word of God, which is the Image of his Holineſs, be transferr'd by baſe Interpretations to be an Advocate for Iniquity? ſuch an ill uſe of his Word reflects upon that Hand which imprinted thoſe Characters of Purity and Righteouſneſs upon it: As the miſ-interpretation of the wholſome Laws of a Prince, made to diſcourage Debauchery, reflects upon his righteouſneſs and ſincerity in enacting them.

5. The Holineſs of God is injured, *when men will put up Petitions to God to favour them in a wicked Deſign.* Such there are and tax'd by the *Apoſtle, James* 4. 3. *Ye ask amiſs, that you may conſume it upon your Luſts*: who deſired Mercies from God, with an intent to make them Inſtruments of Sin, and Weapons of Unrighteouſneſs; as it is reported of a Thief, that he always pray'd for the ſucceſs of his Robbery. It hath not been rare in the World to appoint Faſts and Prayers for ſucceſs in Wars manifeſtly unjuſt, and commenc'd upon breaches of Faith. Many Covetous men petition God to proſper them in their unjuſt gain; as if the bleſſed God ſate in his pure Majeſty upon a Throne of Grace, to eſpouſe unjuſt practiſes, and make Iniquity proſperous. There are ſuch as *offer Sacrifice with an evil mind* *, to barter with God for a Divine Bleſſing to ſpirit a wicked contrivance. How great a contempt of the Holineſs of God is this? How inexcuſable would it be for a Favourite to addreſs himſelf to a juſt Prince with this Language? Sir, I deſire a Boon of ſuch Lands that lye near me, for an addition to my Eſtate, that I may have ſupports for my Debauchery, and be able to play the Villain more powerfully among my Neighbours. Hereby he implies that his Prince is a friend to ſuch Crimes and Wickedneſs he intends his Petition for. Is not this the language of many mens Hearts in the immediate preſence of God? The Order of Prayer runs thus, *Hallowed be thy Name*; firſt to have a deep ſenſe of the Holineſs of the Divine Nature, and an ardent deſire for the glory of it: This Order is inverted by asking thoſe things which are not agreeable to the Will of God; not meet for us to ask, nor meet for God to give; or asking things agreeable to the Will of God, but with a wicked intention: This is, in effect, to deſire God to ſtrip himſelf of his Holineſs, and commit Sacriledge upon his own Nature to gratifie our Luſts.

* Prov. 21. 27.

6. The Purity of God is contemned, *in hating and ſcoffing at the Holineſs which is in a Creature.* Whoever looks upon the holineſs of a Creature as an unlovely thing, can have no good Opinion of the amiableneſs of Divine Purity. Whoſoever hates thoſe qualities and graces that reſemble God in any perſon, muſt needs contemn the Original Pattern, which is more eminent in God. If there be no comlineſs in a Creature's holineſs, to render it grateful to us, we ſhould ſay of God himſelf, were he viſible among us, with thoſe in the *Prophet, Iſai.* 53. *There is no beauty in him that we ſhould deſire him*: Holineſs is beautiful in it ſelf. If God be the moſt lovely Being, that which is a likeneſs to him, ſo far as it doth reſemble him, muſt needs be amiable, becauſe it partakes of God: And therefore thoſe that ſee no beauty in an inferiour holineſs, but contemn it becauſe it is a Purity above them, contemn God much more: He that hates that which is imperfect meerly for that excellency which is in it, doth much more hate that which is perfect, without any mixture or ſtain. Holineſs being the glory of God, the peculiar Title of the Deity, and from him derived unto the Nature of a Creature; he that mocks this in a Perſon, derides God himſelf; and when he cannot abuſe the Purity in the Deity, he will do it in his Image. As Rebels that cannot wrong the King in his Perſon, will do it in his Picture, and his Subjects that are Loyal to him: He that hates the Picture of a man, hates the Perſon repreſented by it much more; he that hates the Beams, hates the Sun; the holineſs of a Creature is but a Beam from that Infinite Sun, a Stream from that Eternal Fountain. Where there is

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a deriſion of the Purity of any Creature; there is a greater reflection upon God in that deriſion, as he is the Author of it. If a mixed and ſtained holineſs be more the ſubject of any mans Scoffs than a great deal of Sin, that Perſon hath a diſpoſition more roundly to ſcoff at God himſelf, ſhould he appear in that unblemiſht and unſpotted Purity which infinitely ſhines in his Nature. O! 'tis a dangerous thing to ſcoff and deride holineſs in any Perſon, though never ſo mean; Such do deride and ſcoff at the moſt holy God.

7. The Holineſs of God is injur'd *by our unprepared addreſſes to him*, when like Swine, we come into the preſence of God with all our mire reeking and ſteaming upon us. A holy God requires a holy Worſhip: And if our beſt Duties, having filth in every part, as perform'd by us, are unmeet for God; how much more unſutable are dead and dirty Duties to a living and immenſe Holineſs? Slight approaches and droſſy frames ſpeak us to have imaginations of God as of a ſlight and ſottiſh Being: This is worſe than the Heathens practis'd, who would purge their Fleſh before they Sacrific'd, and make ſome preparations in a ſeeming Purity, before they would enter into their Temples. God is *ſo Holy*, that were our Services as refin'd as thoſe of Angels, we could not preſent him with a Service meet for his *holy* Nature*. We contemn then this Perfection when we come before him without due preparation; as if God himſelf were of an impure Nature, and did not deſerve our pureſt thoughts in our applications to him; as if any blemiſht and polluted Sacrifice were good enough for him, and his Nature deſerv'd no better. When we excite not thoſe elevated frames of Spirit which are due to ſuch a Being; when we think to put him off with a lame and imperfect Service, we worſhip him not according to the excellency of his Nature, but put a ſlight upon his Majeſtick Sanctity: When we nouriſh in our Duties thoſe fooliſh Imaginations which creep upon us; when we bring into, and continue our worldly, carnal, debauch'd Fancies in his Preſence, worſe than the naſty Servants, or bemired Dogs, a man would bluſh to be attended with in his Viſits to a neat Perſon. To be converſing with ſordid Senſualities, when we are at the feet of an Infinite God, ſitting upon the Throne of his Holineſs, is as much a contempt of him, as it would be of a Prince, to bring a Veſſel full of naſty Dung with us, when we come to preſent a Petition to him clothed in his Royal Robes. Or as it would have been to God, if the High Prieſt ſhould have ſwept all the Blood and Excrements of the Sacrifices from the Foot of the Altar into the Holy of Holies, and heapt it up before the Mercy Seat, where the Preſence of God dwelt *between the Cherubims*, and afterwards ſhovel'd it up into the Ark, to be lodged with *Aarons* Rod and the Pot of *Manna*.

* Joſh. 24. 19.

8. God's Holineſs is ſlighted *in depending upon our imperfect Services to bear us out before the Tribunal of God.* This is too ordinary: The *Jews* were often infected with it †, who not well underſtanding the enormity of their Tranſgreſſions, the interweaving of Sin with their Services, and the unſpottedneſs of the Divine Purity, mingled an Opinion of Merit with their Sacrifices, and thought by the cutting the Throat of a Beaſt, and offering it upon God's Altar, they had made a ſufficient Compenſation to that Holineſs they had offended. Not to ſpeak of many among the *Romaniſts*, who have the ſame notion, thinking to make ſatisfaction to God, by erecting an hoſpital, or endowing a Church, as if this injur'd Perfection could be contented with the Dregs of their Purſes, and the offering of an unjuſt *Mammon*, more likely to mind God of the Injury they have done him, than contribute to the appeaſing of him. But is it not too ordinary with miſerable men, whoſe Conſciences accuſe them of their Crimes, to rely upon the mumbling of a few formal Prayers, and in the ſtrength of them to think to ſtand before the tremendous Tribunal of God, and meet with a Diſcharge upon this account from any Accuſation this Divine Perfection can preſent againſt them? Nay, do not the beſt Chriſtians ſometimes find a Principle in them, that makes them ſtumble in their goings forth to Chriſt, and glorifying the Holineſs of God in that method which he hath appointed? Sometimes caſting an eye at their Grace, and ſticking awhile to this or that Duty, and gazing at the glory of the Temple-building, while they ſhould more admire the glorious Preſence that fills it. What

† Rom. 3. 10.

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is all this but a vilifying of the *Holineſs* of the Divine Nature, as though it would be well enough contented with our Impurities and Imperfections, becauſe they look like a Righteouſneſs in our eſtimation? As though *Droſs* and *Dung*, which are the Titles the *Apoſtle* gives to all the Righteouſneſs of a Fallen Creature *, were valuable in the ſight of God, and ſufficient to render us comely before him. 'Tis a Blaſphemy againſt this Attribute, to pretend that any thing ſo imperfect, ſo daub'd as the beſt of our Services are, can anſwer to that which is Infinitely Perfect, and be a ground of demanding Eternal Life: 'Tis at beſt, to ſet up a guilded *Dagon* as a fit Companion for the *Ark* of his *Holineſs*; our own Righteouſneſs as a ſutable Mate for the Righteouſneſs of God: As if he had repented of the Claim he made by the Law to an exact Conformity, and thrown off the Holineſs of his Nature for the fondling of a Corrupted Creature. Rude and fooliſh Notions of the Divine Purity, are clearly evidenced by any confidence in any Righteouſneſs of our own, though never ſo ſplendid. 'Tis a rendring the Righteouſneſs of God, as dull and obſcure as that of Men; a meer Out-ſide, as their own: As blind as the Heathens pictur'd their *Fortune*, that knew as little how to diſcern the Nature and Value of the Offerings made to her, as to diſtribute her gifts, as if it were all one to them, to have a *Dog* or a *Lamb* preſented in Sacrifice. As if God did not well underſtand his own Nature, when he enacted ſo Holy a Law, and ſtrengthned it with ſo ſevere a Threatning; which muſt follow upon our Conceit, that he will accept a Righteouſneſs lower than that, which bears ſome ſutableneſs to the *Holineſs* of his own Nature, and that of his Law; and that he could eaſily be put off with a pretended and counterfeit Service. What are the Services of the generality of Men, but Suppoſitions, that they can bribe God to an indulgence of them in their Sins, and by an Oral Sacrifice, cauſe him to deveſt himſelf of his Hatred of their former Iniquities, and countenance their following Practices. As the *Harlot* that would return freſh to her Uncleanneſs, upon the confidence that her *Peace Offerings* had contented the Righteouſneſs of God †: As though a ſmall Service could make him wink at our Sins, and lay aſide the Glory of his Nature; when alas, the beſt Duties in the moſt gracious Perſons in this life, are but as the ſteams of a Spiced Dunghil, a compoſition of Myrrh and Froth, ſince there are ſwarms of Corruptions in their Nature, and ſecret Sins that they need a cleanſing from.

* Phil. 3. 8.

† Prov. 7. 14.

9. 'Tis a contemning the *Holineſs* of God, *when we charge the Law of God with rigidneſs.* We caſt Durt upon the *Holineſs* of God, when we blame the *Law* of God, becauſe it ſhackles us, and prohibits our deſired pleaſures; and hate the Law of God, as they did the *Prophets*, becauſe they did not *Propheſy ſmooth things*; but called to them, to *get them out of the way, and turn aſide out of the path, and cauſe the Holy One of Iſrael to ceaſe from before them*, Iſai. 30. 10, 11. Put us no more in mind of the *Holineſs* of God, and the Holineſs of his Law: 'tis a troubleſome thing for us to hear of it: Let him be gone from us, ſince he will not countenance our Vices, and indulge our Crimes; We would rather hear there is no God, than you ſhould tell us of a Holy One. We are contrary to the Law, when we wiſh it were not ſo exact; and therefore contrary to the *Holineſs* of God, which ſet the ſtamp of *Exactneſs* and *Righteouſneſs* upon it. We think him injurious to our Liberty, when by his Precept he thwarts our Pleaſure; we wiſh it of another frame, more mild, more ſutable to our Minds: 'Tis the ſame, as if we ſhould openly blame God for conſulting with his own Righteouſneſs, and not with our Humours, before he ſetled his Law; that he ſhould not have drawn it from the depths of his Righteous Nature, but ſquar'd it to accommodate our Corruption.

This being the language of ſuch Complaints, is a reproving God, becauſe he would not be Unholy, that we might be Unrighteous with Impunity. Had the Divine Law been ſuted to our Corrupt ſtate, God muſt have been Unholy to have complied with his Rebellious Creature. To charge the *Law* with rigidneſs, either in Language or Practice, is the higheſt contempt of Gods *Holineſs*; for it is an Implicit Wiſh, that God were as defil'd, polluted, diſorderly, as our Corrupted Selves.

10. *The*

10. The *Holineſs* of God is injur'd *Opinionatively.*

(1.) *In the Opinion of Venial ſins.* The *Romaniſts* divide Sins into *Venial* and *Mortal*: Mortal, are thoſe which deſerve Eternal Death; Venial, the lighter ſort of Sins, which rather deſerve to be pardon'd than puniſh'd; or if puniſh'd, not with an Eternal, but Temporal Puniſhment. This Opinion hath no foundation in, but is contrary to Scripture. How can any Sin be in its own nature Venial, when the due *Wages of every Sin is death*, Rom. 6. 23. and he, who *continues not in every thing that the Law commands*, falls under a *Curſe*? *Gal.* 3. 10. 'Tis a mean thought of the Holineſs and Majeſty of God to imagine, that any Sin which is againſt an Infinite Majeſty, and as Infinite a Purity both in the Nature of God and the Law of God, ſhould not be conſidered as Infinitely hainous. All Sins are tranſgreſſions of the Eternal Law, and in every one the Infinite *Holineſs* of God is ſome way ſlighted.

(2.) *In the Opinion of Works of Supererrogation.* That is, ſuch Works as are not commanded by God, which yet have ſuch a dignity and worth in their own nature, that the performers of them do not only merit at Gods hands for themſelves, but fill up a Treaſure of Merits for others, that come ſhort of fulfilling the Precepts God hath enjoyn'd. 'Tis ſuch a mean thought of Gods *Holineſs*, that the *Jews* in all the Charges brought againſt them in Scripture, were never guilty of. And if you conſider what pityful things they are, which are within the compaſs of ſuch Works, you have ſufficient reaſon to bewail the Ignorance of Man, and the low eſteem he hath of ſo glorious a Perfection. The Whipping themſelves often in a Week, extraordinary Watchings, Faſtings, Macerating their Bodies, wearing a *Capuchins* Habit, &c. are pityful things to give content to an Infinite Purity. As if the Precept of God requir'd only the Inferior degrees of Virtue, and the Counſels the more high and excellent; as if the *Law* of God, which the *Pſalmiſt* counts *perfect* †, did not command all Good, and forbid all Evil; as if the *Holineſs* of God had forgotten it ſelf in the framing the Law, and made it a ſcanty and defective Rule; and the Righteouſneſs of a Creature were not only able to make an Eternal Righteouſneſs, but ſurmount it. As Man would be at firſt as knowing as God, ſo ſome of his Poſterity would be more holy than God; ſet up a Wiſdom againſt the Wiſdom of God, and a Purity above the Divine Purity. *Adam* was not ſo preſumptuous, he intended no more than an equalling God in Knowledge; but thoſe would exceed him in Righteouſneſs, and not only preſume to render a Satisfaction for themſelves to the *Holineſs* they have injur'd, but to make a Purſe for the ſupply of others that are Indigent, that they may ſtand before the Tribunal of God with a Confidence in the Imaginary Righteouſneſs of a Creature. How horrible is it for thoſe that come ſhort of the Law of God themſelves, to think that they can have enough for a Loan to their Neighbours? An unworthy Opinion.

† Pſal. 19. 7.

2. Information. It may Inform us, *how great is our Fall from God, and how diſtant we are from him.* View the *Holineſs* of God, and take a proſpect of the Nature of Man, and be aſtoniſhed to ſee a Perſon created in the Divine Image, degenerated into the Image of the Devil. We are as far fallen from the *Holineſs* of God, which conſiſts in a Hatred of Sin, as the loweſt Point of the Earth is from the higheſt Point of the Heavens. The *Devil* is not more fallen from the rectitude of his Nature and likeneſs to God, than we are; and that we are not in the ſame condition with thoſe Apoſtate Spirits, is not from any thing in our Nature, but from the Mediation of Chriſt, upon which account God hath indulged in us a continuance of ſome Remainders of that which *Satan* is wholly deprived of. We are departed from our Original Pattern; we were created to live the *life of God*, that is, a life of *Holineſs*; but now we are *alienated from the life of God* *, and of a beautiful piece we are become deformed, daub'd over with the moſt defiling Mud: We *work uncleanneſs with greedineſs*, according to our ability, as Creatures; as God doth work *Holineſs* with affection and ardency, according to his Infiniteneſs, as Creator. More diſtant we are from God by reaſon of Sin, than the vileſt Creature, the moſt deform'd *Toad* or poyſonous *Serpent* is from the higheſt and moſt glorious *Angel*. By forſaking our *Innocence*, we departed from God as our Original Copy. The *Apoſtle* might well ſay, *Rom.* 3. 23. that by Sin *we are come ſhort of the glory of God*. Interpreters trouble themſelves much about that place, *Man is come ſhort of the glory of God*,

* Eph. 4. 18.

that

that is, of the *Holineſs* of God; which is the glory of the Divine Nature, and was pictur'd in the Rational, Innocent Creature. By the *Glory of God*, is meant the *Holineſs of God*: as 1 Cor. 3. 18. *Beholding, as in a glaſs, the Glory of the Lord, we are changed into the ſame Image from glory to glory*; that is, the Glory of God in the Text, into the Image of which we are changed; but the Scripture ſpeaks of no other Image of God, but that of *Holineſs*: *We are come ſhort of the glory of God*; of the *Holineſs* of God, which is the Glory of God; and the Image of it, which was the glory of Man. By Sin, which is particular in oppoſition to the *Purity* of God, Man was left many Leagues behind any reſemblance to God; he ſtript off that which was the glory of his Nature, and was the only means of glorifying God as his Creator. The word ὑστερῶνται, the *Apoſtle* uſes, is very ſignificant, *Poſtpon'd* by Sin an infinite diſtance from any imitation of Gods Holineſs, or any appearance before him in a garb of Nature pleaſing to him. Let us lament our Fall, and diſtance from God.

3. Information. *All Unholineſs is vile and oppoſite to the Nature of God.* 'Tis ſuch a loathſom thing, that the *Purity of Gods eye is averſe from beholding*, Hab. 1.3. 'Tis not ſaid there, that he *will not*, but he *cannot* look on evil; there cannot be any amicableneſs between God and Sin, the Natures of both are ſo directly and unchangeably contrary to one another. Holineſs is the Life of God, it endures as long as his Life; He muſt be Eternally averſe from Sin, he can live no longer than he lives in the hatred and loathing of it. If he ſhould for one inſtant ceaſe to hate it, he would ceaſe to live. To be a Holy God, is as Eſſential to him as to be a living God; and he would not be a living, but a dead God, if he were in the leaſt point of time an Unholy God. He cannot look on Sin without loathing it, he cannot look on Sin but his Heart riſeth againſt it: It muſt needs be moſt odious to him, as that which is againſt the glory of his Nature, and directly oppoſite to that which is the luſtre and varniſh of all his other Perfections. 'Tis the *Abominable thing which his Soul hates*, Jer. 44. 4. the vileſt terms imaginable are uſed to ſignifie it: Do you underſtand the loathſomneſs of a *miry Swine*, or the nauſeouſneſs of the *vomit of a Dog?* Theſe are Emblems of Sin †. Can you endure the ſteams of putrified Carkaſſes from an *open Sepulchre* *? Is the ſmell of the *ſtinking ſweat* or Excrements of a Body delightful? the word ῥυπαρία, in *James* 1. 21. ſignifies as much. Or is the ſight of a Body overgrown with *Scabs* and *Leproſie* grateful to you? So vile, ſo odious is Sin in the ſight of God. 'Tis no light thing then to fly in the Face of God, to break his Eternal Law, to daſh both the *Tables* in pieces, to trample the Tranſcript of Gods own Nature under our feet, to cheriſh that which is inconſiſtent with his Honor, to lift up our heels againſt the glory of his Nature, to joyn Iſſue with the Devil in ſtabbing his Heart, and depriving him of his life. *Sin* in every part of it is an oppoſition to the *Holineſs* of God, and conſequently an envying him a Being and Life, as well as a Glory. If Sin be ſuch a thing, *ye that love the Lord, hate evil.*

† 2 Pet. 2. 22
* Rom. 3. 13

4. Information. *Sin cannot eſcape a due puniſhment.* A hatred of Unrighteouſneſs, and conſequently a will to puniſh it, is as Eſſential to God, as a love of Righteouſneſs. Since he is not as an *Heathen Idol*, but hath Eyes to ſee, and Purity to hate every Iniquity, he will have an Infinite Juſtice to puniſh whatſoever is againſt Infinite Holineſs. As he loves every thing that is amiable, ſo he loaths every thing that is filthy, and that conſtantly without any change; his whole Nature is ſet againſt it, he abhors nothing but this. 'Tis not the Devils knowledge or activity that his hatred is terminated in, but the Malice and Unholineſs of his Nature; 'tis this only is the Object of his Severity: 'Tis in the recompence of this only, that there can be a manifeſtation of his Juſtice.

Sin muſt be puniſh'd; for,

1. *This deteſtation of Sin muſt be manifeſted.* How ſhould we certainly know his loathing of it, if he did not manifeſt by ſome act how ungrateful it is to him? As his love to Righteouſneſs would not appear, without rewarding it; ſo his hatred of Iniquity would be as little evidenc'd, without puniſhing it: His *Juſtice* is the great Witneſs to his *Purity*. The Puniſhment therefore inflicted on the wicked ſhall be, in ſome reſpect, as great as the Rewards beſtow'd upon the Righteous.

Since the hatred of Sin is natural to God, 'tis as natural to him to ſhew one time or other his hatred of it. And ſince men have a conceit that God is like them in Impurity, there is a neceſſity of ſome manifeſtation of himſelf to be Infinitely diſtant from thoſe Conceits they have of him, Pſal. 50. 21. *I will reprove thee, and ſet them in order before thine eyes.* He would elſe encourage the Injuries done to his Holineſs, favour the extravagancies of the Creature, and condemn, or at leaſt ſlight the righteouſneſs both of his own nature and his Soveraign Law. What way is there for God to manifeſt this Hatred, but by Threatning the Sinner? and what would this be but a vain affrightment, and ridiculous to the Sinner, if it were never to be put in execution? There is an indiſſoluble connexion between his Hatred of Sin, and Puniſhment of the Offender, *Pſal.* 11. 5, 6. *The wicked his ſoul hates: Upon the wicked he ſhall rain ſnares, fire, and brimſtone, &c.* He cannot approve of it without denying himſelf, and a total Impunity would be a degree of Approbation.

The Diſpleaſure of God is Eternal and Irreconcileable againſt Sin; for Sin being abſolutely contrary to his holy Nature, he is Eternally contrary to it: If there be not therefore a way to ſeparate the Sin from the Sinner, the Sinner muſt lie under the diſpleaſure of God; no diſpleaſure can be manifeſted without ſome marks of it upon the Perſon that lies under that diſpleaſure. The *Holineſs* of God will right it ſelf of the wrongs done to it, and ſcatter the Prophaners of it at the greateſt diſtance from him, which is the greateſt Puniſhment that can be inflicted; to be removed far from the Fountain of Life is the worſt of deaths: God can as ſoon lay aſide his Purity, as always forbear his diſpleaſure againſt an Impure Perſon; 'tis all one not to hate it, and not to manifeſt his hatred of it.

2. *As his Holineſs is natural and neceſſary, ſo is the puniſhment of Unholineſs neceſſary to him.* 'Tis neceſſary that he ſhould abominate Sin, and therefore neceſſary he ſhould diſcountenance it. The Severities of God againſt Sin are not vain Scare-crows, they have their foundation in the Righteouſneſs of his Nature; 'tis becauſe he is a Righteous and *Holy* God, that he *will not forgive our Tranſgreſſions and Sins*, Joſh. 24. 19. that is, that he will puniſh them. The Throne of his *Holineſs* is a *fiery flame*, Dan. 7. 9. there is both a pure light and a ſcorching heat. Whatſoever is contrary to the Nature of God, will fall under the Juſtice of God; he would elſe violate his own Nature, deny his own Perfection, ſeem to be out of love with his own Glory and Life. He doth not hate it out of choice, but from the Immutable propenſion of his Nature; 'tis not ſo free an act of his Will, as the Creation of Man and Angels, which he might have forborn as well as effected. As the deteſtation of ſin reſults from the univerſal rectitude of his Nature, ſo the puniſhment of Sin follows upon that, as he is the Righteous Governor of the World: 'Tis as much againſt his Nature not to puniſh it, as it is againſt his Nature not to loath it; He would ceaſe to be Holy, if he ceas'd to hate it; and he would ceaſe to hate it, if he ceas'd to puniſh it. Neither the Obedience of our *Saviours* life, nor the ſtrength of his Cries, could put a bar to the cup of his Paſſion; God ſo hated ſin, that when it was but imputed to his Son, without any commiſſion of it, he would bring a Hell upon his Soul. Certainly, if God could have hated ſin without puniſhing it, his Son had never felt the ſmart of his wrath: His love to his Son had been ſtrong enough to have cauſed him to forbear, had not the Holineſs of his Nature been ſtronger to move him to inflict a Puniſhment according to the demerit of his Sin. God cannot but be Holy, therefore cannot but be Juſt, becauſe Injuſtice is a part of Unholineſs.

3. Therefore *there can be no Communion between God and Unholy Spirits.* How is it conceivable, that God ſhould hate the Sin, and cheriſh the Sinner with all his filth in his Boſom; that he ſhould Eternally deteſt the Crime, and Eternally fold the Sinner in his Arms? Can leſs be expected from the purity of his Nature, than to ſeparate an impure Soul, as long as it remains ſo? Can there be any delightful Communion between thoſe whoſe Natures are contrary? *Darkneſs* and *Light* may as ſoon kiſs each other, and become one Nature; *God* and the *Devil* may as ſoon enter into an Eternal League and Covenant together: For God to

have

have pleaſure in wickedneſs, and to admit *Evil to dwell with him*, are things equally impoſſible to his Nature*; while he hates Impurity, he cannot have Communion with an impure Perſon. It may as ſoon be expected, that God ſhould hate himſelf, offer violence to his own Nature, lay aſide his Purity as an Abominable thing, and blot his own Glory as love an Impure Perſon, entertain him as his delight, and ſet him in the ſame Heaven and Happineſs with Himſelf, and his holy Angels: he muſt needs loath him, he muſt needs baniſh him from his Preſence, which is the greateſt Puniſhment. Gods *Holineſs* and Hatred of Sin, neceſſarily infer the Puniſhment of it.

* Pſal. 5. 4.

5. Information. *There is therefore a neceſſity of the ſatisfaction of the Holineſs of God by ſome ſufficient Mediator.* The Divine Purity could not meet with any acquieſcence in all Mankind after the Fall: Sin was hated, the Sinner would be ruin'd, unleſs ſome way were found out to repair the Wrongs done to the *Holineſs* of God; either the Sinner muſt be condemned for ever, or ſome Satisfaction muſt be made, that the *Holineſs* of the Divine Nature might Eternally appear in its full luſtre. That it is Eſſential to the Nature of God to hate all Unrighteouſneſs, as that which is abſolutely repugnant to his Nature, none do queſtion. That the Juſtice of God is ſo Eſſential to him, as that Sin could not be pardon'd without Satisfaction, ſome do queſtion; though this latter ſeems rationally to follow upon the former †. That *Holineſs* is Eſſential to the Nature of God is evident, becauſe elſe God may as much be conceived without Purity, as he might be conceived without the creating the *Sun* or *Stars*. No man can in his right Wits frame a right Notion of a Deity, without *Purity*. It would be a leſs Blaſphemy againſt the Excellency of God, to conceit him not Knowing, than to imagine him not Holy: And for the Eſſentialneſs of his Juſtice, *Joſhua* joyns both his *Holineſs* and his *Jealouſie* as going hand in hand together, Joſh. 24. 19. *He is a holy God, he is a jealous God, he will not forgive your ſin.*

† Turretin. *de Satisfac.* p. 8.

But conſider only the Purity of God, ſince it is contrary to Sin, and conſequently hating the Sinner; the guilty Perſon cannot be reduc'd to God, nor can the *Holineſs* of God have any complacency in a filthy Perſon, but as Fire hath in Stubble, to conſume it. How the Holy God ſhould be brought to delight in Man, without a *Salvo* for the Rights of his *Holineſs* is not to be conceiv'd without an impeachment of the nature of God. The Law could not be aboliſh'd; that would reflect indeed upon the Righteouſneſs of the Law-giver; to aboliſh it, becauſe of Sin, would imply a change of the Rectitude of his Nature: Muſt he change his *Holineſs* for the ſake of that which was againſt his *Holineſs*, in a compliance with a prophane and unrighteous Creature? This ſhould engage him rather to maintain his Law than to null it. And to abrogate his Law as ſoon as he had enacted it, ſince Sin ſtept into the World preſently after it, would be no credit to his Wiſdom.

There muſt be a reparation made of the Honor of Gods *Holineſs*; by our ſelves it could not be without Condemnation; by another it could not be without a ſufficiency in the Perſon: No Creature could do it. All the Creatures being of a finite Nature, could not make a compenſation for the diſparagements of Infinite *Holineſs*. He muſt have deſpicable and vile Thoughts of this excellent Perfection, that imagines that a few Tears, and the glavering Fawnings at the death of a Creature, can be ſufficient to repair the wrongs, and reſtore the Rights of this Attribute. It muſt therefore be ſuch a compenſation as might be commenſurate to the Holineſs of the Divine Nature and the Divine Law, which could not be wrought by any, but him that was poſſeſſed of a Godhead, to give efficacy and exact congruity to it. The Perſon deſign'd and appointed by God for ſo great an affair, was *one in the form of God, one equal with God*, Phil. 2. 6. who could not be term'd by ſuch a Title of Dignity, if he had not been equal to God in the univerſal rectitude of the Divine Nature, and therefore in his Holineſs. The puniſhment due to Sin is tranſlated to that Perſon for the righting Divine *Holineſs*, and the Righteouſneſs of that Perſon is communicated to the Sinner for the Pardon of the Offending Creature.

If the Sinner had been Eternally damn'd, Gods hatred of Sin had been evidenc'd by the ſtrokes of his Juſtice; but his Mercy to a Sinner had lain in obſcurity. If the Sinner had been Pardoned and Saved without ſuch a reparation, Mercy had been evident; but his *Holineſs* had hid its head for ever in his own boſom. There was therefore a neceſſity of ſuch a way to manifeſt his Purity, and yet to bring forth his Mercy: That *Mercy* might not alway ſigh for the deſtruction of the Creature, and that *Holineſs* might not mourn for the neglect of its Honor.

6. Information. Hence it will follow, *There is no Juſtification of a Sinner by any thing in himſelf.* After Sin had ſet foot in the World, Man could preſent nothing to God acceptable to him, or bearing any proportion to the Holineſs of his Law, till God ſet forth a Perſon, upon whoſe account the Acceptation of our Perſons and Services is founded, Epheſ. 1. 6. *Who hath made us accepted in the Beloved.* The Infinite Purity of God is ſo glorious, that it ſhames the Holineſs of Angels, as the light of the *Sun* dims the light of the *Fire*: Much more will the Righteouſneſs of Fallen Man, who is vile, and *drinks up Iniquity like water*, vaniſh into Nothing in his Preſence. With what Self-abaſement and Abhorrence ought he to be poſſeſſed, that comes as ſhort of the Angels in Purity, as a *Dung-hill* doth of a *Star*? The higheſt Obedience that ever was perform'd by any meer Man, ſince Lapſed Nature cannot challenge any acceptance with God, or ſtand before ſo exact an Inquiſition. What Perſon hath ſuch a clear Innocence, and unſpotted Obedience in ſuch a Perfection, as in any degree to ſute the *Holineſs* of the Divine Nature? *Pſal.* 143. 2. *Enter not into judgment with thy Servant, for in thy ſight ſhall no man living be juſtified.* If God ſhould debate the caſe ſimply with Man in his own Perſon, without reſpecting the Mediator, he were not able to *anſwer one of a thouſand.* Though we are his Servants, as *David* was, and perform a ſincere Service, yet there are many little Motes and Duſt of Sin in the beſt Works, that cannot lie undiſcover'd from the Eye of his *Holineſs*: And if we come ſhort in the leaſt of what the Law requires, we are *guilty of all* *. So that *in thy ſight ſhall no man living be juſtified*: In the ſight of thy Infinite *Holineſs*, which hates the leaſt ſpot; in the ſight of thy Infinite Juſtice, which puniſhes the leaſt Tranſgreſſion.

* James 2. 10.

God would deſcend below his own Nature, and vilifie both his Knowledge and Purity, ſhould he accept that for a Righteouſneſs and Holineſs which is not ſo in it ſelf; and nothing is ſo, which hath the leaſt ſtain upon it contrary to the Nature of God. The moſt holy Saints in Scripture, upon a proſpect of his Purity, have caſt away all confidence in themſelves; every flaſh of the Divine Purity has ſtruck them into a deep ſenſe of their own Impurity and ſhame for it, *Job* 42. 6. *Wherefore I abhor my ſelf in duſt and aſhes.* What can the language of any Man be that lies under a ſenſe of Infinite *Holineſs*, and his own Defilement in the leaſt, but that of the Prophet, Iſai. 6. 5. *Wo is me, I am undone?* And what is there in the World can adminiſter any other thought than this, unleſs God be conſidered in Chriſt, *reconciling the World to himſelf*? As a Holy God, ſo righted, as that he can diſpenſe with the Condemnation of a Sinner, without diſpenſing with his hatred of Sin; pardoning the Sin in the Criminal, becauſe it hath been puniſhed in the Surety. That Righteouſneſs which God hath *ſet forth* for Juſtification, is not our own, but a *Righteouſneſs which is of God*, Phil. 3. 9. 10. of Gods appointing, and of Gods performing; appointed by the *Father*, who is God, and performed by the *Son*, who is one with the *Father*. A Righteouſneſs ſurmounting that of all the glorious Angels, ſince it is an Immutable one which can never fail, an *Everlaſting Righteouſneſs*, Dan. 9. 24. A Righteouſneſs wherein the *Holineſs* of God can acquiſce, as conſidered in it ſelf, becauſe it is a Righteouſneſs of one equal with God. As we therefore diſhonor the Divine Majeſty, when we inſiſt upon our own bemir'd Righteouſneſs for our Juſtification; (as if a *Mortal Man were as juſt as God*, and a *Man as pure as his Maker*, Job 4. 17.) So we highly honor the Purity of his Nature, when we charge our Selves with Folly, acknowledge our ſelves Unclean, and accept of that Righteouſneſs which gives

gives a full content to his Infinite Purity. There can be no Juſtification of a Sinner by any thing in himſelf.

7. It Informs us, If *Holineſs* be a glorious Perfection of the Divine Nature, *then the Deity of Chriſt might be argued from hence.* He is indeed dignified with the Title of the *Holy One*, *Acts* 3.14, 16. a title often given to God in the Old Teſtament; and he is called, *The Holy of Holies*, Dan. 9. 24. but becauſe the Angels ſeemed to be termed *Holy Ones*, Dan. 4. 13, 17. and the moſt Sacred place in the *Temple* was alſo called the *Holy of Holies*, I ſhall not inſiſt upon that. But you find our *Saviour* particularly applauded by the Angels, as *Holy*; when this perfection of the Divine Nature, together with the Incommunicable Name of God, are link'd together, and aſcrib'd to him. Iſai. 6. 3. *Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hoſts, and the whole earth is full of his glory*, which the *Apoſtle* interprets of *Chriſt*, John 12. 39, 41. *Iſaiah* again, *He hath blinded their Eyes, and hardned their Hearts, that they ſhould not ſee with their Eyes, nor underſtand with their Hearts, and be converted, and I ſhould heal them. Theſe things*, ſaid *Iſaiah, when he ſaw his glory, and ſpake of him.* He that *Iſaiah* ſaw environ'd with the *Seraphims* in a Reverential poſture before his face, and praiſed as moſt Holy by them, was the True and Eternal God; ſuch Acclamations belong to none, but the great *Jehovah*, God Bleſſed for ever: But, ſaith *John*, It was the *glory of Chriſt* that *Iſaiah* ſaw in this Viſion; *Chriſt* therefore is *God bleſſed for ever*, of whom it was ſaid, *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hoſts* *. The *Evangeliſt* had been ſpeaking of Chriſt, the Miracles which he wrought, the obſtinacy of the *Jews* againſt believing on him; *his Glory* therefore is to be referred to the Subject he had been ſpeaking of. The *Evangeliſt* was not ſpeaking of the *Father*, but of the *Son*, and cites thoſe words out of *Iſaiah*; not to teach any thing of the *Father*, but to ſhew that the *Jews* could not believe in Chriſt. He ſpeaks of him that had wrought ſo many Miracles; but Chriſt wrought thoſe Miracles: He ſpeaks of him whom the *Jews* refuſed to believe on; but Chriſt was the Perſon they would not believe on, while they acknowledged God. It was the *Glory* of this Perſon *Iſaiah* ſaw, and this Perſon *Iſaiah* ſpake of, if the Words of the *Evangeliſt* be of any credit. The *Angels* are too holy to give Acclamations belonging to God, to any but Him that is God.

* Placeus *de Deitat. Chriſti in locum.*

8. It Informs us, that *God is fully fit for the Government of the World.* The Righteouſneſs of Gods Nature qualifies Him to be Judge of the World: If he were not perfectly Righteous and Holy, he were uncapable to Govern and Judge the World; Rom. 3. 5. *If there be unrighteouſneſs with God, how ſhall he judge the World? God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert Judgment*, Job 34. 12. How deſpicable is a Judge that wants Innocence? As *Omniſcience* fits God to be a Judge, ſo *Holineſs* fits him to be a Righteous Judge; Pſal. 1. 6. *The Lord knows*, that is, loves *the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly ſhall periſh.*

9. Information. If *Holineſs* be an eminent Perfection of the Divine Nature, *The Chriſtian Religion is of a Divine Extraction.* It diſcovers the *Holineſs* of God, and forms the Creature to a conformity to him. It gives us a proſpect of his Nature, repreſents him in the *Beauty of Holineſs*, Pſal. 110. 3. more than the whole Glaſs of the Creation. 'Tis in this *Evangelical Glaſs* the *Glory of the Lord* is beheld, and rendred amiable and imitable †. 'Tis a Doctrine *according to Godlineſs*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 3. directing us to live the Life of God; a Life worthy of God, and worthy of our firſt Creation by his hand. It takes us off from our ſelves, fixeth us upon a noble End, points our Actions and the ſcope of our lives to God. It quells the Monſters of Sin, diſcountenanceth the Motes of Wickedneſs; and it is no mean Argument for the *Divinity* of it, that it ſets us no lower a Pattern for our Imitation, than the *Holineſs* of the Divine Majeſty. God is exalted upon the Throne of his *Holineſs* in it, and the Creature advanc'd to an Image and reſemblance of it, 1 Pet. 1. 16. *Be ye holy, for I am holy.*

† 2 Cor. 3. 18.

Uſe 2. The Second Uſe is for *Comfort.* This Attribute frowns upon Lapſed Nature, but ſmiles in the Reſtorations made by the Goſpel. Gods *Holineſs*, in conjunction with his *Juſtice*, is terrible to a guilty Sinner; but now, in conjunction with

with his *Mercy*, by the Satisfaction of Chriſt, 'tis ſweet to a Believing Penitent. In the *firſt Covenant*, the Purity of his Nature was joyned with the Rigours of his Juſtice: In the *ſecond Covenant*, the Purity of his Nature is joyned with the ſweetneſs and tenderneſs of his Mercy. In the one, *Juſtice* flames againſt the Sinner in the right of Injur'd Holineſs: In the other, *Mercy* yearns towards a Believer, with the conſent of Righted Holineſs. To rejoyce in the *Holineſs* of God, is the true and genuine Spirit of a Renewed Man: *My heart rejoyceth in the Lord*; what follows? *There is none holy as the Lord*, 1 Sam. 2. 1, 2. Some Perfections of the Divine Nature are aſtoniſhing, ſome affrighting; but this may fill us both with aſtoniſhment at it, and a Joy in it.

1. *By Covenant we have an Intereſt in this Attribute, as well as any other.* In that Clauſe of *Gods being our God*, entire God with all his Glory, all his Perfections are paſt over as a portion, and a gracious Soul is brought into Union with God, as his God: Not with a part of God, but with God in the Simplicity, Extent, Integrity of his Nature; and therefore in this Attribute. And upon ſome account it may ſeem more in this Attribute, than in any other; for if he be our God, he is our God in his Life and Glory, and therefore in his Purity eſpecially, without which he could not live, he could not be happy and bleſſed. Little comfort will it be to have a dead God, or a vile God made over to us: And as by this Covenant he is our *Father*, ſo he gives us his Nature, and communicates his *Holineſs* in all his Diſpenſations; and in thoſe that are ſevereſt, as well as thoſe that are ſweeteſt; Heb. 12. 10. *But he corrects us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his Holineſs.* Not ſimply, *partakers of Holineſs*, but of *his Holineſs*; to have a Portrayture of it in our Nature, a Meddal of it in our Hearts, a Spark of the ſame Nature with that Immenſe ſplendor and flame in himſelf. The Holineſs of a Covenant Soul, is a reſemblance of the *Holineſs* of God, and formed by it: As the Picture of the Sun in a Cloud is a fruit of his Beams, and an Image of its Author. The fulneſs of the perfection of *Holineſs* remains in the Nature of God, as the fulneſs of the Light doth in the Sun; yet there are tranſmiſſions of Light from the Sun to the Moon, and it is a Light of the ſame Nature both in the one and in the other. The Holineſs of a Creature, is nothing elſe but the reflection of the Divine *Holineſs* upon it; and to make the Creature capable of it, God takes various methods, according to his Covenant Grace.

2. *This Attribute renders God a fit Object for Truſt and Dependance.* The Notion of an Unholy and Unrighteous God, is an uncomfortable *Idea* of him, and beats off our hands from laying any hold of him. 'Tis upon this Attribute the Reputation and Honor of God in the World is built: What encouragement can we have to believe him, or what Incentives could we have to ſerve him, without the luſtre of this in his Nature? The very thought of an Unrighteous God, is enough to drive Men at the greateſt diſtance from him: As the honeſty of a Man gives a reputation to his Word; ſo doth the Holineſs of God give credit to his Promiſe. 'Tis by this he would have us ſtifle our Fears, and fortifie our Truſt, Iſai. 41. 14. *Fear not thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Iſrael; I will help thee, ſaith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Iſrael*: He will be in his Actions, what he is in his Nature. Nothing ſhall make him defile his own Excellency: Unrighteouſneſs is the ground of Mutability; but the promiſe of God doth never fail, becauſe the rectitude of his Nature doth never languiſh: Were his Attributes without the conduct of this, they would be altogether formidable. As this is the glory of all his other Perfections; ſo this only renders him comfortable to a Believing Soul. Might we not fear his Power to cruſh us, his Mercy to overlook us, his Wiſdom to deſign againſt us, if this did not influence them? What an oppreſſion is Power without Righteouſneſs in the hand of a Creature, deſtructive inſtead of protecting; The *Devil* is a mighty Spirit, but not fit to be truſted, becauſe he is an Impure Spirit. When God would give us the higheſt Security of the ſincerity of his Intentions, he *ſwears* by this Attribute †: His *Holineſs* as well as his Truth, is laid to pawn for the ſecurity of his Promiſe. As we make God the Judge between us and others, when we ſwear by him; ſo he makes his Holineſs the Judge between himſelf and his People, when he ſwears by it.

† Pſal. 89. 35.

1. 'Tis

1. *'Tis this renders him fit to be confided in for the anſwer of our Prayers.* This is the ground of his readineſs to give. * *If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts; how much more ſhall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask him?* Though the Holineſs of God be not mention'd, yet it is to be underſtood; the *Emphaſis* lies in thoſe words, *If you being evil*: God is then conſidered in a diſpoſition contrary to this, which can be nothing but his Righteouſneſs. If you that are unholy, and have ſo much Corruption in you, to render you cruel, can beſtow upon your Children the good things they want, how much more ſhall God, who is Holy, and hath nothing in him to check his mercifulneſs to his Creatures, grant the Petitions of his Suppliants? 'Twas this Attribute edg'd the fiduciary importunity of the Souls under the Altar, for the revenging their blood unjuſtly ſhed upon the Earth, *Rev.* 6.10. *How long, O Lord, holy and true, doſt thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the Earth?* Let not thy Holineſs ſtand with folded Arms, as careleſs of the eminent Sufferings of thoſe that fear thee, we implore thee by the Holineſs of thy Nature, and the truth of thy Word. * Matth. 7.11.

2. This renders him *fit to be confided in, for the comfort of our Souls in a broken condition.* The reviving the hearts of the ſpiritually afflicted, is a part of the Holineſs of his Nature, Iſa. 57.15. *Thus ſaith the high and lofty One, that inhabits eternity, whoſe name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the humble.* He acknowledgeth himſelf the lofty One, they might therefore fear he would not revive them; but he is alſo the holy One, and therefore he will refreſh them; he is not more lofty than he is holy; beſides the argument of the immutability of his Promiſe, and the might of his Power, here is the holineſs of his Nature moving him to pity his drooping Creature: His Promiſe is uſher'd in with the name of Power, *high and lofty One*, to bar their diſtruſt of his ſtrength; and with a declaration of his *holineſs*, to check any deſpair of his Will: There is no ground to think I ſhould be falſe to my Word, or miſ-employ my Power, ſince that cannot be, becauſe of the holineſs of my Name and Nature.

3. This renders him *fit to be confided in for the maintenance of Grace, and protection of us againſt our ſpiritual Enemies.* What our Saviour thought an argument in Prayer, we may well take as a ground of our confidence. In the ſtrength of this he puts up his ſute, when in his mediatory capacity he intercedes for the preſervation of his People; John 17.11. *Holy Father, keep through thy own Name thoſe that thou haſt given me, that they may be one as we are. Holy Father,* not merciful Father, or powerful, or wiſe Father, but *holy*; and *Verſe* 25. *righteous Father.* Chriſt pleads that Attribute for the performance of Gods Word, which was laid to pawn when he paſt his word: For it was by his *Holineſs* that he ſwore, That *his ſeed ſhould endure for ever, and his Throne as the Sun before him* †; which is meant of the perpetuity of the Covenant which he had made with Chriſt, and is alſo meant of the preſervation of the *myſtical Seed* of *David*, and the perpetuating his *loving kindneſs* to them *. Grace is an Image of Gods holineſs, and therefore the holineſs of God is moſt proper to be uſed as an Argument to intereſt and engage him in the preſervation of it. In the midſt of Church-provocations, he will not utterly extinguiſh, becauſe he is the *holy One* in the midſt of her *: Nor in the midſt of Judgments will he condemn his people to death, becauſe he is *their holy One* †; but their Enemies ſhall be ordained for Judgment, and eſtabliſhed for Correction. One *Prophet* aſſures them in the Name of the Lord, upon the ſtrength of this Perfection; and the other upon the ſame ground is confident of the protection of the Church, becauſe of Gods holineſs engag'd in an inviolable Covenant. † Pſal. 89.36. * Verſ. 32, 33. * Hoſ. 11.9. † Hab. 1.12.

4. *Comfort.* Since Holineſs is a glorious Perfection of the Nature of God, *he will certainly value every holy Soul.* 'Tis of a greater value with him than the Souls of all men in the World that are deſtitute of it: *Wicked men are the worſt of vileneſſes*, meer droſs and dunghil *; Purity then, which is contrary to wickedneſs, muſt be the moſt precious thing in his eſteem; he muſt needs love that quality which he is moſt pleas'd with in himſelf, as a father looks with moſt delight upon the child wch is poſſeſs'd with thoſe diſpoſitions he moſt values in his own nature. *His countenance doth behold the upright*, Pſal. 11.7. He looks upon them with a full and open face of fa- * Pſal. 12. 8. The vileſt men.

favor, with a countenance clear, unmask'd and ſmiling, with a Face full of delight: Heaven it ſelf is not ſuch a pleaſing Object to him, as the Image of his own increated Holineſs in the created Holineſs of Men and Angels: As a man eſteems that moſt, which is moſt like him, of his own Generation, more than a piece of Art, which is meerly the product of his wit or ſtrength. And he muſt love Holineſs in the creature, he would not elſe love his own Image, & conſequently would undervalue himſelf: He deſpiſeth the *Image* the wicked bears *, but he cannot diſeſteem his own ſtamp on the godly; he cannot but delight in his own work, his choice work, the Maſter-piece of all his works, the new Creation of things; that which is next to himſelf, as being a *Divine Nature* like himſelf †: When he overlooks ſtrength, parts, knowledge, he cannot over-look this; He *ſets apart him that is godly for himſelf*, Pſal. 4. 3. as a peculiar Object to take pleaſure in, he reſerves ſuch for his own complacency, when he leaves the reſt of the World to the Devils power; he is choice of them above all his other works, and will not let any have ſo great a propriety in them as himſelf. If it be ſo dear to him here in its imperfect and mixt condition, that he appropriates it as a peculiar Object for his own delight; how much more will the unſpotted purity of glorified Saints be infinitely pleaſing to him? So that he will take leſs pleaſure in the material Heavens, than in ſuch a Soul. Sin only is deteſtable to God, and when this is done away, the Soul becomes as lovely in his account, as before it was loathſome.

* Pſal. 73 20.

† 2 Pet. 1. 4.

4. 'Tis comfort, upon this account, That *God will perfect holineſs in every upright Soul.* We many times diſtruſt God, and deſpond in our ſelves, becauſe of the Infinite Holineſs of the Divine Nature, and the dung-hill corruptions in our own; but the Holineſs of God engageth him to the preſervation of it, and conſequently to the perfection of it; as appears by our Saviours argument, Joh. 17. 11. *Holy Father, keep through thy own name, thoſe whom thou haſt given me*; to what end? *that they may be one as we are*; one with us, in the reſemblances of Purity. And the holineſs of the Soul is uſed as an Argument by the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. 86. 2. *Preſerve my ſoul, for I am holy*; that is, I have an ardent deſire to Holineſs: Thou haſt ſeparated me from the maſs of the corrupted World, preſerve and perfect me with the Aſſembly of the glorified Quire. The more holy any are, the more communicative they are; God being moſt holy, is moſt communicative of that wch he moſt eſteems in himſelf, and delights to ſee in his Creature: He is therefore more ready to impart his holineſs to them that beg for it, than to communicate his knowledge or his power. Though he were holy, yet he let *Adam* fall, who never petition'd his Holineſs to preſerve him; he let him fall, to declare the holineſs of his own Nature, which had wanted its due manifeſtation without it: But ſince that cannot be declar'd in a higher manner that it hath been already in the death of the Surety that bore our Guilt, there is no fear he ſhould caſt the work out of his hands, ſince the deſign of the permiſſion of mans Apoſtacy, in the diſcovery of the perfections of his Nature has been fully anſwered. The *finiſhing the good work he hath begun*, hath a relation to the glory of Chriſt; and his own *glory in Chriſt* to be manifeſted in the *day* of his appearing *, wherein the glory, both of his own holineſs, and the holineſs of the Mediator, are to receive their full manifeſtation. As it is a part of the holineſs of Chriſt to *ſanctifie his Church* †, till not a *wrinkle or ſpot* be left; ſo it is the part of God not to leave that work imperfect, which his holineſs hath attempted a ſecond time to beautifie his Creature with. He will not ceaſe exalting this Attribute, which is the Believers by the new Covenant, till he utters that applauding Speech of his own work, Cant. 4. 7. *Thou art all fair, my Love, there is no ſpot in thee.*

* Phil. 1. 6.

† Eph. 5. 26, 27.

Uſe 3. Is for *Exhortation.* Is holineſs an eminent perfection of the Divine Nature, then

1. *Let us get and preſerve right and ſtrong apprehenſions of this Divine Perfection.* Without a due ſenſe of it, we can never exalt God in our hearts; and the more diſtinct Conceptions we have of this, and the reſt of his Attributes, the more we glorifie him. When *Moſes* conſidered God as *his ſtrength and ſalvation*, he would exalt him *, and he could never break out in ſo admirable a *Doxology* as that in the *Text*, without a deep ſenſe of the glory of his Purity, which he ſpeaks of with ſo much admiration. Such a ſenſe will be of uſe to us.

* Exod. 15. 2.

1. *In promoting genuine Convictions.* A deep conſideration of the Holineſs of

of God cannot but be followed with a deep conſideration of our impure and miſerable Condition by reaſon of ſin: We cannot glance upon it without reflections upon our own Vileneſs. *Adam* no ſooner heard the voice of a holy God in the Garden, but he conſidered his *own nakedneſs* with ſhame and fear *: Much leſs can we fix our Minds upon it, but we muſt be touched with a ſenſe of our own uncleanneſs. The clear beams of the Sun diſcover that filthineſs in our Garments and Members, which was not viſible in the darkneſs of the night. Impure Metals are diſcern'd by comparing them with that which is pure and perfect in its kind. The ſenſe of guilt is the firſt natural Reſult upon a ſenſe of this excellent Perfection; and the ſenſe of the Imperfection of our own Righteouſneſs is the next. Who can think of it, and reflect upon himſelf as an Object fit for Divine Love? Who can have a due thought of it without regarding himſelf as ſtubble before a conſuming Fire? Who can without a confuſion of heart and face, glance upon that pure Eye which beholds with deteſtation, the foul Motes as well as the filthier and bigger Spots? When *Iſaiah* ſaw his glory, and heard how highly the Angels exalted God for this Perfection, he was in a cold ſweat, ready to ſwoon, till a *Seraphim* with a *Coal from the Altar*, both purg'd and reviv'd him †. They are ſound and genuine Convictions, which have the proſpect of Divine Purity for their immediate Spring, and not a foreſight of our own Miſery; when it is not the puniſhment we have deſerved, but the holineſs we have offended, moſt grates our hearts. Such Convictions are the firſt rude Draughts of the Divine Image in our Spirits; and grateful to God, becauſe they are an acknowledgment of the glory of this Attribute, and the firſt mark of honour given to it by the Creature: Thoſe that never had a ſenſe of their own Vileneſs, were alway deſtitute of a ſenſe of God's holineſs. And by the way we may obſerve, That thoſe that ſcoff at any for hanging down the head under the Conſideration and Conviction of Sin, (as is too uſual with the World) ſcoff at them for having deeper Apprehenſions of the Purity of God than themſelves, and conſequently make a mock of the Holineſs of God, which is the ground of thoſe Convictions; a ſenſe of this would prevent ſuch a damnable reproaching.

* *Gen.* 3. 10.

† *Iſai.* 6. 5, 6, 7.

2. A ſenſe of this *will render us humble in the poſſeſſion of the greateſt holineſs a Creature were capable of.* We are apt to be proud with the *Phariſee*, when we look upon others wallowing in the Mire of baſe and unnatural Luſts; but let any clap their wings, if they can, in a vain boaſting and exaltation, when they view the holineſs of God. What Torch, if it had reaſon, would be proud and ſwagger in its own light, if it compar'd it ſelf with the Sun? *Who can ſtand before this holy Lord God*, is the juſt reflection of the holieſt Perſon, as it was of thoſe 1 *Sam.* 6. 20. that had felt the marks of his jealouſie after their looking into the Ark, though likely out of affection to it, and triumphant joy at its return. When did the Angels teſtifie, by the covering of their Faces, their weakneſs to bear the luſtre of his Majeſty, but when they beheld his glory? When did they ſignifie by their *covering their feet* the ſhame of their own Vileneſs, but when their hearts were fulleſt of the applaudings of this Perfection *? Though they found themſelves without ſpot, yet not with ſuch a holineſs, that they could appear either with their faces or feet unvail'd and unmask't in the Preſence of God. Doth the immenſe ſplendor of this Attribute, engender ſhaming reflections in thoſe pure Spirits? What will it, what ſhould it do in us, that dwell in Houſes of Clay, and creep up and down with that Clay upon our backs, and too much of it in our hearts? The Stars themſelves which appear beautiful in the night, are maskt at the awaking of the Sun: What a dim light is that of a Gloworm to that of the Sun? The apprehenſions of this made the Elders humble themſelves in the midſt of their glory, by *caſting down their Crowns before his Throne* *; a Metaphor taken from the triumphing Generals among the *Romans*, who hung up their victorious *Laurels* in the *Capitol*, dedicating them to their Gods, acknowledging them their ſuperiors in ſtrength, and Authors of their victory. This ſelf-emptineſs at the conſideration of divine Purity, is the note of the true Church repreſented by the 24 *Elders*, and a note of a true Member of the Church; whereas boaſting of Perfection & Merit is the property of the *Antichriſtian* tribe, that have mean thoughts of this adorable Perfection, & think themſelves more righteous than the unſpotted Angels. What a ſelf-annihilation is there in a good man

* *Iſai.* 6. 2, 3.

* *Rev.* 4. 8, 10.

when the ſenſe of Divine Purity is moſt lively in him; yea, how deteſtable is he to himſelf? There is as little proportion between the Holineſs of the Divine Majeſty, and that of the moſt righteous Creature, as there is between a nearneſs of a Perſon that ſtands upon a Mountain to the Sun, and of him that beholds him in a Vale; one is nearer than the other, but it is an advantage not to be boaſted of, in regard of the vaſt diſtance that is between the Sun and the elevated Spectator.

3. This would *make us full of an affectionate Reverence in all our approaches to God.* By this Perfection God is rendred venerable, and fit to be reverenc'd by his Creature; and magnificent thoughts of it in the Creature would awaken him to an actual reverence of the Divine Majeſty. *Pſal.* 111. 9. *Holy and reverend is his name*; a good opinion of this would engender in us a ſincere reſpect towards him; we ſhould then *ſerve the Lord with fear*, as the Expreſſion is *Pſal.* 2. 11. that is. be afraid to caſt any thing befor him that may offend the eyes of his Purity. Who would venture raſhly and gariſhly into the preſence of an eminent Moraliſt, or of a righteous King upon his Throne? The fixedneſs of the Angels aroſe from the continual proſpect of this. What if we had been with *Iſaiah* when he ſaw the Viſion, and beheld him in the ſame glory, and the heavenly Quire in their reverential Poſture in the Service of God; would it not have barred our wandrings, and ſtak'd us down to our Duty? Would not the fortifying an *Idea* of it in our Minds produce the ſame effect? 'Tis for want of this we carry our ſelves ſo looſely and unbecomingly in the Divine Preſence, with the ſame, or meaner Affections than thoſe wherewith we ſtand before ſome vile Creature, that is our Superiour in the World; as though a piece of filthy fleſh were more valuable than this Perfection of the Divinity. How doth the *Pſalmiſt* double his Exhortation to men to ſing Praiſe to God, *Pſal.* 47. 6. *Sing praiſe to God, ſing Praiſes; ſing praiſe to our King, ſing praiſe*, becauſe of His Majeſty, and the Purity of his Dominion: And *verſe* 8. *God reigns over the Heathen, God ſits upon the Throne of his Holineſs.* How would this elevate us in Praiſe, and proſtrate us in Prayer, when we praiſe and pray with an underſtanding and inſight of that Nature we bleſs or implore; as he ſpeaks *verſe* 7. *Sing ye praiſe with underſtanding.* The holineſs of God in his Government and Dominion, the holineſs of his Nature, and the holineſs of his Precepts, ſhould beget in us an humble reſpect in our Approaches. The more we grow in a ſenſe of this, the more ſhall we advance in the true performance of all our Duties.* Thoſe Nations which ador'd the Sun, had they at firſt ſeen his Brightneſs wrapped and maskt in a Cloud, and paid a veneration to it, how would their Adorations have mounted to a greater point, after they had ſeen it in its full brightneſs, ſhaking off thoſe Vails, and chaſing away the Miſts before it; what a profound reverence would they have paid it, when they beheld it in its Glory and Meridian Brightneſs? Our reverence to God in all our Addreſſes to him will arrive to greater degrees, if every act of Duty be uſher'd in, and ſeaſon'd with the thoughts of God as ſitting upon a Throne of Holineſs; we ſhall have a more becoming ſenſe of our own vileneſs, a greater ardor to his Service, a deeper reſpect in his Preſence, if our underſtanding be more clear'd, and poſſeſſed with Notions of this Perfection. Thus take a view of God in this part of his Glory, before you fall down before his Throne, and aſſure your ſelves you will find your hearts and ſervices quickned with a new and lively Spirit.

* Amyrald *Moral. Tom.* 5. *p.* 462.

4. A due ſenſe of this Perfection in God *would produce in us a fear of God, and arm us againſt Temptations and Sin.* What made the *Heathens* ſo wanton and looſe, but the repreſentations of their Gods as vitious? Who would ſtick at Adulteries and more prodigious Luſts, that can take a Pattern for them from the Perſon he adores for a Deity? Upon which account *Plato* would have *Poets* baniſh'd from his Common-wealth, becauſe by dreſſing up their gods in wanton garbs in their Poems, they encourag'd wickedneſs in the People. But if the thoughts of Gods holineſs were impreſt upon us, we ſhould regard ſin with the ſame eye, mark it with the ſame deteſtation in our meaſures, as God himſelf doth. So far as we are ſenſible of the Divine Purity, we ſhould account ſin vile as it deſerves; we ſhould hate it intirely, without a grain of love to it, and hate it perpetually.

Pſal.

Pſal. 119. 104. *Through thy Precepts I get underſtanding, therefore I hate every falſe way.* He looks into God's Statute-Book, and thereby arrives to an underſtanding of the Purity of his Nature, whence his hatred of iniquity commenc'd. This would govern our Motion, check our Vices; it would make us tremble at the hiſſing of a Temptation: When a Corruption did but peep out, and put forth its head, a look to the Divine Purity would be attended with a freſh Convoy of Strength to reſiſt it. There is no ſuch Fortification, as to be wrapped up in the ſenſe of this: This would fill us with an awe of God; we ſhould be aſham'd to admit any filthy thing into us, which we know is deteſtable to his pure Eye. As the approach of a grave and ſerious Man makes Children haſten their Trifles out of the way; ſo would a Conſideration of this Attribute make us caſt away our *Idols*, and fling away our ridiculous thoughts and deſigns.

5. A due ſenſe of this Perfection, *would enflame us with a vehement deſire to be conform'd to him.* All our Deſires would be ardent to regulate our ſelves according to this Pattern of Holineſs and Goodneſs, which is not to be equalled; the Contemplating it as it ſhines forth in the Face of Chriſt, will *transform us into the ſame Image* †. Since our lapſed ſtate, we cannot behold the holineſs of God in it ſelf without affrightment; nor is it an Object of Imitation, but as tempered in Chriſt to our view. When we cannot without blinding our ſelves, look upon the Sun in its Brightneſs, we may behold it through a colour'd Glaſs, whereby the luſtre of it is moderated, without dazling our eyes. The ſenſe of it will furniſh us with a greatneſs of mind, that little things will be contemned by us; Motives of a greater alloy would have little influence upon us; we ſhould have the higheſt Motives to every Duty, and Motives of the ſame ſtrain which influence the Angels above. It would change us, not only into an Angelical Nature, but a Divine Nature: We ſhould act like men of another Sphere; as if we had received our Original in another World, and ſeen with Angels the raviſhing Beauties of Heaven. How little would the mean Imployments of the World ſink us into dirt and mud? How often hath the Meditation of the Courage of a valiant Man, or Acuteneſs and Induſtry of a Learned Perſon, ſpur'd on ſome Men to an imitation of them, and transform'd them into the ſame Nature? As the looking upon the Sun imprints an Image of the Sun upon our eye, that we ſeem to behold nothing but the Sun a while after. The view of the Divine Purity would fill us with a holy generoſity to imitate him, more than the Examples of the beſt men upon Earth. It was a ſaying of a *Heathen*, That *if Virtue were viſible, it would kindle a noble flame of Love to it in the heart, by its raviſhing beauty.* Shall the Infinite Purity of the Author of all Virtue come ſhort of the ſtrength of a Creature? Can we not render that viſible to us by frequent Meditation, which though it be inviſible in his Nature, is made viſible in his Law, in his Ways, in his Son? It would make us ready to obey him, ſince we know he cannot Command any thing that is ſinful, but what is holy, juſt, and good: It would put all our Affections in their due place, elevate them above the Creature, and ſubject them to the Creator.

† 2 Cor. 3. 18.

6. It would *make us patient and contented under all God's Diſpenſations* All penal Evils are the Fruits of his Holineſs, as he is Judge and Governour of the World: He is not an Arbitrary Judge, nor doth any Sentence pronounc'd, nor Warrant for Execution iſſue from him, but what bears upon it a Stamp of the Righteouſneſs of his Nature; he doth nothing by Paſſion or Unrighteouſneſs, but according to the Eternal Law of his own unſtained Nature, which is the Rule to him in his Works, the *Baſis* and Foundation of his Throne and Sovereign Dominion. *Pſal.* 89. 14. *Juſtice*, or Righteouſneſs, *and Judgment are the Habitation of thy Throne*; upon theſe his Sovereign Power is eſtabliſhed: So that there can be no juſt Complaint or Indictment brought againſt any of his Proceedings with men. How doth our Saviour, who had the higheſt Apprehenſions of God's Holineſs, juſtify God in his deepeſt diſtreſſes, when he cried and was not anſwered in the particular he deſired, in that Prophetick *Pſalm* of him, *Pſal.* 22. 2, 3. *I cry day and night but thou heareſt not.* Thou ſeemeſt to be deaf to all my Petitions, afar off *from the words of my roaring, but thou art holy.* I caſt no blame

upon thee: All thy dealings are ſquar'd by thy holineſs, this is the only Law to thee; in this I acquieſce. 'Tis part of thy holineſs to hide thy face from me, to ſhew thereby thy deteſtation of ſin. Our Saviour adores the Divine Purity in his ſharpeſt Agony, and a like ſenſe of it would guide us in the ſame ſteps to acknowledge and glorifie it, in our greateſt deſertions and afflictions; eſpecially ſince as they are the fruit of the holineſs of his Nature, ſo they are the means to impart to us clearer ſtamps of *holineſs*, according to that in himſelf, which is the original Copy *. He melts us down as Gold, to fit us for the receiving a new Impreſſion, to mortifie the Affections of the Fleſh, and cloath us with the Graces of his Spirit. The due ſenſe of this would make us to ſubmit to his ſtroke, and to wait upon him for a good iſſue of his dealings.

* Heb. 12. 10.

2. *Exhortation.* Is holineſs a Perfection of the Divine Nature? Is it the glory of the Deity? Then *let us glorifie this holineſs of God. Moſes* glorifies it in the *Text*, and glorifies it in a *Song*, which was a Copy for all Ages. The whole Corporation of *Seraphims* have their Mouths fill'd with the praiſes of it. The Saints, whither Militant on Earth, or Triumphant in Heaven, are to continue the ſame Acclamation, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hoſts* †. Neither Angels nor glorified Spirits exalt at the ſame rate, the *Power* which formed them Creatures, nor *Goodneſs* which preſerves them in a bleſſed Immortality; As they do *holineſs*, which they bear ſome beams of in their own Nature, and whereby they are capacitated to ſtand before his Throne. Upon the account of this, a Debt of Praiſe is demanded of all Rational Creatures by the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* 99. 3. *Let them praiſe thy great and terrible Name, for it is holy.* Not ſo much for the greatneſs of his Majeſty, or the treaſures of his juſtice; but as they are conſidered in conjunction with his holineſs, which renders them beautiful; *for it is holy.* Grandeur and Majeſty ſimply in themſelves, are not Objects of Praiſe, nor do they merit the Acclamations of men, when deſtitute of Righteouſneſs: This only renders every thing elſe adorable: and this adorns the Divine Greatneſs with an amiableneſs: *Iſai.* 12. 6. *Great is the holy one of Iſrael in the midſt of thee*; and makes his Might worthy of Praiſe, *Luke* 1. 49. In honouring this which is the Soul and Spirit of all the reſt, we give a glory to all the Perfections which conſtitute and beautifie his Nature: And without the glorifying this, we glorify nothing of them, though we ſhould extol every other ſingle Attribute a thouſand times. He values no other Adoration of his Creatures, unleſs this be intereſted, nor accepts any thing as a glory from them; *Levit.* 10. 3. *I will be ſanctified in them that come near me, and I will be glorified.* As if he had ſaid, in manifeſting my Name to be holy, you truly, you only honour me. And as the Scripture ſeldom ſpeaks of this Perfection without a particular *Emphaſis*, it teaches us not to think of it without a ſpecial Elevation of heart: By this act only, while we are on Earth, can we joyn Conſort with the Angels in Heaven; he that doth not honour it, delight in it, and in the meditation of it, hath no reſemblance of it; he hath none of the Image, that delights not in the Original. Every thing of God is glorious, but this moſt of all. If he built the World principally for any thing, it was for the communication of his Goodneſs, and diſplay of his Holineſs. He formed the Rational Creature to manifeſt his Holineſs in that Law whereby he was to be govern'd: Then deprive not God of the deſign of his own Glory.

† Rev. 4. 8.

We honour this Attribute,

1. *When we make it the ground of our love to God.* Not becauſe he is gracious to us, but holy in himſelf. As God honours it, in loving himſelf for it, we ſhould honour it, by pitching our Affections upon him chiefly for it. What renders God amiable to himſelf, ſhould render him lovely to all his Creatures. *Iſai.* 42. 21. *The Lord is well pleaſed for his righteouſneſs ſake.* If the hatred of evil be the immediate reſult of a love to God, then the peculiar object or term of our love to God, muſt be that Perfection which ſtands in direct oppoſition to the hatred of evil. *Pſal.* 97. 10. *Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.* When we honour his holineſs in every ſtamp and impreſſion of it; his Law, not principally becauſe of its uſefulneſs to us, its accommodateneſs to the order of the World, but for its innate Purity, and his

his People not for our intereſt in them, ſo much as for bearing upon them this glittering mark of the Deity, we honour then the Purity of the Law-giver, and the Excellency of the Sanctifier.

2. We honour it, *when we regard chiefly the illuſtrious appearance of this in his Judgments in the world.* In a caſe of Temporal Judgment, *Moſes* celebrates it in the *Text*: In a caſe of Spiritual Judgments, the Angels applaud it in *Iſaiah*. All his ſevere proceedings are nothing but the ſtrong breathings of this Attribute. Purity is the flaſh of his revenging Sword. If he did not hate evill, his Vengeance would not reach the Committers of it: He is a *Refiners fire* in the day of his Anger*: By his ſeparating Judgments, he *takes away the wicked of the earth like Droſs. Pſal.* 119. 119. How is his holineſs honoured, when we take notice of his ſweeping out the rubbiſh of the World: How he ſutes puniſhment to ſin, and diſcovers his hatred of the matter and circumſtances of the Evil, in the matter and circumſtances of the Judgment. This Perfection is legible in every ſtroke of his Sword; we honour it when we read the ſyllables of it, and not by ſtanding amaz'd only at the greatneſs and ſeverity of the Blow, when we read how holy he is in his moſt terrible Diſpenſations: For as in them God magnifies the greatneſs of his Power, ſo he ſanctifies himſelf; that is, declares the Purity of his Nature as a Revenger of all Impiety. *Ezek.* 38. 22, 23. *And I will plead againſt him with Peſtilence, and with Blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the people that are with him, an overflowing Rain and great Hail-ſtones, Fire and Brimſtone. Thus will I magnify my ſelf, and ſanctify my ſelf.*

* Mal 3. 2.

3. We honour this Attribute, *when we take notice of it in every accompliſhment of his Promiſe, and every grant of a Mercy.* His Truth is but a branch of his Righteouſneſs, a ſlip from this Root. He is glorious in Holineſs in the account of *Moſes*, becauſe he *led forth his People whom he had redeemed, Exod.* 15. 13. His People by a Covenant with their Fathers, being the God of *Moſes*, the God of *Iſrael*, and the God of their *Fathers*: Verſe 2. *My God, and my Fathers God I will exalt thee.* For what? for his faithfulneſs to his Promiſe. The holineſs of God, which *Mary, Luke* 1. 49. magnifies, is ſumm'd up in this, the help he afforded his Servant *Iſrael* in the *remembrance of his mercy, as he ſpake to our Fathers, to* Abraham *and his Seed for ever*, Verſe 54, 55. The certainty of his Covenant Mercy depends upon an unchangeableneſs of his holineſs. What are **ſure mercies*, are *holy* mercies in the *Septuagint*; and in *Acts* 13. 34. which makes that Tranſlation *Canonical.* His nearneſs to anſwer us when we call upon him for ſuch Mercies, is a fruit of the holineſs of his Name and Nature. *Pſal.* 145. 17. *The Lord is holy in all his works; the Lord is nigh to all them that call upon him. Hannah*, after a return of Prayer, ſets a particular mark upon this in her Song, 1 *Sam.* 2. 2. *There is none holy as the Lord*; ſeparated from all Droſs, firm to his Covenant, and righteous in it to his Suppliants that confide in him, and plead his Word. When we obſerve the workings of this in every return of Prayer, we honour it; 'tis a ſign the Mercy is really a return of Prayer, and not a Mercy of courſe, bearing upon it only the characters of a common Providence. This was the Perfection *David* would bleſs for the Catalogue of Mercies in *Pſal.* 103. 1. *&c. Bleſs his (Holy) Name.* Certainly one reaſon why ſincere Prayer is ſo delightful to him, is becauſe it puts him upon the exerciſe of this his beloved Perfection, which he ſo much delights to honour. Since God acts in all thoſe as the Governour of the World, we honour him not, unleſs we take notice of that Righteouſneſs which fits him for a Governour, and is the inward Spring of all his Motions. *Gen.* 18 25. *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* It was his deſign in his pity to *Iſrael*, as well as the Calamities he intended againſt the *Heathens*, to be *ſanctified in them*; that is, declared holy in his Merciful, as well as his Judicial procedure †. Hereby God credits his Righteouſneſs, which ſeemed to be forgotten by the one, and contemned by the other*, he removes by this all ſuſpition of any unfaithfulneſs in him.

* Iſai. 55. 3.

† Ez. 36. 21, 23.

* *Sanct.* in loc.

4. We

4. We honour this Attribute, *when we truſt his Covenant, and Promiſe againſt outward Appearances.* Thus our *Saviour* in the *Prophecy* of him*; when God ſeemed to bar up the Gates of his Palace againſt the entry of any more Petitions, This Attribute proves the ſupport of the Redeemers Soul; *But thou art holy, Oh thou that inhabiteſt the Praiſes of Iſrael*: As it refers to what goes before, it has been twice explain'd; as it refers to what follows, it is a ground of truſt, *Thou inhabiteſt the Praiſes of Iſrael*: Thou haſt had the Praiſes of *Iſrael* for many Ages for thy holineſs. How? *Our Fathers truſted in thee, and thou didſt deliver them*; They honoured thy holineſs by their truſt and thou didſt honour their Faith by a deliverance; thou always hadſt a Purity that would not ſhame nor confound them. I will truſt in thee as thou art holy, and expect the breaking out of this Attribute for my good as well as my Predeceſſors; *Our Fathers truſted in thee*, &c.

* Pſal. 22. 2, 3, 4.

5. We honour this Attribute, *when we ſhew a greater Affection to the marks of his holineſs in times of the greateſt contempt of it.* As the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* 119. 126, 127. *They have made void thy Law, therefore I love thy Commandments above Gold.* While they ſpurn at the Purity of thy Law, I will value it above the Gold they poſſeſs; I'll eſteem it as Gold, becauſe others count it as Droſs: By their ſcorn of it, my love to it ſhall be the warmer, and my hatred of iniquity ſhall be the ſharper: The diſdain of others ſhould enflame us with a zeal and fortitude to appear in the behalf of his deſpiſed Honour. We honour this Holineſs many other ways; by preparation for our addreſſes to him out of a ſenſe of his Purity: When we imitate it; As he honours us *by teaching us his Statutes**; ſo we honour him by learning and obſerving them. When we beg of him to ſhew himſelf a Refiner of us, to make us more conformable to him in holineſs, and bleſs him for any communication of it to us, it renders us beautiful and lovely in his ſight.

* Pſal. 119. 135.

To *conclude*; to honour, it is the way to engage it for us: To give it the glory of what it hath done by the arm of power for our reſcue from Sin, and beating down our Corruptions at his feet, is the way to ſee more of its marvellous works, and behold a clearer brightneſs. As *unthankfulneſs* makes him withdraw his Grace*, ſo glorifying him cauſes him to impart it. God honours men in the ſame way they honour him: When we honour him by acknowledging his Purity, he will honour us by communicating of it to us. This is the way to derive a greater excellency to our Souls.

* Rom. 1. 21, 24.

3. *Exhortation.* Since holineſs is an eminent perfection of the Divine Nature, *let us labour after a Conformity to God in this Perfection.* The Nature of God is preſented to us in the *Scripture*, both as a pattern to imitate, and a *Motive* to perſwade the Creature to holineſs*. Since it is therefore the *Nature* of God, the more our Natures are beautified with it, the more like we are to the Divine Nature. 'Tis not the pattern of Angels, nor *Arch-angels*, that our *Saviour* or his *Apoſtle* propoſeth for our imitation, but the original of all Purity, *God himſelf* The ſame that created us, to be imitated by us. Nor is an equal degree of Purity enjoyned us; though we are to be pure, and perfect, and merciful as God is, yet not eſſentially ſo; for that would be to command us an impoſſibility in it ſelf; as much as to order us to ceaſe to be Creatures, and commence Gods. No Creature can be eſſentially holy but by participation from the chief Fountain of holineſs; but we muſt have the ſame kind of holineſs, the ſame truth of holineſs. As a ſhort line may be as ſtraight as another, though it parallel it not in the immenſe length of it: A Copy may have the likeneſs of the Original, though not the ſame Perfection: We can not be good, without eying ſome exemplar of goodneſs as the Pattern. No pattern is ſo ſutable as that which is the higheſt Goodneſs and Purity. That Limner that would draw the moſt excellent piece, fixes his eyes upon the moſt perfect pattern. He that would be a good *Orator*, or *Poet*, or *Artificer*, conſiders ſome perſon moſt excellent in each kind, as the Object of his imitation. Who ſo fit as God to be viewed, as the pattern of holineſs, in our intendment of, and endeavour after holineſs? The *Stoicks*, one of the beſt ſects of *Philoſophers*, adviſed their Diſciples to pitch upon ſome eminent example of Virtue, according to which to form their lives; as *Socrates*, *&c.* But true holineſs doth not only endeavour to live the life of a good man, but chuſes to live a Divine life: As before the man was *alienated from the life of God* †, ſo upon his return he aſpires after the life

* 1 Joh. 3. 3. Matth. 5. 48. Lev. 11. 44. 1 Pet. 1. 15, 16.

† Eph. 4. 19.

life of God. To endeavour to be like a good man, is to make one Image like another; to ſet our Clocks by other Clocks, without regarding the Sun: But true holineſs conſiſts in a likeneſs to the moſt exact Sampler. God being the firſt Purity, is the Rule as well as the Spring of all Purity in the Creature, the chief and firſt Object of Imitation. We diſown our ſelves to be his Creatures, if we breath not after a reſemblance to him in what he is imitable. There was in man, as created according to God's Image, a natural appetite to reſemble God: It was at firſt planted in him by the Author of his Nature. The Devils temptation of him by that Motive to tranſgreſs the Law, had been as an Arrow ſhot againſt a brazen Wall, had there not been a deſire of ſome *likeneſs* to his Creator engraven upon him*: It would have had no more influence upon him, than it could have had upon a meer Animal. But man miſtook the term; he would have been like God in knowledge, whereas he ſhould have affected a greater reſemblance of him in Purity. O that we could exemplify God in our Nature! Precepts may inſtruct us more, but Examples affect us more; one directs us, but the other attracts us. What can be more attractive of our imitation, than that which is the Original of all Purity both in Men and Angels? * Gen 3. 5.

This conformity to him conſiſts in an imitation of him,

1. *In his Law.* The Purity of his Nature was firſt viſible in this Glaſs; hence 'tis called a *holy* Law: *Rom.* 7. 12. a *pure* Law, *Pſal.* 19. 8. Holy and pure, as it is a Ray of the pure Nature of the Law-giver. When our Lives are a Comment upon his Law, they are expreſſive of his Holineſs: We conform to his Holineſs, when we regulate our ſelves by his Law, as it is a Tranſcript of his Holineſs: We do not imitate it, when we do a thing in the matter of it agreeable to that holy Rule, but when we do it with reſpect to the Purity of the Law-giver beaming in it. If it be agreeable to God's Will, and convenient for ſome deſign of our own, and we do any thing only with a reſpect to that deſign, we make not God's Holineſs diſcovered in the Law our Rule, but our own conveniency: 'Tis not a conformity to God, but a conformity of our Actions to *Self*. As in abſtinence from intemperate Courſes, not becauſe the holineſs of God in his Law hath preſcrib'd it, but becauſe the health of our Bodies, or ſome noble Contentments of life require it; then it is not God's holineſs that is our Rule, but our own ſecurity, conveniency, or ſome thing elſe which we make a God to our ſelves.

It muſt be a real conformity to the Law: Our holineſs ſhould ſhine as really in the practiſe, as God's Purity doth in the Precept. God hath not a pretence of Purity in his Nature, but a reality: 'Tis not only a ſuddain boiling up of an admiration of him, or a ſtarting wiſh to be like him, from ſome ſuddain impreſſion upon the Fancy, (which is a meer temporary blaze) but a ſetled temper of Soul, loving every thing that is like him, doing things out of a firm deſire to reſemble his Purity in the Copy he hath ſet; not a reſting in *Negatives*, but aſpiring to *Poſitives*; *Holy and harmleſs* are diſtinct things: they were diſtinct qualifications in our High Prieſt in his Obedience to the Law †, ſo they muſt be in us. † Heb. 7. 26.

2. *In his Chriſt.* As the Law is the Tranſcript, ſo Chriſt is the Image of his Holineſs: The glory of God is too dazling to be beheld by us: The acute eye of an Angel is too weak to look upon that bright Sun without covering his Face. We are much too weak to take our Meaſures from that Purity which is infinite in his Nature. But he hath made his Son like us, that by the imitation of him in that temper, and ſhadow of human *Fleſh*, we may arrive to a reſemblance of him*. Then there is a conformity to him, when that which Chriſt did is drawn in lively Colours in the Soul of a Chriſtian; when as he dyed upon the Croſs we dye to our ſins; as he roſe from the Grave, we riſe from our Luſts; as he aſcended on high, we mount our Souls thither: When we expreſs in our lives what ſhined in his, and exemplifie in our hearts what he acted in the world, and become with him, as he was ſeparate from ſinners. The holineſs of God in Chriſt is our ultimate pattern: As we are not only to believe *in Chriſt*, but *by Chriſt in God** , ſo we are not only to imitate Chriſt, but the holineſs of God as diſcovered in Chriſt. * 2 Cor. 3. 18. * Joh. 14. 1.

And to enforce this upon us, let us conſider,

1. *'Tis this only wherein he commands our imitation of him.* We are not commanded to be mighty and wiſe, as God is mighty and wiſe; but *be holy as I am holy.*

holy. The declarations of his power are to enforce our subjection; those of his wisdom to encourage our direction by him; but this only to attract our imitation. When he saith, *I am holy*, the immediate inference he makes, is *be ye so too*, which is not the proper instruction from any other Perfection †. Man was created by Divine Power, and harmoniz'd by Divine Wisdom, but not after them, or according to them, as the true Image; this was the Prerogative of Divine *Holiness*, to be the *Pattern* of his Rational Creature *: Wisdom and Power were subservient to this, the one as the Pensil, the other as the Hand that mov'd it. The condition of a Creature is too mean to have the communications of the Divine Essence, the true Impressions of his Righteousness and Goodness we are only capable of. 'Tis only in those moral Perfections we are said to resemble God. The *Devils*, those impure and ruin'd Spirits, are nearer to him in strength and knowledge than we are; yet in regard of that natural and intellectual Perfection, never counted like him, but at the greatest distance from him, because at the greatest distance from his Purity. God values not a natural Might, nor an acute Understanding, nor vouchsafes such Perfections the glorious Title of that of his Image. * *Plutarch* saith, God is angry with those that imitate his Thunder or Lightning, his works of Majesty, but delighted with those that imitate his Virtue. In this only we can never incur any reproof from him, but for falling short of him and his glory. Had *Adam* endeavour'd after an imitation of this, instead of that of Divine Knowledge, he had escap'd his fall, and preserv'd his standing; And had *Lucifer* wish'd himself like God in this, as well as his Dominion, he had still been a glorious Angel, instead of being now a ghastly Devil: To reach after a Union with the Supream Being in regard of holiness, is the only generous and commendable Ambition.

† *In this saith* Plato *God is* ἐν μέσῳ ὅρος *&c.*

* Eph. 4. 24. Col. 3. 10.

* Engub. *inde perenni Philoso.* Lib. 6. cap. 6.

2. *This is the prime way of honouring God.* We do not so glorifie God by elevated Admirations, or eloquent Expressions, or pompous Services of him, as when we aspire to a conversing with him with unstained Spirits, and live to him in living like him. The Angels are not called holy for applauding his Purity, but conforming to it. The more perfect any Creature is in the rank of Beings, the more is the Creator honoured; As it is more for the honour of God to create an Angel or Man, than a meer Animal; because there are in such, clearer Characters of Divine power and goodness, than in those that are Inferiour. The more perfect any Creature is morally, the more is God glorified by that Creature; tis a real declaration that God is the best and most amiable Being; that nothing besides him is valuable, and worthy to be the Object of our imitation. 'Tis a greater honouring of him, than the highest acts of Devotion, and the most religious bodily Exercise, or the singing this *Song of* Moses *in the Text*, with a Triumphant Spirit. As it is more the honour of a Father to be imitated in his Virtues by his Son, than to have all the slavering Commendations by the Tongue or Pen of a vicious and debauch'd Child. By this we honour him in that Perfection which is dearest to him, and counted by him as the chiefest glory of his Nature. God seems to accept the glorifying this Attribute, as if it were a real addition to that holiness which is infinite in his Nature, and because infinite, cannot admit of any increase: And therefore the word *sanctified* is used instead of *glorified*. *Isai.* 8. 13. *Sanctifie the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear; and let him be your dread.* And *Isai.* 29. 23. *They shall sanctifie the holy One of* Jacob, *and fear the God of* Israel. This sanctification of God is by the fear of him, which signifies in the Language of the Old Testament, a reverence of him, and a righteousness before him. He doth not say, when he would have his Power or Wisdom glorified, *empower me*, or *make me wise*; but when he would have holiness glorified by the Creature, 'tis *sanctifie me*; that is, manifest the purity of my Nature by the holiness of your lives: But he expresseth it in such a term, as if it were an addition to this infinite Perfection; so acceptable it is to him, as if it were a Contribution from his Creature for the inlarging an Attribute so pleasing to him, and so glorious in his Eye. 'Tis as much as in the Creature lies, a preserving the life of God, since this Perfection is his Life; and that he would as soon part with his Life as part with his Purity. It keeps up the Reputation of God in the World, and attracts others to a love of him; whereas unworthy carriages defame God in the eyes of men, and bring up an ill report of him, as if he were such a one as those that profess him, and walk unsuitably to their Profession, appear to be.

3. *This*

3. *This is the excellency and beauty of a creature.* The Title of beauty is given to it in *Pſal.* 110. 3. *Beauties* in the plural number, as comprehending in it all other beauties whatſoever. What is a Divine excellency can not be a Creatures Deformity: The natural beauty of it is a repreſentation of the Divinity; and a holy man ought to eſteem himſelf excellent, it being ſuch in his meaſure as his God is, and puts his principal felicity in the poſſeſſion of the ſame purity in Truth. This is the refin'd Complexion of the Angels that ſtand before his Throne. The Devils loſt their comlineſs when they fell from it. It was the honour of the humane Nature of our Saviour, not only to be united to the Deity, but to be ſanctified by it. He was *fairer than all the Children of men*, becauſe he had a holineſs above the Children of men: *Grace was poured into his lips*, *Pſal.* 45. 2. It was the *Jewel* of the reaſonable Nature in paradiſe: Conformity to God was mans original happineſs in his created ſtate, and what was naturally ſo, cannot but be immutably ſo in its own Nature. The beauty of every copied thing conſiſts in its likeneſs to the Original: Every thing hath more of lovelineſs, as it hath greater impreſſions of its firſt Pattern: In this regard holineſs hath more of beauty on it, than the whole Creation, becauſe it partakes of a greater excellency of God than the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*. No greater glory can be, than to be a conſpicuous and viſible Image of the inviſible, and holy, and bleſſed God. As this is the ſplendor of all the Divine Attributes, ſo it is the flower of all a Chriſtians Graces, the Crown of all Religion: 'Tis the glory of the Spirit. In this regard the *Kings Daughter* is ſaid to be all *glorious within* *. 'Tis more excellent than the ſoul it ſelf, ſince the greateſt ſoul is but a deformed piece without it: (A *Diamond without luſtre* †.) What are the noble faculties of the Soul without it, but as a curious ruſty Watch, a delicate heap of Diſorder and confuſion? 'Tis impoſſible there can be beauty, where there are a multitude of *ſpots and wrinkles* that blemiſh a Countenance *. It can never be in its true brightneſs, but when it is perfect in Purity, when it regains what it was poſſeſſed of by Creation, and diſpoſſeſſed of by the fall, and recovers its primitive temper. We are not ſo beautiful by being the work of God, as by having a ſtamp of God upon us. Worldly Greatneſs may make men honourable in the ſight of creeping worms. Soft lives, ambitious reaches, luxurious pleaſures, and a pompous Religion render no man excellent and noble in the ſight of God: This is not the excellency and nobility of the Deity which we are bound to reſemble; Other lines of a Divine Image muſt be drawn in us to render us truly excellent.

* Pſal. 45. 13.
† *Vaughan*, p. 4. 5.
* Eph. 5. 27.

4. *'Tis our life.* What is the life of God, is truly the life of a rational Creature *. The life of the Body conſiſts not in the perfection of its Members, and the integrity of its Organs, theſe remain when the Body becomes a Carcaſs; but in the preſence of the Soul, and its vigorous animation of every part, to perform the diſtinct offices belonging to each of them. The life of the Soul conſiſts not in its Being, or Spiritual Subſtance, or the excellency of its Faculties of Underſtanding and Will, but in the moral and becoming operations of them. The ſpirit is only *life becauſe of righteouſneſs* *. The Faculties are turned by it, to acquit themſelves in their functions, according to the Will of God; the abſence of this doth not only deform the Soul, but in a ſort annihilate it, in regard of its true eſſence and end: *Grace* gives a Chriſtian Being, and a want of it is the want of a true Being, *Cor.* 1. 15. 10. When *Adam* deveſted himſelf of his original righteouſneſs, he came under the force of the threatning, in regard of a ſpiritual death: Every perſon is *morally dead whiles he lives* an unholy life †. What life is to the body, that is righteouſneſs to the Spirit; and the greater meaſure of holineſs it hath, the more of life it hath, becauſe it is in a greater nearneſs, and partakes more fully of the fountain of life. Is not that the moſt worthy life, which God makes moſt account of, without which his life could not be a pleaſant and bleſſed life, but a life worſe than death? What a miſerable life is that of the men of the World, that are carried with greedy inclinations to all manner of unrighteouſneſs, whither their intereſts or their luſts invite them? The moſt beautiful body is a Carcaſs, and the moſt honourable perſon hath but a brutiſh life *; miſerable Creatures when their life ſhall be extinct without a Divine rectitude, when all other things will vaniſh as the ſhadows of the night at the appearance of the Sun.

* *Amirald*, in Heb. p. 101, 102.
* Rom. 8. 10.
† 1 Tim. 5. 6.
* Pſal. 49. 20.

Holineſs is our life.

5. *Tis this only fits us for Communion with God.* Since it is our beauty and our life, without it, what Communion can an excellent God have with deformed Creatures, a living God with dead Creatures? *Without Holineſs none ſhall ſee God*, *Heb.* 12. 14. The Creature muſt be ſtript of his Unrighteouſneſs, or God of his Purity, before they can come together. Likeneſs is the ground of Communion and of Delight in it: The oppoſition between God and unholy Souls, is as great as that
*1 Joh. 1. 6. between *light and darkneſs**, Divine fruition is not ſo much by a union of Preſence, as a union of Nature. Heaven is not ſo much an outward, as an inward life; the foundation of Glory is laid in Grace; a reſemblance to God is our vital happineſs, without which the Viſion of God would not be ſo much as a cloudy and ſhadowy happineſs, but rather a torment than a felicity; unleſs we be of a like nature to God, we cannot have a pleaſing fruition of him. Some *Philoſophers* think, that if our Bodies were of the ſame nature with the Heavens, of an Æthereal Subſtance, the nearneſs to the Sun would cheriſh, not ſcorch us. Were we partakers of a Divine Nature, we might enjoy God with delight; whereas remaining in our unlikeneſs to him, we cannot think of him, and approach to him without terror. As ſoon as ſin had ſtript man of the Image of God, he was an Exile from the comfortable preſence of God, unworthy for God to hold any correſpondence with: He can no more delight in a defiled perſon, than a man can take a Toad into intimate converſe with him; he would hereby diſcredit his own Nature, and juſtify our Impurity. The holineſs of a Creature only prepares him for an eternal conjunction with God in glory. *Enoch*'s walking with God, was the cauſe of his being ſo ſoon waſted to the place full of a fruition of him; he hath as much delight in ſuch, as in Heaven it ſelf; one is his Habitation as well as the other: The one is his habitation of Glory, and the other is the houſe of his Pleaſure:
*Joel. 3. 17. If he dwell in *Zion*, it muſt be a *holy Mountain**, and the Members of *Zion* muſt be upheld in their rectitude and integrity, before they be *ſet before the face of God*
† Pſal. 41. 12. *for ever* †. Such are ſtil'd his Jewels, his Portion, as if he lived upon them, as a man upon his Inheritance. As God cannot delight in us, ſo neither can we delight in God without it. We muſt *purifie* our ſelves *as he is pure*, if we expect to *ſee him*
*1 Joh. 3. 2, 3. *as he is* in the comfortable glory and beauty of his Nature*, elſe the ſight of God would be terrible and troubleſome: We cannot be ſatisfied with the likeneſs of God at the Reſurrection, unleſs we have *a righteouſneſs* wherewith to *behold his*
*Pſal. 17. 15. *face**. 'Tis a vain imagination in any to think that Heaven can be a place of happineſs to him, in whoſe eye the beauty of Holineſs, which fills and adorns it, is an unlovely thing: Or that any can have a ſatisfaction in that Divine Purity which is loathſome to him in the imitations of it. We cannot enjoy him, unleſs we reſemble him; nor take any pleaſure in him if we were with him, without ſomething of likeneſs to him.

Holineſs fits us for Communion with God.

6. *We can have no Evidence of our Election and Adoption without it.* Conformity to God in Purity, is the fruit of electing Love, *Eph.* 1. 4. *He hath choſen us that we ſhould be holy.* The goodneſs of the Fruit evidenceth the nature of the Root: This is the Seal that aſſures us the Patent is the Authentick Grant of the Prince. Whatſoever is holy, ſpeaks it ſelf to be from God; and whoſoever is holy, ſpeaks
*1 Joh. 2. 29. himſelf to belong to God. This is the only evidence that *we are born of God**. The ſubduing our ſouls to him, the forming us into a reſemblance to himſelf, is a more certain ſign we belong to him, than if we had with *Iſaiah* ſeen his glory in the Viſion with all his train of Angels about him. This juſtifies us to be the ſeed of God, when he hath as it were taken a ſlip from his own Purity, and engrafted it in our Spirits: He can never own us for his Children without his mark, the ſtamp of holineſs. The Devils ſtamp is none of Gods Badge. Our ſpiritual extraction from him is but pretended, unleſs we do things worthy of ſo illuſtrious a Birth, and becoming the honour of ſo great a Father: What evidence can we elſe have of any child-like love to God, ſince the proper act of love is to imitate the Object of our Affections?

And

And that we may be in ſome meaſure like to God in this excellent Perfection;

1. *Let us be often viewing and ruminating on the holineſs of God, eſpecially as diſcovered in Chriſt*: 'Tis by a believing meditation on him, that we are *changed into the ſame image* †. We can think often of nothing that is excellent in the World, but it draws our Faculties to ſome kind of ſutable operation; and why ſhould not ſuch an excellent *Idea* of the holineſs of God in Chriſt perfect our underſtandings, and awaken all the powers of our Souls to be formed to actions worthy of him? A *Painter* employed in the limning ſome excellent Piece, has not only his Pattern before his eyes, but his eye frequently upon the Pattern, to poſſeſs his fancy to draw forth an exact reſemblance. He that would expreſs the Image of God, muſt imprint upon his Mind the Purity of his Nature; Cheriſh it in his thoughts, that the excellent beauty of it may paſs from his Underſtanding to his Affections, and from his Affections to his Practiſe. How can we ariſe to a conformity to God in Chriſt, whoſe moſt holy nature we ſeldom glance upon, and more rarely ſink our Souls into the depths of it by meditation? Be frequent in the meditation of the holineſs of God. † 2 Cor. 3. 18.

2. *Let us often exerciſe our ſelves in acts of love to God, becauſe of this Perfection.* The more adoring thoughts we have of God, the more delightfully we ſhall aſpire to, and more raviſhingly catch after any thing that may promote the more full draught of his Divine Image in our hearts. What we intenſly affect, we deſire to be as near to as we can, and to be that very thing rather than our ſelves. All imitations of others, ariſe from an intenſe love to their perſons or excellency. When the Soul is raviſht with this perfection of God, it will deſire to be united with it; to have it drawn in it, more than to have its own being continued to it. It will deſire and delight in its own being, in order to this heavenly and ſpiritual work. The impreſſions of the Nature of God upon it, and the imitations of the Nature of God by it, will be more deſirable than any natural perfection whatſoever. The Will in loving is rendred like the object beloved; is turned into its nature †, and imbibes its qualities. The Soul by loving God, will find it ſelf more and more transform'd into the Divine Image, whereas ſlighted enſamples are never thought worthy of Imitation. † *Amor naturam induit & mores imbibit rei amatæ*

3. *Let us make God our end.* Every mans mind forms it ſelf to a likeneſs to that which it makes its chief end. An earthly Soul is as droſſy as the Earth he gapes for: An ambitious Soul is as elevated as the honour he reaches at: The ſame Characters that are upon the thing aimed at, will be imprinted upon the Spirit of him that aims at it. When God and his Glory are made our end, we ſhall find a ſilent likeneſs paſs in upon us; the Beauty of God will by degrees enter upon our Souls.

4. *In every deliberate action, let us reflect upon the Divine Purity as a pattern.* Let us examine whether any thing we are prompted unto, bear an impreſſion of God upon it: Whether it looks like a thing, that God himſelf would do in that caſe, were he in our Natures, and in our Circumſtances. See whether it hath the livery of God upon it, how congruous it is to his Nature: whether, and in what manner the holineſs of God can be glorified thereby; and let us be induſtrious in all this: For can ſuch an imitation be eaſy which is reſiſted by the conſtant aſſaults of the Fleſh, which is diſcouraged by our own ignorance, and depreſt by our faint and languiſhing Deſires after it? O! happy we, if there were ſuch a Heart in us.

4. A fourth *Exhortation.* If holineſs be a Perfection belonging to the Nature of God; then, *where there is ſome weak conformity to the holineſs of God, let us labour to grow up in it, and breath after fuller meaſures of it.* The more likeneſs we have to him, the more love we ſhall have from him. Communion will be ſutable to our imitation; his love to himſelf in his Eſſence, will caſt out beams of love to himſelf in his Image. If God loves holineſs in a lower meaſure, much more ſtill he love is in a higher degree, becauſe then his Image is more illuſtrious and beautiful, and comes nearer to the lively lineaments of his own Infinite Purity. Perfection in any thing is more lovely and amiable than Imperfection in any ſtate; and the nearer any thing arrives to Perfection, the further are thoſe things ſeparated from it which might cool an affection to it. An increaſe in holineſs is attended with a manifeſtation of his love, *Joh.* 14. 21. *He that hath my Commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me, and he ſhall be loved of my Father,*

Father, and I will love him, and I will manifeſt my ſelf to him: 'Tis a teſtimony of love to God, and God will not be behind hand with the Creature in kindneſs: He loves a holy man for ſome reſemblance to him in his Nature; but when there is an abounding in ſanctified diſpoſitions ſutable to it, there is an increaſe of favour: The more we reſemble the Original, the more ſhall we enjoy the bleſſedneſs of that Original: As any partake more of the Divine likeneſs, they partake more of the Divine happineſs.

5. *Exhortation. Let us carry our ſelves holily in a ſpiritual manner in all our religious approaches to God*; *Pſal.* 93. 5. *Holineſs becomes thy Houſe, O Lord for ever.* This Attribute ſhould work in us a deep and reverential reſpect to God. This is the reaſon rendred why we ſhould *worſhip at his foot-ſtool*, in the loweſt poſture of humility proſtrate before him, becauſe *he is holy* †. Shooes muſt be put off from our feet, *Exod.* 3. 5. that is, Luſts from our Affections, every thing that our Souls are clogged and bemired with, as the Shooe is with dirt. He is not willing we ſhould offer to him an impure Soul, , mired Hearts, rotten Carcaſſes, putrified in vice, rotten in iniquity: Our Services are to be as free from prophaneneſs, as the ſacrifices of the Law were to be free from ſickline ſs or any blemiſh. Whatſoever is contrary to his Purity is *abhorred* by him, and unlovely in his ſight, and can meet with no other *ſucceſs* at his hands, but a diſdainful turning away both of his eye and ear *. Since he is an Immenſe purity, he will reject from his preſence, and from having any communion with him, all that which is not conformable to him; as light chaſes away the darkneſs of the night, and will not mix with it. If we *ſtretch out* our *hands towards him*, we muſt *put iniquity far away from* us *; the fruits of all ſervice will elſe drop off to nothing. *Then ſhall the offering of Judah and Jeruſalem be pleaſant to the Lord*: When? when the heart is purged by Chriſt ſitting as a *purifier of ſilver* †. Not all the Incenſe of the *Indies* yield him ſo ſweet a Savour, as one ſpiritual act of worſhip from a heart eſtranged from the vileneſs of the World, and raviſht with an affection to, and a deſire of imitating the Purity of his Nature.

† Pſal. 99. 5.

* Iſai. 1. 15.

* Job. 11. 13, 14.

† Mal. 3. 3, 4.

6. *Exhortation. Let us addreſs for holineſs to God the Fountain of it.* As he is the Author of bodily life in the Creature, ſo he is the Author of his own life, the life of God in the Soul. By his holineſs he makes men holy, as the Sun by his light enlightens the Air. He is not only the Holy One, but *our* Holy One *: *The Lord that ſanctifies us, Levit.* 20. 8. As he hath mercy to pardon us, ſo he hath holineſs to purify us, the excellency of being a Sun to comfort us and a Shield to protect us, giving *Grace and Glory* *. Grace whereby we may have Communion with him to our comfort, and ſtrength againſt our ſpiritual enemies for our defence; Grace as our preparatory to glory, and Grace growing up till it ripen in Glory. He only can mould us into a Divine frame. The great Original can only derive the excellency of his own nature to us. We are too low, too lame to lift up our ſelves to it; too much in love with our own Deformity, to admit of this Beauty without a heavenly power inclining our deſires for it, our affections to it, our willingneſs to be partakers of it. He can as ſoon ſet the beauty of Holineſs in a deformed heart, as the beauty of Harmony in a confuſed maſs when he made the World. He can as ſoon cauſe the light of Purity to riſe out of the darkneſs of Corruption, as frame glorious ſpirits out of the inſufficiency of nothing. His beauty doth not decay, he hath as much in himſelf now as he had in his Eternity: He is as ready to impart it, as he was at the Creation; only we muſt wait upon him for it, and be content to have it by ſmall meaſures and degrees. There is no fear of our ſanctification, if we come to him as a God of holineſs, ſince he is a God of peace, and the breach made by *Adam* is repaired by Chriſt, *Theſſ.* 1. 5. 23. *And the very God of peace ſanctify you wholly*, &c. He reſtores the ſanctifying ſpirit which was withdrawn by the Fall, as he is a God pacified and his Holineſs righted by the Redeemer. The beauty of it appears in its ſmiles upon a man in Chriſt, and is as ready to impart it ſelf to the reconcil'd Creature, as before Juſtice was to puniſh the rebellious one. He loves to ſend forth the ſtreams of this perfection into created Chanels, more than any elſe. He did not deſign the making the Creature ſo powerful as he might, becauſe power is not ſuch an excellency in its own Nature, but as it is conducted and managed by ſome other excellency. Power is indifferent and may be uſed well

* Iſai. 43. 15.

* Pſal. 84. 11.

or ill according as the poſſeſſor of it is righteous or unrighteous. God makes not the Creature ſo powerful as he might, but he delights to make the Creature that waits upon him as holy as it can be, beginning it in this World, and ripening it in the other: 'Tis from him we muſt expect it, and from him that we muſt beg it, and draw arguments from the holineſs of his Nature to move him to work holineſs in our Spirits: We cannot have a ſtronger plea. Purity is the Favourite of his own Nature; and delights it ſelf in the reſemblances of it in the Creature. Let us alſo go to God, to preſerve what he hath already wrought and imparted. As we cannot attain it, ſo we cannot maintain it without him. God gave it *Adam*, and he loſt it: When God gives it us, we ſhall loſe it without his influencing and preſerving Grace: The chanel will be without a Stream, if the Fountain do not bubble it forth; and the ſtreams will vaniſh, if the Fountain doth not conſtantly ſupply them. Let us apply our ſelves to him for holineſs as he is a God *glorious in holineſs*: By this we honour God, and advantage our ſelves.

A DISCOURSE UPON THE Goodneſs of God.

Mark 10. 18.

And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Why calleſt thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God.

THE words are part of a Reply of our Saviour to the Young-mans Petition to him: A certain Perſon came in haſte, *running*, as being eager for ſatisfaction, to entreat his directions, what he ſhould do, to inherit Everlaſting Life; The Perſon is deſcribed only in general, *verſe* 17. *There came one*, A certain Man: But *Luke* deſcribes him by his Dig-
*Luk. 18. 18. nity, **A certain Ruler*; One of Authority among the *Jews*. He deſires of him an Anſwer to a legal Queſtion, [*What he ſhould do?*] Or, as *Matthew* hath it,
*Mat. 19. 16. *What good thing ſhall I do, that I may have Eternal Life?* *He imagin'd Everlaſting Felicity was to be purchaſed by the works of the Law; He had not the leaſt Sentiments of Faith: *Chriſt*'s Anſwer implies, there was no hopes of the happineſs of another World by the works of the Law; unleſs they were perfect and anſwerable to every Divine Precept. He doth not ſeem to have any ill, or hypocritical intent in his Addreſs to Chriſt; not to tempt him, but to be inſtructed by him. He ſeems to come with an ardent deſire, to be ſatisfi'd in his Demand; he performed a ſolemn act of Reſpect to him, *he kneeled to him*, προσκυνήσας, proſtrated himſelf upon the ground; Beſides Chriſt is ſaid, *Verſe* 21. *to love him*, which had been inconſiſtent with the knowledge Chriſt had of the hearts and thoughts of Men, and the abhorrence he had of Hypocrites, had he been only a Counterfeit in this Queſtion.

But the firſt Reply Chriſt makes to him, reſpects the Title of *Good Maſter*, which this Ruler gave him in his Salutation.

1. Some think, that Chriſt hereby would draw him to an *acknowledgment of him as God*; You acknowledge me *good*, How come you to ſalute me with ſo great a Title, ſince you do not afford it to your greateſt Doctors? *Lightfoot in loc.* obſerves, that the Title of *Rabbi bone* is not in all the *Talmud*. You muſt own me to be *God*, ſince you own me to be *good*: *Goodneſs* being a Title only due and properly belonging to the Supream Being.

If you take me for a Common-man, with what Conſcience can you ſalute me in a manner proper to God? Since no Man is *good*, no, not one, but the heart of Man is evil continually. The *Arrians* uſed this place to back their denying the Deity of Chriſt: Becauſe, ſay they, He did not acknowledge him-
*Eraſm. in loc. ſelf *good*, therefore he did not acknowledge himſelf *God*. *But he doth not here deny his Deity, but reproves him for calling him Good, when he had not yet
*Auguſtin. confeſt him to be more than a Man. *You behold my Fleſh, but you conſider not the fulneſs of my Deity; If you account me *Good*, account me *God*, and imagine

imagine me not to be a ſimple and a meer Man. He diſowns not his own Deity, but allures the Young-man to a confeſſion of it. Why call'ſt thou me Good, ſince thou doſt not diſcover any apprehenſions of my being more than a Man? Though thou comeſt with a greater Eſteem to me, than is commonly entertain'd of the Doctors of the Chair, why doſt thou own me to be *good*, unleſs thou own me to be *God*? If Chriſt had deny'd himſelf in this Speech to be *good*, he had rather entertain'd this Perſon with a frown and ſharp reproof for giving him a Title due to *God alone*, than have received him with that courteſie, and complaiſance as he did*. Had he ſaid there is none *good* but the Father, he had excluded himſelf; but in ſaying, there is none *good* but God, he comprehends himſelf. * *Heinſius in Matth.*

2. Others ſay, that Chriſt had *no intention to draw him to an acknowledgment of his Deity*, but only aſſerts his *Divine Authority* or Miſſion from God. *For which interpretation *Maldonat* calls *Calvin* an *Arrianizer*. He doth not here aſſert the Eſſence of his Deity, but the Authority of his Doctrine: As if he ſhould have ſaid, you do without ground give me the Title of *good*, unleſs you believe I have a Divine Commiſſion for what I declare and act. Many do think me an Impoſtor, an Enemy of God, and a friend to Devils; you muſt firmly believe, that I am not ſo as your Rulers report me, but that I am ſent of God, and authorized by him; you cannot elſe give me the Title of good, but of wicked. And the reaſon they give for this interpretation, is, becauſe it is a queſtion, whether any of the *Apoſtles* underſtood him at this time, to be God, which ſeems to have no great ſtrength in it; ſince not only the *Devil* had publickly owned him, to be the *Holy One of God**, but *John the Baptiſt* had born Record, that he was the *Son of God* †; and before this time *Peter* had confeſt him openly, in the hearing of the reſt of the Diſciples, that he was *the Chriſt the Son of the living God**. But I think *Paræus* his interpretation is beſt, which takes in both thoſe; Either you are ſerious or deceitful in this Addreſs; if you are ſerious, Why do you call me *good* and make bold to fix ſo great a Title upon one you have no higher thoughts of than of a meer Man? Chriſt takes occaſion from hence, to aſſert God to be only and Sovereignly *good*; * *There is none good but God.* God only hath the honour of *abſolute goodneſs*, and none but God merits the name of *good*. * A Heathen could ſay much after the ſame manner: All other things are far from the nature of good; call none elſe good but God, for this would be a profane Errour: Other things are only good in opinion, but have not the true ſubſtance of Goodneſs: He is *Good* in a more excellent way, than any Creature can be dominated *Good*. *Calvin in loc. * Luke 4. 34. † Joh. 1. 32, 34. * Mat. 16. 16. * *Triſmegiſt. Pæm ad cap. 2.* * *Eugubin de Perea Philoſ. lib. 5. cap. 9.*

1. *God is only originally Good, Good of himſelf.* All Created Goodneſs is a Rivulet from this Fountain, but *Divine Goodneſs* hath no Spring; God depends upon no other for his Goodneſs, he hath it in, and of himſelf: Man hath no Goodneſs from himſelf, God hath no Goodneſs from without himſelf: his Goodneſs is no more derived from another, than his Being: If he were Good by any External thing, that thing muſt be in being before him, or after him; If before him, he was not then himſelf from Eternity; If after him, he was not Good in himſelf from Eternity. The End of his Creating things then, was not to confer a Goodneſs upon his Creatures, but to partake of a Goodneſs from his Creatures. *God is Good by and in himſelf*, ſince all things are only Good by him; and all that Goodneſs which is in Creatures, is but the breathing of his own Goodneſs upon them. They have all their lovelineſs from the ſame Hand they have their Being from. Though by Creation God was declared Good, yet he was not made Good by any, or by all the Creatures. He partakes of none, but all things partake of him. He is ſo Good that he gives all, and receives nothing; *Only Good* becauſe nothing is Good but by him: Nothing hath a Goodneſs but from him.

2. *God only is infinitely Good.*

A boundleſs Goodneſs that knows no limits, a Goodneſs as infinite as his Eſſence, not only Good, but beſt; not only Good, but Goodneſs it ſelf, the Supream unconceivable Goodneſs. All things elſe are but little Particles of God, ſmall Sparks from this Immenſe Flame, Sips of Goodneſs to this Fountain. Nothing

thing that is good by his influence, can equal him, who is good by himſelf: Derived goodneſs, can never equal Primitive goodneſs, Divine goodneſs communicates it ſelf to a vaſt number of Creatures in various degrees; to Angels, Glorifi'd Spirits, Men on Earth, to every Creature; and when it hath communicated all that the preſent World is capable of, there is ſtill leſs diſplay'd, than left to enrich another World. All poſſible Creatures are not capable of exhauſting the Wealth, the Treaſures, that Divine Bounty is filled with.

3. *God is only perfectly good*, becauſe only Infinitely good.

He is good without indigence, becauſe he hath the whole Nature of goodneſs, not only ſome beams that may admit of increaſe of degree. As in him is the whole Nature of Entity, ſo in him is the whole Nature of Excellency. As nothing hath an abſolute perfect Being but God, ſo nothing hath an *abſolutely perfect goodneſs* but God. As the Sun hath a perfection of heat in it, but what is warm'd by the Sun, is but imperfectly hot, and equals not the Sun in that perfection of heat, wherewith it is naturally endued. The goodneſs of God is the meaſure and rule of goodneſs in every thing elſe.

4. *God only is Immutably good.*

Other things may be perpetually good by Supernatural Power, but not *Immutably good* in their own Nature. Other things are not ſo good, but they may be bad; God is ſo good, that he cannot be bad. *It was the Speech of a *Philoſopher*, That it was a hard thing to find a good Man, yea impoſſible; but though it were poſſible to find a good Man, he would be good but for ſome moment, or a ſhort time: For though he ſhould be good at this inſtant, it was above the Nature of Man to continue in a habit of goodneſs, without going awry and warping. But *the goodneſs of God endureth for ever* †. God always glitters in goodneſs, as the Sun, which the Heathens call'd the viſible Image of the Divinity, doth with Light. There is not ſuch a perpetual light in the Sun, as there is a fulneſs of goodneſs in God; *no variableneſs* in him, as he is the *Father of Lights.** Before I come to the *Doctrine*, that is the chief ſcope of the words, ſome remarks may be made upon the Young-mans *Queſtion* and *Carriage*, *What muſt I do to inherit Eternal Life?*

*Eugubin. Peren. Philoſ. lib. 5. cap. 9. p. 97. col. 1.

† Pſal. 52. 1.

* 1 James 17.

1. *The opinion of gaining Eternal Life by the outward obſervation of the Law, will appear very unſatisfactory to an inquiſitive Conſcience.* This *Ruler* affirm'd, and certainly did confidently believe, that he had fulfill'd the Law: *All this have I obſerved from my youth*; yet he had not any full ſatisfaction in his own Conſcience; his heart miſ-gave, and ſtarted upon ſome Sentiments in him, that ſomething elſe was requir'd, and what he had done might be too weak, too ſhort to ſhoot Heavens lock for him. And to that purpoſe he comes to Chriſt, to receive Inſtructions for the piecing up whatſoever was defective. Whoſoever will conſider the Nature of God, and the Relation of a Creature, cannot with reaſon think, that Eternal Life was of it ſelf due from God as a Recompence to *Adam*, had he perſiſted in a ſtate of Innocence: Who can think ſo great a Reward due, for having perform'd that, which a Creature in that Relation was oblig'd to do? Can any Man think another oblig'd to convey an Inheritance of 1000 *l. per annum* upon his payment of a few Farthings, unleſs any compact appears to ſupport ſuch a conceit? And if it were not to be expected in the integrity of Nature, but only from the goodneſs of God, how can it be expected ſince the Revolt of Man and the Univerſal Deluge of Natural Corruption? God owes nothing to the holieſt Creature; what he gives is a Preſent from his Bounty, not the Reward of the Creatures Merit. And the Apoſtle defies all Creatures from the greateſt to the leaſt, from the talleſt Angel to the loweſt Shrub, to bring out any one Creature that hath firſt given to God; *Who hath firſt given to him; And it ſhall be recompenced to him again?* The Duty of the Creature, and Gods gift of Eternal Life is not a Bargain and Sale.

*Verſe 20.

* Rom. 11. 35.

God gives to the Creature, he doth not properly repay: For he that repays hath received ſomething of an equal value, and worth before. When God Crowns Angels and Men, he beſtows upon them purely what is his own, not what is theirs by Merit and Natural Obligation: Though indeed what God gives

gives by virtue of a Promiſe made before, is upon the performance of the Condition due by gracious Obligation. God was not indebted to Man in Innocence, but every Mans Conſcience may now mind him, that he is not upon the ſame level as in the State of Integrity; And that he cannot expect any thing from God, as the Salary of his Merit, but the free gift of Divine Liberality. *Man is oblig'd to the practiſe of what is good, both from the Excellency of the Divine Precepts, and the Duty he ows to God, and cannot without ſome Declaration from God, hope for any other Reward, than the ſatisfaction of having well acquitted himſelf. * Amyrant. *Morale.*

2. *'Tis the Diſeaſe of Humane Nature ſince its Corruption, to hope for Eternal Life by the tenor of the Covenant of Works.*

Though this *Rulers* Conſcience was not throughly ſatisfy'd with what he had done, but imagin'd he might for all that, fall ſhort of Eternal Life, yet he ſtill hugs the imagination of obtaining it by doing, †*What ſhall I do, that I may inherit Eternal Life*? This is natural to Corrupted Man: *Cain* thought to be accepted for the ſake of his Sacrifice; and when he found his miſtake, he was ſo weary of ſeeking Happineſs by doing, that he would court miſery by Murdering. All men ſet too high a value upon their own Services: Sinful Creatures would fain make God a Debtor to them, and be Purchaſers of Felicity; They would not have it conveyed to them by Gods Sovereign Bounty, but by an Obligation of Juſtice upon the value of their Works. The *Heathens* thought God would treat Men according to the Merit of their Services; and it is no wonder they ſhould have this Sentiment, when the *Jews* educated by God in a wiſer School, were wedded to that Notion. The *Phariſees* were highly fond of it, it was the only Argument they uſed in Prayer, for Divine Bleſſing: You have one of them boaſting of his frequency in *Faſting*, and his exactneſs in paying his *Tithes* †; as if God had been beholding to him, and could not without manifeſt wrong deny him his demand. And *Paul* confeſſeth it to be his own Sentiment before his Converſion, he accounted this *Righteouſneſs of the Law gain to him** ; he thought by this to make his Market with God. The whole Nation of the *Jews* affected it, † *compaſſing Sea and Land* to make out a Righteouſneſs of their own, as the *Phariſees* did to make Proſelytes. † Verſe 17. † Luke 19.12. * Phil. 3:7. † Rom. 10. 3. *Going about to eſtabliſh their own Righteouſneſs.*

The *Papiſts* follow their ſteps, and diſpute for Juſtification by the Merit of Works, and find out another Key of Works of Supererogation, to unlock Heavens Gate, than what ever the *Scripture* informed us of: 'Tis from hence alſo, that Men are ſo ready to make Faith as a Work, the cauſe of our Juſtification. Man fooliſhly thinks he hath enough to ſet up himſelf after he hath proved Bankrupt, and loſt all his Eſtate. This Imagination is born with us, and the beſt Chriſtians may find ſome ſparks of it in themſelves, when there are ſpringings up of Joy in their Hearts, upon the more cloſe performance of one Duty than of another, as if they had wiped off their ſcores, and given God a ſatisfaction for their former neglects. *We have forſaken all and follow'd thee*, was the boaſt of his Diſciples: *What ſhall we have therefore?* was a Branch of this Root †. Eternal Life is a gift not by any Obligation of Right, but an abundance of goodneſs; 'tis owing not to the dignity of our Works, but the magnificent Bounty of the Divine Nature, and muſt be ſued for by the Title of God's Promiſe, not by the Title of the Creatures Services. We may obſerve, † Mat. 19.27.

3. *How inſufficient are ſome Aſſents to Divine Truth, and ſome Expreſſions of Affection to Chriſt, without the Practice of Chriſtian Precepts.* This Man Addreſt to Chriſt with a profound Reſpect, acknowledging him more than an ordinary Perſon, with a more Reverential Carriage than we read any of his Diſciples paid to him in the days of his Fleſh: he fell down at his Feet, kiſt his Knees, as the Cuſtom was, when they would teſtify the great Reſpect, they had to any eminent Perſon, eſpecially to their *Rabbins*. All this ſome think to be included in the word προσκυνέω; † He ſeems to acknowledge him the *Meſſiah* by giving him the Title of *Good*, a Title they did not give to their Doctors of the Chair; He breaths out his opinion, that he was able to inſtruct him beyond the ability of the Law; He came with a more than ordinary Affection to him, † *Verſe* 17. Lightfoot *in loc.*

and expectation of advantage from him, evident by his departing ſad, when his expectations were fruſtrated by his own perverſity; it was a ſign he had a high eſteem of him, from whom he could not part without marks of his Grief. What was the cauſe of his refuſing the inſtructions, he pretended ſuch an affection to receive? He had Poſſeſſions in the World. How ſoon do a few drops of worldly advantages quench the firſt Sparks of an ill grounded love to *Chriſt*? How vain is a complemental and cringing devotion, without a ſupream preference of God, and valuation of *Chriſt* above every outward allurement? We may obſerve this,

4. *We ſhould never admit any thing to be aſcrib'd to us, which is proper to God Why calleſt thou me Good? There is none Good but One, that is God.* If you do not acknowledge me God, aſcribe not to me the Title of Good. It takes off all thoſe Titles which fawning Flatterers give to Men, Mighty, Invincible to *Princes*, Holineſs to the *Pope*. We call one another good, without conſidering how Evil; and Wiſe, without conſidering how Fooliſh; Mighty, without conſidering how Weak; and Knowing, without conſidering how Ignorant. No man but hath more of Wickedneſs than Goodneſs; of Ignorance than Knowledge; of Weakneſs than Strength. God is a jealous God of his own Honour, he will not have the Creature ſhare with him in his Royal Titles. 'Tis a part of Idolatry to give Men the Titles which are due to God; a kind of a Worſhip of the Creature together with the Creator. Worms will not ſtand out, but aſſault *Herod* in his Purple, when he uſurps the Prerogative of God; and prove ſtiff and invincible Vindicators of their Creators Honor, when ſummoned to Arms by the Creators Word †.

† 12 Acts, 22, 23.

Doct. The Obſervation which I intend to proſecute is this:

Pure and Perfect Goodneſs is only the Royal Prerogative of God: Goodneſs is a choice Perfection of the Divine Nature.

This is the true and genuine Character of God; He is good, He is goodneſs, good in Himſelf, good in his Eſſence, good in the Higheſt Degree, poſſeſſing whatſoever is Comely, Excellent, Deſirable; the Higheſt Good, becauſe the Firſt Good; whatſoever is perfect Goodneſs, is GOD; whatſoever is truly goodneſs in any Creature, is a reſemblance of God *. All the Names of God are comprehended in this one of Good. All gifts, all variety of goodneſs, are contained in him as one common good. He is the efficient cauſe of all good, by an over-flowing goodneſs of his Nature; He refers all things to Himſelf as the end, for the repreſentation of his own goodneſs; *Truly God is Good* †. Certainly it is an undoubted Truth, 'tis written in his Works of Nature; and his Acts of Grace *, *He is abundant in Goodneſs.*

* *Ficin. in Dionys. de divin. nom. cap.* 511.

† Pſal. 73. 1.
* Exod. 34. 6.

And every thing is a Memorial, not of ſome few Sparks, but of his greater goodneſs †. This is often celebrated in the *Pſalms*, and Men invited more than once, to Sing forth the Praiſes of it †. It may better be admired than ſufficiently ſpoken of, or thought of, as it Merits. 'Tis diſcovered in all his Works, as the goodneſs of a Tree in all its Fruits; 'tis eaſie to be ſeen, and more pleaſant to be contemplated. In general,

† Pſal. 145. 7.
* Pſal. 107. 8. 15. 21. 31.

1. *All Nations in the World have acknowledged GOD Good,* τὸ Ἀγαθὸν was one of the Names the *Platoniſts* expreſt him by, and Good, and God are almoſt the ſame words in our Language. All as readily conſented in the Notion of his Goodneſs, as in that of his Deity. Whatſoever Diviſions or Diſputes there were among them in the other Perfections of God, they all agreed in this without diſpute, ſaith *Syneſius* *. One calls him *Venus*, in regard of his Lovelineſs †. Another calls him Ἔρωτα, Love, as being the Band which ties all things together. No Perfection of the Divine Nature is more eminently, nor more ſpeedily viſible in the whole Book of the Creation than this. His greatneſs ſhines not in any part of it, where his goodneſs doth not as glorioully gliſter. Whatſoever is the Inſtrument of his Work, as his Power; Whatſoever is the orderer of his Work, as his Wiſdom; yet nothing can be ador'd as the Motive of his Work, but the goodneſs of his Nature. This only could induce him, to reſolve to Create: His Wiſdom then ſteps in, to diſpoſe the Methods of what he reſolved; And his Power follows to execute, what his Wiſdom hath diſpoſed, and his Good-

* *Empedocles.*
† *Heſiod.*

neſs

neſs deſign'd. His Power in making, and his Wiſdom in ordering, are ſubſervient to his *Goodneſs*; and this Goodneſs which is the end of the Creation, is as viſible to the Eyes of Men, as legible to the Underſtanding of Men, as his Power in forming them, and his Wiſdom in tuning them. And as the Book of Creation, ſo the Records of his Government muſt needs acquaint them with a great part of it, when they have often beheld him, ſtretching out his Hand, to ſupply the Indigent, relieve the Oppreſſed, and puniſh the Oppreſſors, and give them in their Diſtreſſes, what might *fill their Hearts with Food and Gladneſs*. 'Tis this the *Apoſtle* * means by his *Godhead*, which he links with his Eternity and Power, as clearly ſeen in the things that are made, as in a pure Glaſs. *For the inviſible things of him from the Creation of the World, are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead.* The Godhead which comprehends the whole Nature of God as diſcoverable to his Creatures, was not known, yea, was impoſſible to be known by the Works of Creation. There had been nothing then reſerv'd to be manifeſted in *Chriſt*. But his *Goodneſs*, which is properly meant there by his *Godhead*, was as clearly viſible as his Power. The *Apoſtle* upbraids them with their Unthankfulneſs, and argues their inexcuſableneſs, becauſe the Arm of his Power in Creation made no due impreſſions of fear upon their Spirits, nor the Beams of his Goodneſs wrought in them ſufficient ſentiments of Gratitude. Their not glorifying God, was a contempt of the former, and their not being thankful, was a ſlight of the later. God is the Object of Honour, as he is powerful, and the Object of Thankfulneſs properly, as he is bountiful.

* Rom. 10. 21.

All the Idolatry of the Heathens, is a clear teſtimony of their common ſentiment of the Goodneſs of God: Since the more eminently uſeful any Perſon was in ſome advantagious Invention for the benefit of Mankind, they thought he merited a rank in the number of their Deities. The *Italians* eſteemed *Pythagoras* a God becauſe he was φιλανθρωπότατος †: To be Good and Uſeful, was an Approximation to the Divine Nature: Hence it was, that when the *Lyſtrians* ſaw a reſemblance of the Divine Goodneſs in the charitable and miraculous Cure of one of their Cripled Citizens, preſently they miſtook *Paul* and *Barnabas* for Gods, and inferred from thence their right to Divine Worſhip, inquiring into nothing elſe but the viſible Character of their goodneſs and uſefulneſs, to capacitate them for the Honor of a Sacrifice †. Hence it was that they adored thoſe Creatures, that were a common Benefit, as the Sun, and Moon, which muſt be founded upon a præexiſtent Notion not only of the Being, but of the Bounty, and Goodneſs of God, which was naturally implanted in them, and legible in all Gods Works. And the more beneficial any thing was to them, and the more ſenſible advantages they received from it, the higher ſtation they gave it in the rank of their Idols, and beſtow'd upon it a more ſolemn Worſhip. An abſurd miſtake to think every thing that was ſenſibly good to them, to be God, cloathing himſelf in ſuch a form, to be adored by them. And upon this account the *Ægyptians* worſhipped God under the figure of an Ox, and the *Eaſt Indians* in ſome parts of their Countrey Deifie a Heyfer, intimating the Goodneſs of God as their Nouriſher and Preſerver, in giving them Corn, whereof the Ox is an inſtrument in ſerving for Plowing, and preparing the Ground.

† *Iamblych vit. Pythag. lib. 1. col. 6. p. 43.*

† Acts 14. 8, 9, 10, 11.

2. *The Notion of Goodneſs is inſeparable from the Notion of a God.*

We cannot own the Exiſtence of God, but we muſt confeſs alſo the Goodneſs of his Nature. Hence the Apoſtle gives to his Goodneſs the Title of his Godhead, as if *Goodneſs* and *Godhead* were convertible terms *. As it is indiſſolubly linkt with the Being of a Deity, ſo it cannot be ſever'd from the Notion of it: We as ſoon Undeify him by denying him Good, as by denying him Great: *Optimus, Maximus*, the Beſt, Greateſt, was the name whereby the *Romans* entitled Him. His Nature is as Good, as it is Majeſtick; ſo doth the *Pſalmiſt* joyn them *. *I will declare thy Greatneſs, they ſhall abundantly utter the memory of thy great Goodneſs.* They conſidered his Goodneſs before his Greatneſs, in putting *Optimus* before *Maximus*; Greatneſs without Sweetneſs, is an unruly and affrighting Monſter in the World; like a vaſt turbulent Sea, always caſting out Mire, and Dirt. Goodneſs is the brightneſs and lovelineſs

* Rom. 1. 20.

* Pſal. 145. 6, 7.

of our Majeſtical Creator. To fancy a God without it, is to fancy a miſerable, ſcanty, narrow-hearted ſavage God, and ſo an unlovely, and horrible Being: For he is not a God that is not Good, he is not a God that is not the higheſt Good: Infinite Goodneſs is more neceſſary to, and more ſtraitly joyned with an infinite Deity, than infinite Power, and infinite Wiſdom: We cannot conceive him God, unleſs we conceive him the higheſt Good, having nothing ſuperiour to Himſelf in Goodneſs, as he hath nothing Superiour to Himſelf, in Excellency and Perfection. No man can poſſibly form a Notion of God in his Mind, and yet form a Notion of ſomething better than God: for whoever thinks any thing better than God, fancieth a God with ſome defect By how much the better he thinks that thing to be, by ſo much the more imperfect he makes God in his Thoughts. This Notion of the Goodneſs of God was ſo natural, that ſome *Philoſophers* and others, being ſtartled at the Evil they ſaw in the World, fancy'd beſides a good God, an evil Principle, the Author of all Puniſhments in the World. This was ridiculous; for thoſe two muſt be of equal Power, or one inferiour to the other; If Equal, the Good could do nothing, but the Evil one would reſtrain him; and the Evil one could do nothing, but the Good one would contradict him: So they would be always contending and never conquering: If one were inferiour to the other, then there would be nothing but what that Superior order'd. Good, if the Good one were Superiour, and nothing but Evil, if the Bad one were Superiour. In the proſecution of this let us ſee,

1. *What this Goodneſs is.*
2. *Some Propoſitions concerning the nature of it.*
3. *That God is Good.*
4. *The manifeſtation of it, in Creation, Providence, and Redemption.*
5. *The Uſe.*

1. *What this Goodneſs is?*

There is a Goodneſs of Being, which is the natural perfection of a thing; There is the Goodneſs of Will, which is the Holineſs, and Righteouſneſs of a Perſon: There is the Goodneſs of the Hand, which we call Liberality, or Beneficence, a doing good to others.

1. We mean not by this, *The Goodneſs of his Eſſence, or the Perfection of his Nature.* God is thus Good, becauſe his Nature is infinitely Perfect, He hath all things requiſite to the compleating of a moſt Perfect and Sovereign Being. *All Good meets in his Eſſence,* as all Water meets in the Ocean. Under this Notion all the Attributes of God, which are requiſite to ſo illuſtrious a Being, are comprehended. All things that are, have a goodneſs of Being in them, derived to them by the Power of God, as they are Creatures; ſo the Devil is good, as he is a Creature of Gods making: He hath a natural goodneſs, but not a moral goodneſs: when he fell from God, he retained his natural goodneſs as a Creature; becauſe he did not ceaſe to be, he was not reduced to that nothing, from whence he was drawn; but he ceaſed to be morally good, being ſtript of his Righteouſneſs by his Apoſtaſie; as a Creature he was Gods Work, as a Creature he remains ſtill Gods Work, and therefore as a Creature remains ſtill good, in regard of his created Being. The more of Being any thing hath, the more of this ſort of natural goodneſs it hath; and ſo the Devil hath more of this natural goodneſs than Men have; becauſe he hath more marks of the Excellency of God upon him, in regard of the greatneſs of his Knowledge, and the extent of his power, the largeneſs of his capacity, and the acuteneſs of his underſtanding, which are natural Perfections belonging to the nature of an Angel; though he hath loſt his moral perfections. God is *Sovereignly, and infinitely Good in this ſort of Goodneſs.* He is unſearchably perfect, * nothing is wanting to his Eſſence, that is neceſſary to the Perfection of it; yet this is not that which the Scripture expreſſeth under the term of Goodneſs, but a Perfection of Gods Nature as related to us, and which he poureth forth upon all his Creatures, as Goodneſs which flows from this Natural Perfection of the Deity.

* Job 11. 7.

2. *Nor*

2. *Nor is it the ſame with the Bleſſedneſs of God, but ſomething flowing from his Bleſſedneſs.* Were he not firſt infinitely Bleſſed, and Full in Himſelf, he could not be infinitely Good and Diffuſive to us; had he not an infinite abundance in his own Nature, he could not be overflowing to his Creatures.

Had not the Sun a fulneſs of Light in it ſelf, and the Sea a vaſtneſs of Water, the one could not enrich the World with its Beams, nor the other fill every Creek with its Waters.

3. *Nor is it the ſame with the Holineſs of God.* The Holineſs of God is the rectitude of his Nature, whereby he is Pure, and without Spot in himſelf. The *Goodneſs of God* is the efflux of his Will, whereby he is beneficial to his Creatures. The Holineſs of God is manifeſt in his rational Creatures; but the Goodneſs of God extends to all the Works of his Hands. His Holineſs beams moſt in his Law, his Goodneſs reacheth to every thing that had a Being from him*. *The Lord is good to all.* And though he be ſaid in the ſame Pſalm, *verſe* 17. to be *Holy in all his Works*, 'tis to be underſtood of his Bounty, Bountiful in all his Works; the *Hebrew* word ſignifying both Holy and Liberal, and the Margent of the *Bible* reads it *Merciful* or *Bountiful.* * Pſal. 145. 9.

4. *Nor is this Goodneſs of God the ſame with the Mercy of God.* Goodneſs extends to more Objects than Mercy; Goodneſs ſtretcheth it ſelf out to all the Works of his Hands; Mercy extends only to a miſerable Object; for it is joyned with a ſentiment of pity, occaſioned by the calamity of another. The Mercy of God is exerciſed about thoſe that Merit Puniſhment; the Goodneſs of God is exerciſed upon Objects that have not merited any thing contrary to the acts of his Bounty. Creation is an act of Goodneſs, not of Mercy; Providence in governing ſome part of the World, is an act of Goodneſs, not of Mercy*. The Heavens, ſaith *Auſtin*, need the Goodneſs of God to govern them, but not the Mercy of God to relieve them; The Earth is full of the Miſery of Man, and the Compaſſions of God; but the Heavens need not the Mercy of God to pity them, becauſe they are not miſerable; though they need the Goodneſs, and Power of God to ſuſtain them; becauſe as Creatures they are impotent without him. Gods Goodneſs extends to the Angels, that kept their ſtanding, and to Man in Innocence, who in that ſtate ſtood not in need of Mercy. Goodneſs and Mercy are diſtinct, though Mercy be a Branch of Goodneſs; There may be a manifeſtation of Goodneſs, though none of Mercy. Some think Chriſt had been incarnate, had not Man fallen: Had it been ſo, there had been a manifeſtation of Goodneſs to our Nature, but not of Mercy; becauſe Sin had not made our Natures miſerable. The Devils are Monuments of Gods creating Goodneſs, but not of his pardoning Compaſſions. The Grace of God reſpects the rational Creature, Mercy the miſerable Creature, Goodneſs all his Creatures, Brutes, and the ſenſleſs Plants, as well as reaſonable Man. * *Lombard* lib. 4. diſtinct 46. p. 386.

5. *By Goodneſs is meant the Bounty of God.* This is the Notion of goodneſs in the World; when we ſay a good Man, we mean either a holy Man in his life, or a charitable and liberal Man in the management of his Goods. A righteous Man, and a good Man are diſtinguiſhed*. For ſcarcely for a *righteous Man* will one die; yet for a *good Man* one would even dare to die. For an innocent Man, one as innocent of the Crime as Himſelf would ſcarce venture his Life; but for a good Man, a liberal tender-hearted Man, that had been a common Good in the place where he lived, or had done another as great a benefit as life it ſelf amounts to, a Man out of gratitude might dare to die. *The Goodneſs of God is his inclination to deal well and bountifully with his Creatures**. 'Tis that whereby he wills, there ſhould be ſomething beſides Himſelf for his own Glory. God is good in Himſelf, and to Himſelf, i. e. highly amiable to Himſelf; and therefore ſome define it a Perfection * Rom. 5. 7. * *Cocceii ſum.* p. 30.

Perfection of God, whereby he loves himſelf and his own Excellency; but as it ſtands in Relation to his Creatures, 'tis that Perfection of God, whereby he delights in his Works, and is beneficial to them. God is the *higheſt Goodneſs*, becauſe he doth not act for his own profit, but for his Creatures welfare, and the manifeſtation of his own Goodneſs. He ſends out his Beams, without receiving any addition to himſelf, or ſubſtantial advantage from his Creatures. 'Tis from this Perfection that he loves whatſoever is good, and that is, whatſoever he hath made, *For every Creature of God is good* *; Every Creature hath ſome Communications from him, which cannot be without ſome Affection to them; Every Creature hath a Footſtep of *Divine Goodneſs* upon it; God therefore loves that goodneſs in the Creature, elſe he would not love himſelf. † God hates no Creature, no not the Devils, and Damn'd, as Creatures; he is not an Enemy to them, as they are the Works of his hands: He is properly an Enemy, that doth ſimply and abſolutely wiſh Evil to another; but God doth not abſolutely wiſh Evil to the Damned; that Juſtice that he inflicts upon them, the deſerved Puniſhment of their Sin, is part of his Goodneſs, (as ſhall afterward be ſhewn.)

* 1 Tim. 4. 4.

† Cajetan *in ſecund' ſecundæ Qu.* 34. *Ar.* 3.

This is the moſt pleaſant Perfection of the Divine Nature; His Creating Power amazes us, His Conducting Wiſdom aſtoniſheth us, His Goodneſs, as furniſhing us with all Conveniencies, delights us, and renders both his amazing Power, and aſtoniſhing Wiſdom delightful to us.

As the Sun by effecting things, is an Emblem of Gods Power, by diſcovering things to us, is an Emblem of his Wiſdom, but by refreſhing and comforting us, is an Emblem of his Goodneſs; And without this refreſhing Virtue it communicates to us, we ſhould take no pleaſure in the Creatures it produceth, nor in the Beauties it diſcovers. As God is Great and Powerful, he is the Object of our Underſtanding; but as Good and Bountiful, he is the Object of our Love and Deſire.

6. The Goodneſs of God comprehends all his Attributes. All the Acts of God are nothing elſe but the Effluxes of his Goodneſs, diſtinguiſht by ſeveral names, according to the Objects it is exerciſed about. As the Sea, though it be one Maſs of Water, yet we diſtinguiſh it by ſeveral names, according to the Shores it waſheth, and beats upon, as the *Britiſh* and *German* Ocean, though all be one Sea. When *Moſes* long'd to ſee his Glory, God tells him, he would give him a proſpect of his *Goodneſs*; † *I will make all my goodneſs to paſs before thee.* His Goodneſs is his Glory and Godhead, as much as is delightfully viſible to his Creatures, and whereby he doth beneſit Man; *I will cauſe my Goodneſs*, or *Comlineſs*, as *Calvin* renders it, to paſs before thee; what is this, but the Train of all his lovely Perfections ſpringing from his *Goodneſs*? * The whole Catalogue of *Mercy*, *Grace*, *long-ſuffering*, *abundance of Truth*, ſummed up in this *one word*. All are Streams from this Fountain; he could be none of this, were he not firſt Good. When it confers Happineſs without Merit, 'tis Grace; when it beſtows Happineſs againſt Merit, 'tis Mercy; when he bears with provoking Rebels, it's long-ſuffering; when he performs his Promiſe, 'tis Truth; when it meets with a Perſon, to whom it is not oblig'd, 'tis Grace; when he meets with a Perſon in the World, to which he hath obliged himſelf by Promiſe, 'tis Truth *; when it Commiſerates a Diſtreſſed Perſon, 'tis Pity; when it ſupplies an Indigent Perſon, 'tis Bounty; when it ſuccours an Innocent Perſon, 'tis Righteouſneſs, and when it pardons a Penitent Perſon, 'tis Mercy; all ſumm'd up in this one name of *Goodneſs*: And the *Pſalmiſt* expreſſeth the ſame Sentiment in the ſame words: † *They ſhall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodneſs, and ſhall ſing of thy righteouſneſs. The Lord is gracious and full of compaſſion, ſlow to anger, and of great mercy: the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.* He is firſt Good, and then Compaſſionate. Righteouſneſs is often in Scripture taken, not for Juſtice, but Charitableneſs: This Attribute, ſaith one, † is ſo full of God, that it doth deifie all the reſt, and verifie the Adorableneſs of him. His Wiſdom might contrive againſt us, his Power bear too heard upon us; one might be too hard for an Ignorant, and the other too mighty for an Impotent Creature

* Exod. 33. 19.

* Exod. 34. 6.

* Herle *upon Wiſdom. cap.* 5. *p.* 41, 42.

† Pſ. 145. 7, 8.

† Ingelo *Benivolio, & Uran, Book* 4. *p.* 260, 261.

Creature; his holineſs would ſcare an impure and guilty Creature, but his goodneſs conducts them all for us, and makes them all amiable to us; Whatever Comelineſs they have in the eye of a Creature, whatever Comfort they afford to the Heart of a Creature, we are oblig'd for all to his *goodneſs*. This puts all the reſt upon a delightful Exerciſe, this makes his Wiſdom deſign for us, and this makes his Power to act for us: This vails his Holineſs from affrighting us, and this Spirits his Mercy to relieve us: † All his acts towards Man, are but the Workmanſhip of this. What moved him at firſt to Create the World out of nothing, and erect ſo noble a Creature as Man, endow'd with ſuch excellent gifts; was it not his *goodneſs*? What made him ſeparate his Son to be a Sacrifice for us, after we had endeavoured to raze out the firſt marks of his favour; Was it not a ſtrong bubling of *goodneſs*? What moves him, to reduce a Fallen Creature to the due ſenſe of his Duty, and at laſt bring him to an Eternal Felicity; is it not only his *goodneſs*? This is the Captain Attribute that leads the reſt to act. This attends them, and Spirits them in all his ways of acting. This is the Compliment and Perfection of all his Works; had it not been for this, which ſet all the reſt on work, nothing of his Wonders had been ſeen in Creation, nothing of his Compaſſions had been ſeen in Redemption. The Second thing is ſome *Propoſitions to explain the Nature of this Goodneſs*;

† Daille *Melang part* 2. *p.* 704, 705.

1. *He is good by his own Eſſence.* God is not only good in his Eſſence, but good by his Eſſence: The Eſſence of *every created thing is good*, ſo the unerring God pronounced every thing which he had made *. The Eſſence of the worſt Creatures, yea, of the impure and Savage Devils is good, but they are not good *per eſſentiam*, for then they could not be bad, Malicious, and Oppreſſive. God is good as he is God, and therefore good by himſelf, and from himſelf, not by participation from another; He made every thing good, but none made him good: Since his goodneſs was not received from another, he is good by his *own Nature*. He could not receive it from the things he Created, they are later then he: Since they received all from him, they could beſtow nothing on him, and no God preceded him, in whoſe Inheritance and Treaſures of Goodneſs, he could be a Succeſſor: He is abſolutely his *own goodneſs*, he needed none to make him good; but all things needed him, to be good by him. Creatures are good by being made ſo by him, and cleaving to him: He is good without cleaving to any goodneſs without him, Goodneſs is not a Quality in him, but a Nature, * not a Habit added to his Eſſence, but his Eſſence it ſelf; He is not firſt God, and then afterwards good, but he is good as he is God, his Eſſence being one and the ſame, is formally and equally God and good. Αὐτάγαθον, *good of himſelf*, was one of the Names the *Platoniſts* gave him. He is Eſſentially good in his own Nature, and not by any outward action which follows his Eſſence. He is an Independent Being, and hath nothing of goodneſs or happineſs from any thing without him, or any thing he doth act about. If he were not good by his Eſſence, he could not be Eternally good, he could not be the *firſt good*, he would have ſomething before him, from whence he derived that Goodneſs, wherewith he is poſſeſſed; Nor could he be perfectly good, for he could not be equally good to that, from whom he derived his goodneſs: No Star, no ſplendid Body that derives light from the Sun, doth equal that Sun by which it's enlightned.

* Gen. 1. 31.

* Ficini *epiſt. lib.* 11. *epiſt.* 30.

Hence his goodneſs muſt be infinite, and circumſcrib'd by no limits: The Exerciſe of his goodneſs may be limited by himſelf, but his goodneſs the Principle, cannot; For ſince his Eſſence is Infinite, and his Goodneſs is not diſtinguiſhed from his Eſſence, 'tis Infinite alſo; If it were limited, it were Finite; he cannot be bounded by any thing without him; if ſo, then he were not God, becauſe he would have ſomething Superior to him, to put bars in his way; If there were any thing to fix him, it muſt be a good or evil Being; Good it cannot be, for it is the property of goodneſs to encourage goodneſs, not to bound it; Evil it cannot be, for then it would extinguiſh goodneſs, as well as limit it; it would not be content with the circumſcribing it, without deſtroying it; for it is the nature of every Contrary, to endeavour the deſtruction of its

Oppoſite.

Opposite. He is Essentially good by his own Essence, therefore good of himself, therefore Eternally good, and therefore abundantly good.

2. *God is the prime and chief Goodness.* Being good *per se*, and by his own Essence, he must needs be the *chief Goodness*, in whom there can be nothing but good, from whom there can proceed nothing but good, to whom all good whatsoever must be referr'd as the final cause of all good. As he is the chief Being, so he is the chief good. And as we rise by steps from the Existence of Created things, to acknowledge one Supream Being, which is God; so we mount by steps from the Consideration of the goodness of Created things, to acknowledge one Infinite Ocean of Sovereign Goodness, whence the Streams of Created goodness are deriv'd. When we behold things that partake of goodness from another, we must acquiesce in one that hath goodness by participation from no other, but Originally from himself, and therefore Supreamly in himself above all other things. So that as nothing greater and more Majestick can be imagin'd, so also nothing Better and more Excellent can be conceiv'd than God. Nothing can add to him, or make him better than he is, nothing can detract from him, to make him worse, nothing can be added to him, nothing can be sever'd from him; No Created Good can render him more Excellent; No Evil from any Creature, can render him less Excellent. † Our *goodness extends not to him*; *Wickedness may hurt a Man*, as we are, and our *Righteousness may profit the Son of Man*, but if we be *Righteous*, *what give we to him*, or *what receives he at our hands?* * As he hath no Superior in place above him, so being chief of all, he cannot be made better by any Inferior to him. How can he be made better by any, that hath from himself, all that he hath? The goodness of a Creature may be chang'd, but the goodness of the Creator is immutable; He is always like himself, so Good that he cannot be Evil, as he is so Blessed, that he cannot be Miserable.

† Psal. 16. 2.

* Job. 35. 7, 8.

Nothing is good but God, because nothing is of it self but God: As all things being from nothing, are nothing in comparison of God, so all things being from nothing, are scanty and evil in comparison of God. If any thing had been *ex Deo*, God being the Matter of it, it had been as good as God is; but since the Principle whence all things were drawn, was nothing, though the Efficient Cause by which they were extracted from nothing was God, they are as nothing in goodness, and not estimable in comparison of God. † *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, &c.* God is all good, every Creature hath a distinct variety of goodness. God distinctly pronounced every days work in the Creation *good*. Food communicates the goodness of its Nourishing Virtue to our Bodies, Flowers the goodness of their Odors to our Smell, every Creature a goodness of Comliness to our Sight; Plants the goodness of Healing Qualities for our Cure. And all derive from themselves a goodness of Knowledge, objectively to our Understandings. The Sun by one sort of goodness warms us, Metals enrich us, living Creatures sustain us, and delight us by another; All those have distinct kinds of Goodness, which are eminently summed up in God, and are all but parts of his Immense Goodness. 'Tis he that enlightens us by his Sun, nourisheth us by Bread. * *'Tis not by Bread alone, that we live, but by the Word of God.* 'Tis all but his own Supream Goodness, conveyed to us through those varieties of Conduit-pipes. *God is all Good*, other things are good in their kind, as a good Man, a good Angel, a good Tree, a good Plant; but God hath a Good of all kinds eminently in his Nature. He is no less All-good, than he is Almighty, and All-knowing: As the Sun contains in it all the Light, and more Light than is in all the clearest Bodies in the World; so doth God contain in himself all the Good, and more Good than is in the richest Creatures. Nothing is good, but as it resembles him; as nothing is hot, but as it resembles Fire, the Prime Subject of Heat.

† Psal. 73. 25.

* Matth. 4. 4.

God is Omnipotent, therefore no Good can be wanting to him. If he were destitute of any which he could not have, he were not Almighty: He is so good that there is no mixture of any thing, which can be call'd not good in him; every thing besides him wants some good, which others have. Nothing can be so

Evil

Evil as God is Good. There can be no evil, but there is ſome mixture of good with it. No Nature ſo evil, but there is ſome ſpark of goodneſs in it: But God is a Good which hath no taint of Evil; nothing can be ſo Supream an Evil, as God is Supream Goodneſs.

He is only Good without capacity of Increaſe: He is all Good, and unmixedly Good; none Good but God. A Goodneſs like the Sun, that hath all Light, and no Darkneſs. That is the ſecond thing, He is the Supream and chief Goodneſs.

3. *This Goodneſs is Communicative.* None ſo Communicatively Good as God. As the Notion of God includes Goodneſs, ſo the Notion of Goodneſs includes Diffuſiveneſs; without Goodneſs he would ceaſe to be a Deity, and without Diffuſiveneſs he would ceaſe to be Good. The being Good is neceſſary to the being God: For Goodneſs is nothing elſe in the Notion of it, but a ſtrong inclination to do good; either to find, or make an Object, wherein to exerciſe it ſelf, according to the Propenſion of its own Nature; and it is an Inclination of Communicating it ſelf, not for its own intereſt, but the good of the Object it pitcheth upon. Thus God is good by Nature, and his Nature is not without activity, he acts conveniently to his own Nature. † *Thou art good, and doſt good.* † Pſ. 119. 68. And nothing accrues to him, by the Communications of himſelf to others, ſince his Bleſſedneſs was as great before the frame of any Creature, as ever it was ſince the Erecting of the World; ſo that the Goodneſs of Chriſt himſelf encreaſeth not the luſtre of his Happineſs: † *My Goodneſs extends not to thee.* He is not † Pſal. 16. 2. of a nigardly and envious Nature; He is too Rich to have any cauſe to envy, and too Good to have any will to envy: He is as liberal as he is rich, according to the capacity of the Object about which his Goodneſs is exerciſed. The Divine Goodneſs being the Supream Goodneſs, is Goodneſs in the higheſt Degree of Activity; not an idle, enclos'd, pent up Goodneſs, as a Spring ſhut up, or a Fountain ſealed, bubling up within it ſelf, but bubling out of it ſelf. A Fountain of Gardens to water every part of his Creation; *He is an oyntment power'd forth*: † Nothing ſpreads it ſelf more than Oyl, and takes up a larger ſpace, whereſoever it drops. It may be no leſs ſaid of the Goodneſs of God, as it is of the fulneſs of Chriſt, † *He fills all in all*: He fills Rational Creatures with Underſtanding, Senſitive Nature with Vigor and Motion, the whole World with Beauty and Sweetneſs. Every Taſt, every Touch of a Creature is a Taſt and Touch of Divine Goodneſs. Divine Goodneſs offers it ſelf in one ſpark in this Creature, in another ſpark in the other Creature, and altogether make up a goodneſs inconceivable by any Creature. The whole Maſs and extracted Spirit of it is infinitely ſhort of the Goodneſs of the Divine Nature, imperfect ſhadows of that Goodneſs which is in himſelf.

† Can. 1. 3. † Eph. 1. 23.

Indeed, The more excellent any thing is, the more nobly it acts; How remotely doth Light, that excellent brightneſs of the Creation, diſperſe it ſelf? How doth that glorious Creature, which God hath ſet in the Heavens, ſpread its Wings over Heaven and Earth, roul it ſelf about the World, caſt its Beams upward and downward, inſinuate into all Corners, pierce the Depths, and ſhoot up its Rays into the Heights, encircle the higher and lower Creatures in its Arms, reach out its Communications to influence every thing under the Earth, as well as dart its Beams of Light and Heat on things above, or upon the Earth? *Nothing is hid from it*; † not from its Power, nor from its Sweetneſs. † Pſal. 19. 6. How Communicative alſo is Water, a neceſſary and excellent Creature? How active is it in a River, to nouriſh the living Creatures engendred in its Womb? Refreſheth every Shore it runs by, promotes the propagation of Fruits for the Nouriſhment, and beſtows a Verdure upon the Ground for the delight of Man; and where it cannot reach the higher Ground in its Subſtance, it doth by its Vapours mounted up, and concocted by the Sun, and gently diſtilled upon the Earth, for the opening its Womb to bring forth its Fruits. † God is more prone † *Tom.* 2. *p.* 926. to communicate himſelf, than the Sun to ſpread its Wings, or the Earth to mount up its Fruits, or the Water to multiply living Creatures. *Goodneſs* is his Nature. Hence were there internal Communications of himſelf from E-

ternity; Diffuſions of himſelf without himſelf in time, in the Creation of the World, like a full Veſſel running over. He Created the World that he might impart his Goodneſs to ſomthing without him, and diffuſe larger meaſures of his Goodneſs, after he had laid the firſt Foundation of it in its Being: And therefore he Created ſeveral ſorts of Creatures, that they might be capable of various, and diſtinct meaſures of his Liberality, according to the diſtinct capacities of their Nature; but imparted moſt to the Rational Creature, becauſe that is only capable of an Underſtanding to know him, and Will to embrace him. He is the higheſt Goodneſs, and therefore a communicative Goodneſs, and acts excellently according to his Nature.

4. *God is neceſſarily Good.* None is neceſſarily Good but God; he is as neceſſarily Good, as he is neceſſarily God. His goodneſs is as inſeparable from his Nature as his Holineſs. He is good by Nature, not only by Will; as he is Holy by Nature not only by Will; he is good in his Nature, and good in his Actions; and as he cannot be bad in his Nature, ſo he cannot be bad in his Communications: He can no more act contrary to this Goodneſs in any of his Actions, than he can un-God himſelf. 'Tis not neceſſary that God ſhould Create a World; he was at his own choice whether he would Create or no: But when he reſolves to make a World, 'tis neceſſary that he ſhould make it good, becauſe he is goodneſs it ſelf, and cannot act againſt his own Nature. He could not Create any thing without goodneſs in the very act: The very act of Creation or Communicating, being to any thing without himſelf, is in it ſelf an act of Goodneſs, as well as an act of Power: Had he not been good in himſelf, nothing could have been endued with any goodneſs by him. In the act of giving Being, he is Liberal, the Being he beſtows is a diſplaying his own Liberality: He could not confer what he needs not, and which could not be deſerved, without being Bountiful. Since what was nothing, could not merit to be brought into Being, the very act of giving to nothing a Being, was an act of choice Goodneſs.

He could not Create any thing without Goodneſs as the Motive, and the neceſſary Motive: His Goodneſs could not neceſſitate him to make the World, but his Goodneſs could only move him to reſolve to make a World; He was not bound to erect and faſhion it becauſe of his Goodneſs, but he could not frame it without his Goodneſs as the moving Cauſe.

He could not Create any thing, but he muſt Create it Good. It had been Inconſiſtent with the Supream Goodneſs of his Nature, to have Created only Murderous, Ravenous, Injurious Creatures: To have Created a Bedlam rather than a World. A meer heap of Confuſion would have been as inconſiſtent with his Divine Goodneſs, as with his Divine Wiſdom.

Again, When his Goodneſs had moved him to make a Creature, his Goodneſs would neceſſarily move him to be beneficial to his Creature; not that this neceſſity reſults from any Merit in the Creature which he had framed; but from the Excellency and Diffuſiveneſs of his own Nature, and his own Glory, the end for which he form'd it, which would have been obſcure, yea, nothing, without ſome degrees of his Bounty. What occaſion of Acknowledgements and Praiſe could the Creature have for its Being, if God had given him only a miſerable Being, while it was innocent in action? The Goodneſs of God would not ſuffer him to make a Creature, without providing Conveniencies for it, ſo long as he thought good to maintain its Being, and furniſhing it with that which was neceſſary to anſwer that End for which he Created it; And his own Nature would not ſuffer him to be unkind to his Rational Creature, while it was Innocent. It had been Injuſtice to inflict Evil upon the Creature, that had not offended, and had no relation to an offending Creature; The Nature of God could not have brought forth ſuch an act. † And therefore ſome ſay, That God, after he had Created Man, could not preſently annihilate him, and take away his Life and Being. As a Soveraign he might do it, as Almighty he was able to do it, as well as Create him; but in regard of his Goodneſs, he could not Morally do it: For had he annihilated Man as ſoon as ever he had made him, he had not made Man for himſelf, and for his own Glory; to be loved, worſhipped, ſought, and acknowledged by him: He would not then have

† Cocceii *ſum. Theolog. p. 91.*

have been the end of Man; He had Created him in vain, and the World in vain, which he aſſures us he did not *. And certainly, if the gifts of God be without Repentance, Man could not have been annihilated after his Creation without Repentance in God, without any Cauſe, had not Sin entred into the World. If God did not ſay to Man, after Sin had made its entrance into the World, *Seek ye me in vain*; he could not, becauſe of his Goodneſs, have ſaid ſo to Man in his Innocence. As God is neceſſarily Mind, ſo he is neceſſarily Will; as he is neceſſarily Knowing, ſo he is neceſſarily Loving. He could not be Bleſſed, if he did not know Himſelf, and his own Perfection: Nor Good, if he did not delight in Himſelf, and his own Perfections. And this Goodneſs whereby he delights in Himſelf, is the ſource of his delight in his Creatures, wherein he ſees the footſteps of Himſelf. If he loves Himſelf, he cannot but love the Reſemblance of Himſelf, and the Image of his own Goodneſs. He loves Himſelf, becauſe he is the higheſt Goodneſs and Excellency, and loves every thing as it reſembles Himſelf, becauſe it is an efflux of his own Goodneſs: And as he doth neceſſarily love Himſelf, and his own Excellency, ſo he doth neceſſarily love any thing that reſembles that Excellency, which is the Primary Object of his Eſteem. But,

* Isa. 45. 18, 19.

5. Though he be neceſſarily Good, yet *he is alſo freely Good*. The neceſſity of the Goodneſs of his Nature hinders not the liberty of his Actions: The matter of his acting is not at all neceſſary, but the manner of his acting in a good and bountiful way, is neceſſary, as well as free *. He Created the World and Man freely, becauſe he might chooſe whether he would Create it, but he Created them good neceſſarily, becauſe he was firſt neceſſarily good in his Nature, before he was freely a Creator. When he Created Man, he freely gave him a poſitive Law, but neceſſarily a Wiſe and Righteous Law; becauſe he was neceſſarily Wiſe and Righteous, before he was freely a Lawgiver. When he makes a Promiſe, he freely lets the Word go out of his Lips, but when he hath made it, he is neceſſarily a faithful Performer; becauſe he was neceſſarily True and Righteous in his Nature, before he was freely a Promiſer. God is neceſſarily good in his Nature, but free in his Communications of it: To make him neceſſarily to communicate his Goodneſs in the firſt Creation of the Creature, would render him but Impotent, good without liberty and without will: If the Communications of it be not free, the Eternity of the World muſt neceſſarily be concluded, which ſome Anciently aſſerted from the Naturalneſs of Gods Goodneſs, making the World flow from God as Light from the Sun.

* Gilbert de *Dei Domino*, p. 6.

God indeed is neceſſarily good *Affectivè*, in regard of his Nature; but freely good *Effectivè*, in regard of the Effluxes of it to this or that particular Subject he pitcheth on. He is not neceſſarily Communicative of his Goodneſs as the Sun of his Light, or a Tree of its cooling Shade, that chooſeth not its Objects, but enlightens all indifferently, without any variation or diſtinction: This were to make God of no more Underſtanding than the Sun, to ſhine not where it pleaſeth, but where it muſt. He is an underſtanding Agent, and hath a Soveraign Right to chooſe his own Subjects. It would not be a Supream Goodneſs, if it were not a voluntary Goodneſs. 'Tis agreeable to the Nature of the higheſt Good, to be abſolutely free, to diſpenſe his Goodneſs in what methods and meaſures he pleaſeth, according to the free Determinations of his own Will, guided by the Wiſdom of his Mind, and regulated by the Holineſs of his Nature. He is not to *give an account of any of his matters* †. *He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and he will have compaſſion on whom he will have compaſſion* *. And he will be good to whom he will be good: When he doth act, he cannot but act well, ſo its neceſſary; yet he may act this good, or that good to this or that degree, ſo it is free. As it is the Perfection of his Nature, 'tis neceſſary; as 'tis the communication of his Bounty, 'tis voluntary. The Eye cannot but ſee if it be open, yet it may glance upon this or that colour, fix upon this or that object, as it is conducted by the Will. God neceſſarily loves Himſelf, becauſe he is good, yet not by conſtraint, but freedom; becauſe his affection to Himſelf is from a knowledge of Himſelf: He neceſſarily loves his own Image; becauſe 'tis his Image, yet freely, becauſe not blindly,

† Job 33. 13.

* Rom. 9. 15.

but from motions of Underſtanding and Will. What neceſſity could there be upon him, to reſolve to communicate his Goodneſs? It could not be to make Himſelf better by it; for he had a Goodneſs uncapable of any addition: He confers a goodneſs on his Creatures, but reaps not a Harveſt of goodneſs to his own Eſſence from his Creatures. What Obligation could there be from the Creature, to confer a goodneſs on him to this or that degree, for this or that duration? If he had not Created a Man, nor Angel, he had done them no wrong. If he had given them only a ſimple Being, he had manifeſted a part of his Goodneſs, without giving them a right to challenge any more of him. If he had taken away their Beings after a time when he had anſwered his End, he had done them no Injury: For what Law oblig'd him to enrich them, and leave them in that Being wherein he had inveſted them, but his ſole Goodneſs? Whatever ſparks of goodneſs any Creature hath, are the free effuſions of Gods bounty, the Offspring of his own inclination to do well, the ſimple favor of the Donor; not purchaſed, not merited by the Creature. God is as unconſtrained in his Liberty in all his Communications, as Infinite in his Goodneſs, the Fountain of them.

6. *This Goodneſs is Communicative with the greateſt Pleaſure.* *Moſes* deſired to ſee his Glory, God aſſures him, he ſhould *ſee his Goodneſs* †, intimating that his Goodneſs is his *Glory*, and his Glory his Delight alſo. He ſends not forth his Bleſſings with an ill Will; He doth not ſtay till they are ſqueezed from him; He *prevents* Men with his *Bleſſings of Goodneſs* *; He is moſt delighted, when he is moſt diffuſive, and his pleaſure in beſtowing, is larger than his Creatures in poſſeſſing; He is not covetous of his own Treaſures; He lays up his Goodneſs in order to laying it out with a complacency wholly Divine. The jealouſie Princes have of their Subjects, makes them ſparing of their Gifts, for fear of giving them Materials for Rebellion. Gods foreſight of the ill uſe Men would make of his Benefits, dampt him not in beſtowing his Largeſſes. He is uncapable of Envy: His own Happineſs can no more be diminiſh'd, than it can be encreaſed. None can over-top him in goodneſs, becauſe nothing hath any Good, but what is derived from him; his Gifts are without Repentance: Sorrow hath no footing in him, who is infinitely Happy, as well as infinitely Good. Goodneſs and Envy are inconſiſtent. How unjuſtly then did the Devil accuſe God? What God gives out of Goodneſs, he gives with joy and gladneſs. He did not only Will that we ſhould be, but rejoyce that he had brought us into Being. He *rejoiced* in his *Works* †. And his Wiſdom ſtood by him, *delighting in the habitable parts of the Earth* *. He beheld the World after its Creation with a Complacency, and ſtill governs it with the ſame pleaſure wherewith he reviewed it. Infinite Chearfulneſs attends Infinite Goodneſs. He would not give, if he had not a pleaſure that others ſhould enjoy his Goodneſs; Since he is better than any thing, and more Communicative than any thing; He is more joyful in giving out, than the Sun can be to run its Race in powring forth Light. He is ſaid only to repent and grieve, when Men anſwer not the Obligations and Ends of his Goodneſs; which would be their own Felicity as well as his Glory. Though he doth not force greater degrees of his Goodneſs upon thoſe that neglect it, yet he denies them not to thoſe that ſollicite him for it. 'Tis always greater pleaſure to him to impart upon the importunities of the Creatures, than it is to a Mother to reach out her Breaſt to her crying and longing Infant. He is not wearied by the ſollicitations of Men, he is pleaſed with their Prayers; becauſe he is pleaſed with the imparting of his own Goodneſs. He ſeems to be in travel with it, longing to be delivered of it into the lap of his Creature. He is as much delighted with Petitions for his Liberality in beſtowing his beſt Goodneſs, as Princes are weary of the craving of their Subjects. None can be ſo deſirous to ſqueeze thoſe that are under them, as God is delighted to enlarge his hand towards them. 'Tis the nature of his Goodneſs to be glad of Mens ſollicitations for it: becauſe they are ſignificant valuations of it, and therefore fit occaſions for him to beſtow it. Since he doth not delight in the unhappineſs of any of his Creatures, he certainly delights

† Exod. 33. 18, 19.

* Pſal. 21. 3.

† Pſal. 104. 31.

* Prov. 8. 31.

lights in what may conduce unto their Felicity. He doth with the ſame delight multiply the effects of his Goodneſs, where his Wiſdom ſees it convenient, as he beheld the firſt Fruits of his Goodneſs, with a complacency upon the laying the Top-ſtone of the Creation.

7. *The diſplaying of this Goodneſs was the Motive and End of all his Works of Creation and Providence**. God being Infinitely Wiſe, could not act without the higheſt Reaſon, and for the higheſt End: The reaſon that induced him to Create, muſt be of as great an Eminency as Himſelf: The Motive could not be taken from without him; becauſe there was nothing but Himſelf in Being: It muſt be taken therefore from within Himſelf, and from ſome one of thoſe moſt Excellent Perfections whereby we conceive Him. But upon the exact Conſideration of all of them, none can ſeem to challenge that Honor of being the Motive of them, to reſolve the ſetting forth any Work but his own Goodneſs; This being the firſt thing manifeſt in his Creation, ſeems to be the firſt thing moving him to a Reſolution to Create; Wiſdom may be conſidered as directing; Power conſidered as Acting; but it is natural to reflect upon Goodneſs as moving the one to Direct, the other to Act: Power was the Principle of his Action, Wiſdom the Rule of his Action, Goodneſs the Motive of his Action: Principle and Rule are awakened by the Motive, and ſubſervient to the End. That which is the moſt amiable Perfection in the Divine Nature, and that which he firſt took notice of as the Foot-ſteps of them in the diſtinct view of every days Work, and the general view of the whole Frame, ſeems to claim the beſt right to be entitled the Motive and End of his Creation of Things.

* Amyral *Moral. Tom.* 1. p. 260.

God could have no end but Himſelf, becauſe there was nothing beſides Himſelf. Again, The end of every Agent is that which he eſteems good, and the beſt good for that kind of Action. Since nothing is to be eſteemed good but God, nothing can be the ultimate End of God but Himſelf and his own *Goodneſs*: What a Man wills chiefly, is his End; but God cannot will any other thing but Himſelf as his End, becauſe there is nothing Superior to Himſelf in Goodneſs. He cannot will any thing, that ſupreamly ſerves Himſelf and his own Goodneſs as his End: for if he did, that which he wills, muſt be Superior to Himſelf in Goodneſs, and then he is not God; or Inferior to them in Goodneſs, and then he would not be Righteous, in willing that which is a lower Good before a higher. God cannot will any thing as his End of acting but Himſelf, without undeifying Himſelf. Gods Will being Infinitely Good, cannot move for any thing but what is Infinitely Good; and therefore whatſoever God made, he made for Himſelf, † that whatſoever he made might bear a badge of this Perfection upon it, and be a diſcovery of his wonderful Goodneſs; For the making things for Himſelf doth not ſignifie any Indigence in God, that he made any thing to encreaſe his Excellency (for that is capable of no addition) but to manifeſt his Excellency. God poſſeſſing every thing eminently in Himſelf, did not Create the World for any need he had of it; Finite things were unable to make any acceſſion to that which is Infinite. Man indeed builds a Houſe to be a ſhelter to him againſt wind and weather, and makes Clothes to ſecure him from cold, and plants Gardens for his recreation and health. God is above all thoſe little helps: he did not make the World for Himſelf in ſuch a kind, but for Himſelf, *i. e.* the manifeſtation of Himſelf, and the riches of his Nature. Not to make Himſelf bleſſed, but to diſcover his own bleſſedneſs to his Creatures, and communicate ſomething of it to them. He did not garniſh the World with ſo much Bounty, that he might live more happily than he did before; but that his Rational Creatures might have fit Conveniencies. As the end for which God demands the performance of our Duty, is not for his own advantage, but for our good; * ſo the end why he conferr'd upon us the excellency of ſuch a Being, was for our good, and the diſcovery of his Goodneſs to us: For had not God Created the World, he had been wholly unknown to any but himſelf; He produced Creatures that he might be known. As the Sun ſhines not only to diſcover other things, but to be ſeen it ſelf in its beauty and

† Prov. 16. 4

* Deut. 10. 13.

and brightneſs. God would Create things, becauſe we would be known in his Glory and Liberality; Hence is it that he Created Intellectual Creatures, becauſe without them, the reſt of the Creation could not be taken notice of: It had been in ſome ſort in vain; for no Nature lower than an Underſtanding Nature, was able to know the Marks of God in the Creation, and acknowledge him as God. In this regard, God is good above all Creatures, becauſe he intends only to communicate his Goodneſs in Creation, not to acquire any Goodneſs or Excellency from them, as men do in their framing of things. God is all, and is deſtitute of nothing, and therefore nothing accrues to him by the Creation, but the acknowledgement of his Goodneſs. This Goodneſs therefore muſt be the Motive and End of all his Works.

The third thing, *That God is good.*

1. *The more excellent any thing is in Nature, the more of goodneſs and kindneſs it hath.* For we ſee more of love and kindneſs in Creatures that are endued with Senſe, to their Deſcendents, than in Plants, that have only a Principle of Growth. Plants preſerve their Seeds whole that are encloſed in them; Animals look to their young only after they are dropt from them; yet after ſome time take no more notice of them than of a Stranger that never had any Birth from them. But Man, that hath a higher Principle of Reaſon, cheriſheth his Offspring, and gives them Marks of his goodneſs while he lives, and leaves not the World at the time of his Death without ſome Teſtimonies of it; Much more muſt God, who is a higher Principle than Senſe or Reaſon, be *good* and bountiful to all his Offspring. The more perfect any thing is, the more it doth communicate it ſelf. The Sun is more excellent than the Stars, and therefore doth more ſenſibly, more extenſively diſperſe its liberal Beams than the Stars do. And the better any Man is, the more charitable he is. God being the moſt excellent Nature, having nothing more excellent than himſelf, becauſe nothing more ancient than himſelf, who is the Ancient of Days; There is nothing therefore better and more bountiful than himſelf.

2. *He is the cauſe of all Created Goodneſs, he muſt therefore himſelf be the Supream Good.* What Good is in the Heavens, is the Product of ſome Being above the Earth; and thoſe varieties of Goodneſs in the Earth, and ſeveral Creatures, are ſome where in their Fulneſs and Union: That therefore which poſſeſſes all thoſe ſcattered Goodneſſes in their fulneſs, muſt be all Good, All that Good which is diſplay'd in Creatures; therefore Soveraignly beſt. Whatſoever Natural or Moral Goodneſs there is in the World, in Angels, or Men, or Inferiour Creatures, is a Line drawn from that Center, the Bublings of that Fountain. God cannot but be better then all, ſince the Goodneſs that is in Creatures is the Fruit of his own. If he were not good, he could produce no good: he could not beſtow what he had not. If the Creature be *good*, as the *Apoſtle* ſays, *every Creature is* *, he muſt needs be better than all, becauſe they have nothing but what is derived to them from him; and much more *goodneſs* than all, becauſe Finite Beings are not capable of receiving into them, and containing in themſelves all that goodneſs which is in an Infinite Being; When we ſearch for good in Creatures, they come ſhort of that ſatisfaction which is in God. † As the certainty of a firſt Principle of all things, is neceſſarily concluded from the Being of Creatures, and the upholding and ſuſtaining Power and Virtue of God is concluded from the mutability of thoſe Things in the World; whence we infer, that there muſt be ſome ſtable Foundation of thoſe tottering things, ſome firm Hinge upon which thoſe changeable Things do move, without which, there would be no Stability in the kinds of Things, no Order, no Agreement, or Union among them: So from the goodneſs of every Thing, and their uſefulneſs to us, we muſt conclude him Good, who made all thoſe Things. And ſince we find diſtinct Goodneſſes in the Creature, we muſt conclude that one Principle whence they did flow, excels in the Glory of Goodneſs; All thoſe little Glimmerings of

* 1 Tim. 4. 4.

† Pſal. 4. 6.

of Goodneſs which are ſcattered in the Creatures, as the Image in the Glaſs, repreſent the Face, Poſture, Motion of him whoſe Image it is, but not in the fulneſs of Life and Spirit, as in the Original; 'Tis but a Shadow at the beſt, and ſpeaks ſomething more excellent in the Copy. As God hath an Infiniteneſs of Being above them, ſo he hath a *Supremacy of Goodneſs* beyond them: What they have, is but a Participation from him; what he hath, muſt be infinitely ſuper-eminent above them. If any thing be good by it ſelf, it muſt be Infinitely Good, it would ſet it ſelf no bounds; we muſt make as many Gods, as particulars of Goodneſs in the World: But being Good by the bounty of another, that from whence they flow muſt be the chief Goodneſs. * 'Tis Gods Excellency and Goodneſs, which like a Beam pierceth all things: He decks Spirits with Reaſon, endues Matter with Form, furniſheth every thing with uſeful Qualities.

* Ficinus *in Com. Amor. Orat.* 2. *cap.* p. 1326.

As one Beam of the Sun illuſtrates Fire, Water, Earth; ſo one Beam of God enlightens and endows Minds, Souls, and Univerſal Nature: Nothing in the World had its goodneſs from it ſelf, any more than it had its being from it ſelf. The Cauſe muſt be richer than the Effect.

But that which I intend is the *Defence of this Goodneſs.*

1. *The Goodneſs of God is not impair'd by ſuffering Sin to enter into the World, and Man to fall thereby.* 'Tis rather a Teſtimony of Gods Goodneſs, that he gave Man an ability to be Happy, than any Charge againſt his Goodneſs, that he ſetled Man in a capacity to be Evil. God was firſt a Benefactor to Man, before Man could be a Rebel againſt God. May it not be enquired, whether it had not been againſt the Wiſdom of God, to have made a Rational Creature with Liberty, and not ſuffer him to act according to the Nature he was endowed with, and to follow his own choice for ſome time? Had it been Wiſdom to frame a Free Creature, and totally to reſtrain that Creature from following its Liberty? Had it been Goodneſs, as it were, to force the Creature to be happy againſt its will? Gods Goodneſs furniſh'd *Adam* with a power to ſtand; was it contrary to his Goodneſs, to leave *Adam* to a free uſe of that Power? To make a Creature, and not let that Creature act according to the freedom of his Nature, might have been thought to have been a blot upon his Wiſdom, and a conſtraint upon the Creature, not to make uſe of that freedom of his Nature, which the Divine Goodneſs had beſtowed upon him. To what purpoſe did God make a Law to govern his Rational Creature, and yet reſolve that Creature ſhould not have his choice, whether he would obey it or no? Had he been really conſtrained to obſerve it, his Obſervation of it could no more have been call'd Obedience, than the acts of Bruits that have a kind of Natural conſtraint upon them by the inſtinct of their Nature, can be called Obedience: In vain had God endow'd a Creature with ſo great and noble a Principle as Liberty. Had it been Goodneſs in God after he had made a Reaſonable Creature, to govern him in the ſame manner as he did Bruits, by a neceſſary Inſtinct? It was the Goodneſs of God to the Nature of Men and Angels, to leave them in ſuch a Condition, to be able to give him a voluntary Obedience, a nobler Offering than the whole Creation could preſent him with; And ſhall this Goodneſs be undervalued, and accounted mean, becauſe Man made an ill uſe of it, and turn'd it into wantonneſs? As the unbelief of Man doth not diminiſh the Redeeming Grace of God, † ſo neither doth the fall of Man leſſen the Creating Goodneſs of God. Beſides, why ſhould the permiſſion of ſin be thought more a blemiſh to his Goodneſs, than the providing a way of Redemption for the deſtroying the Works of Sin, and the Devil be judged the Glory of it, whereby he diſcover'd a goodneſs of Grace that ſurpaſt the bounds of Nature? If this were a thing that might ſeem too obſcure, or deface the Goodneſs of God, in the permiſſion of the fall of *Angels* and *Adam*, it was in order to bring forth a greater Goodneſs in a more illuſtrious pomp to the view of the World: * *God hath concluded them all in Unbelief, that he might have Mercy upon*

† Rom. 3. 3.

* Rom. 11. 32.

upon all. But if nothing could be alledged for the defence of his Goodness in this, it were most comely for an ignorant Creature, not to Impeach his Goodness, but adore him in his proceedings, in the same language the *Apostle* doth, *ver.*33. *Oh the depth of the riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways past finding out?*

2. *Nor is his Goodness prejudic'd, by not making all things the equal Subjects of it.*

1. *'Tis true all things are not Subjects of an equal Goodness.* The Goodness of God is not so illustriously manifested in one thing as another. In the Creation he hath dropt goodness upon some, in giving them Beings and Sense; and powr'd it upon others, in endowing them with Understanding and Reason. The *Sun* is full of Light, but it hath a want of Sense; *Brutes* excel in the vigor of Sense, but they are destitute of the Light of Reason: *Man* hath a Mind and Reason conferr'd on him, but he hath neither the acuteness of Mind, nor the quickness of Motion equal with an Angel. In Providence also he doth give abundance: and opens his hand to some, to others he is more sparing; He gives greater gifts of Knowledge to some, while he lets others remain in Ignorance; he strikes down some, and raiseth others; He afflicts some with a continual Pain, while he blesseth others with an uninterrupted Health; He hath chosen one Nation wherein to set up his Gospel Sun, and leaves another benighted in their own Ignorance. *Known was God in Judea, they were a peculiar People alone of all the Nations of the Earth**. He was not equally good to the Angels: He held forth his hand, to support some in their happy Habitation, while he suffered others to sink in irreparable Ruine; and he is not so diffusive here of his Goodness to his own, as he will be in Heaven. Here their Sun is sometimes clouded, but there all clouds and shades will be blown away, and melted into nothing: Instead of Drops here, there will be above Rivers of Life. Is any Creature destitute of the open Marks of his Goodness, though all are not enrich'd with those signal Characters which he vouchsafes to others? He that is unerring pronounced *every thing good* distinctly in its Production, and the whole good in its Universal Perfection. † Though he made not all things *equally good*, yet he made nothing evil; and though one Creature in regard of its Nature, may be better than another, yet an Inferior Creature, in regard of its usefulness in the order of the Creation, may be better than a Superior. The Earth hath a goodness in bringing forth Fruits, and the Waters in the Sea a goodness in multiplying Food. That any of us have a Being, is goodness; that we have not so healthful a Being as others, is unequal, but not unjust goodness. He is good to all, though not in the same degree. *The whole Earth is full of his Mercy**. A good Man is good to his Cattle, to his Servants; he makes a provision for all, but he bestows not those Floods of Bounty upon them, that he doth upon his Children. As there are *various Gifts*, but *one Spirit**; so there are *various Distributions*, but from *one Goodness*; The Drops as well as the fuller Streams, are of the same Fountain, and relish of the Nature of it; And though he do not make all Men partake of the riches of his Grace after the corruption of their Nature, Is his Goodness disgraced hereby? Or doth he merit the Title of Cruelty? Will any diminish the goodness of a Father, for his not setting up his Son, after he hath foolishly and wilfully proved Bankrupt; or not rather admire his liberality in giving him so large a Stock to Trade with, when he first set him up in the World?

Deut. 14.2.

† Gen. 1. 4. 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31.

‡ Psal. 119.64.

* 1 Cor. 12.4.

2. *The goodness of God to Creatures, is to be measured by their distinct Usefulness to the Common End.* It were better for a Toad or Serpent to be a Man, *i. e.* better for the Creature it self, if it were advanced to a higher degree of Being, but not better for the Universe: He could have made every Pebble a living Creature, and every living Creature a Rational one: But that he made every thing as we see, it was a goodness to the Creature it self; But that he did not make it of a higher Elevation in Nature, was a part of his goodness

goodneſs to the Rational Creature. If all were Rational Creatures, there would have been wanting Creatures of an Inferior Nature for their conveniency; There would have wanted the manifeſtation of the *variety* and *fulneſs of his goodneſs*. Had all things in the World been Rational Creatures, much of that goodneſs which he hath communicated to Rational Creatures, would not have appear'd: How could Man have ſhew'd his skill in Taming and Managing Creatures more mighty than himſelf? What Materials would there have been to manifeſt the goodneſs of God, beſtowed upon the reaſonable Creatures for framing Excellent Works and Inventions? Much of the Goodneſs of God hath lain wrapt up from Senſe and Underſtanding. All other things partake not of ſo great a Goodneſs as Man; yet they are ſo ſubſervient to that Goodneſs pour'd forth on Man, that little of it could have been ſeen without them. Conſider Man, every Member in his Body hath a goodneſs in it ſelf; but a greater goodneſs, as referred to the whole, without which, the goodneſs of the more Noble Part would not be manifeſted. The Head is the moſt excellent Member, and hath greater Impreſſions of Divine Goodneſs upon it, in regard that it is the Organ of Underſtanding: Were every Member of the Body a Head, what a deformed Monſter would Man be? If he were all Head, where would be Feet for Motion? and Arms for Action? Man would be fit only for Thought, and not for Exerciſe. The goodneſs of God in giving Man ſo noble a part as the Head, could not be known without a Tongue, whereby to expreſs the Conception of his Mind; and without Feet and Hands whereby to act much of what he conceives and determines, and execute the reſolves of his Will: All thoſe have a Goodneſs in themſelves, an Honor, a Comelineſs from the Goodneſs of God, * but not ſo great a Goodneſs as the Nobler Part: Yet if you conſider them in their Functions, and refer them to that excellent Member which they ſerve, their Inferior Goodneſs is abſolutely neceſſary to the goodneſs of the other; without which, the goodneſs of the Head and Underſtanding would lie in Obſcurity, be Inſignificant to the whole World, and in a great meaſure to the Perſon himſelf that wants ſuch Members.

* 1 Cor. 12. 22, 23.

3. *The Goodneſs of God is more ſeen in this inequality.* If God were equally good to all, it would deſtroy Commerce, Unity, the Links of Humane Society; damp Charity, and render that uſeleſs which is one of the nobleſt and delightfulleſt Duties to be exerciſed here; It would cool Prayer, which is excited by wants, and is a neceſſary demonſtration of the Creatures dependance on God. But in this inequality, every Man hath enough in his Enjoyments for Praiſe, and in his Wants matter for his Prayer. Beſides, the inequality of the Creature is the Ornament of the World: What pleaſure could a Garden afford, if there were but one ſort of Flowers, or one ſort of Plants? Far leſs than when there is variety to pleaſe the Sight, and every other Senſe.

Again, The freedom of Divine Goodneſs, which is the Glory of it, is evident hereby; Had he been alike good to all, it would have look'd like a neceſſary, not a free Act: But by the inequality, it is manifeſt that he doth not do it by a Natural neceſſity as the Sun ſhines, but by a voluntary Liberty, as being the entire Lord, and free Diſpoſer of his own Goods: And that it is the gift of the Pleaſure of his Will, as well as the Efflux of his Nature; That he hath not a Goodneſs without Wiſdom, but a Wiſdom as rich as his Bounty.

4. *The Goodneſs of God could not be equally communicated to all, after their ſettlement in their ſeveral Beings.* Becauſe they have not a capacity in their Natures for it: He doth beſtow the Marks of his Goodneſs according to that natural Capacity of fitneſs he perceives in his Creatures: As the Water of the Sea fills every Creek and Gulf with different Meaſures, according to the compaſs each have to contain it; And as the Sun doth diſperſe Light to the Stars above, and the places below, to ſome more, to ſome leſs, according to the meaſures of their Reception. God doth not do good to all Creatures ac-

cording to the greatneſs of his own Power, and the extent of his own Wealth, but according to the capacity of the Subject: Not ſo much good as he can do, but ſo much good as the Creature can receive. The Creature would ſink, if God would pour out all his Goodneſs upon it: As *Moſes* would have periſhed, if God ſhould have ſhewn him all his Glory *. He doth manifeſt more Goodneſs to his Reaſonable Creatures, becauſe they are more capable of acknowledging, and ſetting forth his Goodneſs.

* Exod. 33. 18, 20.

5. *God ought to be allow'd the free diſpoſal of his own Goodneſs.* Is not God the Lord of his own Gifts; and will you not allow him the priviledge of having ſome more peculiar Objects of his love and pleaſure, which you allow without blame to Man, and uſe your ſelf without any ſenſe of a Crime? Is a Prince eſteem'd good, though he be not equally bountiful to all his Servants, nor equally gracious in pardoning all his Rebels; And ſhall the goodneſs of the great Soveraign of the World be impeach'd, notwithſtanding thoſe mighty diſtributions of it; becauſe he will act according to his own Wiſdom and Pleaſure, and not according to Mens fancies and humors? Muſt purblind Reaſon be the Judge and Director, how God ſhall diſpoſe of his own, rather than his own Infinite Wiſdom and Soveraign Will? Is God leſs good, becauſe there are numberleſs nothings, which he is able to bring into being? He could Create a World of more Creatures than he hath done: Doth he therefore wiſh evil to them by letting them remain in that nothing from whence he could draw them? No, but he denies that good to them, which he is able if he pleaſed to confer upon them.

If God doth not give that good to a Creature which it wants by his own demerit, can he be ſaid to wiſh evil to it; or only to deny that goodneſs which the Creature hath forfeited, † and which is at Gods liberty to retain or diſperſe? Though God cannot but love his own Image where he finds it, yet when this Image is loſt, and the Devils Image voluntarily received, he may chooſe whether he will manifeſt his goodneſs to ſuch a one or no. Will you not account that Man liberal, that diſtributes his Alms to a great company, though he rejects ſome? Much more will you account him good, if he rejects none that implore him, but diſpenſeth his doles to every one upon their Petition: And is he not good, becauſe he will not beſtow a Farthing upon thoſe that Addreſs not themſelves to him? God is ſo good, that he denies not the beſt good to thoſe that ſeek him: He hath promiſed Life and Happineſs to them that do ſo. Is he leſs good, becauſe he will not diſtribute his goodneſs to thoſe that deſpiſe him? Though he be Good, yet his Wiſdom is the Rule of diſpenſing his Goodneſs.

† Camero p. 30.

6. *The ſevere Puniſhment of Offenders, and the Afflictions he inflicts upon his Servants, are no violations of his Goodneſs.* The Notion of Gods Vindictive Juſtice is as naturally inbred, and implanted in the mind of Man, as that of his Goodneſs, and thoſe two Sentiments never ſhock'd one another. The Heathen never thought him bad becauſe he was Juſt, nor unrighteous becauſe he was Good. God being Infinitely good, cannot poſſibly intend or act any thing but what is good: *Thou art good, and thou doſt good, i. e.* whatſoever thou doſt is good, whatſoever it be, pleaſant or painful to the Creature: * Puniſhments themſelves are not a Moral Evil in the Perſon that inflicts, though they are a Natural evil in the Perſon that ſuffers them. In ordering Puniſhment to the Wicked, Good is added to Evil; In ordering Impunity to the Wicked, Evil is added to Evil. To puniſh Wickedneſs is Right, therefore Good: To leave Men uncontroul'd in their Wickedneſs, is Unrighteous, and therefore Bad. But again, Shall his Juſtice in ſome few Judgments in the World, impeach his Goodneſs, more than his wonderful Patience to Sinners is able to ſilence the Calumnies againſt him? Is not his hand fuller of gracious Doles, than of dreadful Thunderbolts? Doth he not oftner ſeem forgetful of his Juſtice, when he pours upon the Guilty the Streams of his Mercy, than to be forgetful of his Goodneſs, when he ſprinkles in the World ſome drops of his Wrath?

* Pſ. 119. 68.

Boetius.

First,

Firſt, *Gods Judgments in the World, do not infringe his Goodneſs*; For,

1. *The Juſtice of God is a part of the Goodneſs of his Nature.* God Himſelf thought ſo, when he told *Moſes*, he would make all his *Goodneſs* paſs before him *: He leaves not out in that enumeration of the parts of it, his Reſolution, by no means to clear the Guilty, but to viſit the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children †. Tis a Property of *Goodneſs* to hate Evil, and therefore a Property of *Goodneſs* to puniſh it: 'Tis no leſs Righteouſneſs to give according to the deſerts of a Perſon in a way of Puniſhment, than to reward a Perſon that obeys his Precepts in a way of Recompence. Whatſoever is Righteous is Good; Sin is evil, and therefore whatſoever doth witneſs againſt it, is good: His Goodneſs therefore ſhines in his Juſtice, for without being Juſt he could not be good. Sin is a Moral Diſorder in the World: Every Sin is Injuſtice: Injuſtice breaks Gods Order in the World; there is a neceſſity therefore of Juſtice to put the World in Order. Puniſhment orders the Perſon committing the Injury, who when he will not be in the order of Obedience, muſt be in the order of ſuffering for Gods Honor. The goodneſs of all things which God pronounced ſo, conſiſted in their order and beneficial helpfulneſs to one another: When this order is inverted, the goodneſs of the Creature ceaſeth: If it be a bad thing to ſpoil this order, Is it not a part of Divine Goodneſs to reduce them into order, that they may be reduced in ſome meaſure to their goodneſs? Do we ever account a Governor leſs in goodneſs, becauſe he is exact in Juſtice, and puniſheth that which makes a diſorder in his Government? And is it a diminution of the Divine Goodneſs, to puniſh that which makes a Diſorder in the World? As Wiſdom without Goodneſs would be a Serpentine Craft, and iſſue in Deſtruction; ſo Goodneſs without Juſtice would be impotent Indulgece, and caſt things into Confuſion. When *Abels* Blood cryed out for Vengeance againſt *Cain*, it ſpake a good thing; Chriſts Blood ſpeaking better things than the Blood of *Abel*, implies that *Abel*'s Blood ſpake a good thing; the Comparative implies a Poſitive *. If it were the goodneſs of that Innocent Blood to demand Juſtice, it could not be a badneſs in the Soveraign of the World to execute it. How can God ſuſtain the part of a Good and Righteous Judge, if he did not preſerve Humane Society? And how would it be preſerved, without manifeſting himſelf by Publick Judgments againſt Publick Wrongs? Is there not as great a neceſſity that Goodneſs ſhould have Inſtruments of Judgment, as that there ſhould be Priſons, Bridewells, and Gibbets in a good Commonwealth? Did not the Thunderbolts of God ſometimes roar in the ears of Men, they would ſin with a higher hand than they do, fly more in the Face of God, make the World as much a Moral, as it was at firſt a Natural Chaos: The Ingenuity of Men would be damp'd, if there were not ſomething to work upon their Fears, to keep them in their due order. Impunity of the nocent Perſon is worſe than any Puniſhment. 'Tis a Miſery to want Medicines for the Cure of a ſharp Diſeaſe; and a Mark of goodneſs in a Prince to conſult for the ſecurity of the Political Body, by cutting off a Gangreen'd and corrupting Member: And what Prince would deſerve the noble Title of Good, if he did not reſtrain by puniſhment thoſe Evils which impair the Publick Welfare? Is it not neceſſary that the Examples of Sin, whereby others have been encourag'd to Wickedneſs, ſhould be made Examples of Juſtice, whereby the ſame Perſons, and others, may be diſcourag'd from what before they were greedily inclin'd unto? Is not a Hatred of what is bad and unworthy, as much a part of Divine Goodneſs, as a love to what is Excellent, and bears a Reſemblance to himſelf? Could he poſſibly be accounted Good, that ſhould bear the ſame degree of Affection to a prodigious Vice, as to a ſublime Virtue? And ſhould behave himſelf in the ſame manner of carriage to the Innocent and Culpable? Could you account him Good, if he he did always with pleaſure behold Evil, and perpetually ſuffer the Oppreſſions of the Innocent under unpuniſh'd Wickedneſs? How ſhould we know the Goodneſs of the Divine Nature, and his Affection to the goodneſs of his Creature, if he did not by ſome acts of Severity witneſs his implacable averſion againſt Sin, and his care to preſerve the good government of the World? If corrupted Creatures ſhould al-

† Exod 34. 7.

* Heb. 12. 24.

ways be exempt from the effects of his Indignation, he would declare himſelf not to be Infinitely Good, becauſe he would not be really Righteous. No Man thinks it a Natural Vice in the Sun, by the power of its ſcorching heat, to dry up and conſume the unwholſom Vapours of the Air; nor are the Demonſtrations of Divine Juſtice any blots upon his Goodneſs, ſince they are both for the defence and glory of his Holineſs, and for the preſervation of the beauty and order of the World.

2. *Is it not part of the Goodneſs of God to make Laws, and annex Threatnings; And ſhall it be an Impeachment of his Goodneſs to ſupport them?* The more ſevere Laws are made for deterring Evil, the better is that Prince accounted, in making ſuch proviſion for the welfare of the Community. The deſign of Laws, and the deſign of upholding the honor of thoſe Laws by the puniſhment of Offenders, is to promote Goodneſs and reſtrain Evil; The Execution of thoſe Laws muſt be therefore purſuant to the ſame deſign of Goodneſs, which firſt ſetled them. Would it not be contrary to Goodneſs, to ſuffer that which was deſign'd for the ſupport of Goodneſs, to be ſcorn'd and ſlighted? It would neither be prudence nor goodneſs, but folly and vice, to let Laws, which were made to promote Vertue, be broken with Impunity. Would not this be to weaken Vertue, and give a new life and Vigor to Vice? Not only the Righteouſneſs of the Law it ſelf, but the Wiſdom of the Lawgiver would be expoſed to contempt, if the Violations of it remain'd uncontroul'd, and the Violence offer'd by Men paſſed unpuniſhed. None but will acknowledge the Divine Precepts to be the Image of the Righteouſneſs of God, and beneficial for the common good of the World; **The Law is holy, juſt and good*, and ſo is every Precept of it: The Law was for no other end, but to keep the Creature in ſubjection to, and dependance on God: This dependance could not be preſerved without a Law, nor that Law be kept in Reputation without a Penalty; nor would that Penalty be ſignificant without an Execution. Every Law loſeth the nature of a Law, without a Penalty; and the Penalty loſeth its vigor, without the infliction of it: How can thoſe Laws attain their end, if the Tranſgreſſions of them be not puniſhed? Would not the Wickedneſs of Mens hearts be encouraged by ſuch a kind of uncomely Goodneſs? And all the Threatnings be to no other end, than to engender vain and fruitleſs Fears in the Minds of Men? Is it good for the Majeſty of God to ſuffer it ſelf to be trampled on by his Vaſſals? To ſuffer Men by their Rebellion to level his Law with the wickedneſs of their own hearts; and by Impunity ſlight his own Glory, and incourage their Diſobedience? Who would give any Man, any Prince, any Father that ſhould do ſo, the name of a good Governor? If it were a Fruit of Divine Goodneſs to make Laws, is it contrary to Goodneſs to ſupport the honor of them? 'Tis every whit as rational, and as good to vindicate the honor of his Laws by Juſtice, as at firſt to ſettle them by Authority; As much goodneſs to vindicate it from Contempt, as at firſt to Enact it; As it is as much Wiſdom to preſerve a Law, as at firſt to frame it: Shall his Precepts be thought by him unworthy of a Support, that were not thought by him unworthy to be made? The ſame reaſon of Goodneſs that led him to enjoyn them, will lead him to revenge them. Did evil appear odious to him, while he Enacted his Law; and would not his own Goodneſs, as well as his Wiſdom appear odious to him, if he did never execute it? Would it not be a denial of his own Goodneſs, to be led by the fooliſh and corrupt Judgment of his Creatures, and ſlight his own Law, becauſe his Rebels ſpurn at it? Since he valued it before they could actually contemn it, would he not misjudge his own Law and his own Wiſdom, diſcount from the true value of them, condemn his own Acts, cenſure his Precepts as Unrighteous, and therefore Evil and Injurious? Remove the differences between Good and Evil, look upon Vice as Virtue, and Wickedneſs as Righteouſneſs, if he thought his Commands unworthy of a Vindication? How can there be any ſupport to the honor of his Precepts, without ſometimes Executing the ſeverity of his Threatnings?

* Rom. 7. 12.

And

And as to his Threatnings of puniſhment for the breach of his Laws, are they not deſigned to diſcourage Wickedneſs, as the Promiſes of Reward were deſigned to encourage Goodneſs? Hath he not multiplyed the one to ſcare Men from Sin, as well as the other to allure Men to Obedience? Is not the ſame Truth engaged to ſupport the one as well as the other? And how could he be abundant in Goodneſs, if he were not abundant in Truth? Both are link'd together; *If he neglected his Truth, he would be out of love with his own Goodneſs; ſince it cannot be manifeſted in performing the Promiſes to the Obedient, if it be not alſo manifeſted in executing his Threatnings upon the Rebellious. Had not God annex'd Threatnings to his Laws, he would have had no care of his own Goodneſs. The Order between God and the Creature wherein the Declaration of his Goodneſs conſiſted, might have been eaſily broken by his Creature: Man would have freed himſelf from ſubjection to God, been unaccountable to him. Had this conſiſted with that Infinite Goodneſs whereby he loves himſelf, and loves his Creatures? As therefore the annexing Threatnings to his Law, was a part of his Goodneſs; the Execution of them is ſo far from being a blemiſh, that it is the honor of his Goodneſs. The Rewards of Obedience, and the Puniſhment of Diſobedience refer to the ſame end, *viz.* the due manifeſtation of the valuation of his own Law, the glorifying his own Goodneſs, which enjoyned ſo beneficial a Law for Man, and the ſupport of that goodneſs in the Creatures which by that Law he demands righteouſly and kindly of them.

* Exod. 34. 6.

3. Hence it follows, *That not to puniſh Evil would be a want of Goodneſs to himſelf.* The Goodneſs of God is an indulgent Goodneſs in a way of Wiſdom and Reaſon; not a fond Goodneſs in a way of weakneſs and folly: Would it not be a weakneſs, always to bear with the Impenitent? A want of expreſſing a goodneſs to Goodneſs it ſelf? Would not Goodneſs have more reaſon to complain for a want of Juſtice to reſcue it, than Men have reaſon to complain for the exerciſe of Juſtice in the vindication of it? If God eſtabliſhed all things in Order with Infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and God ſilently behold f r ever this Order broken; would he not either charge himſelf with a want of Power, or a want of Will to preſerve the Marks of his own Goodneſs? Would it be a kindneſs to himſelf to be careleſs of the breaches of his own Orders? His Throne would ſhake, yea, ſink from under him, if Juſtice, whereby he Sentenceth, and Judgment, whereby he Executes his Sentence, were not the ſupports of it. † *Juſtice and Judgment are the habitation of thy Throne,* מכון, the Stability or Foundation of thy Throne; So *Pſal.* 92. 2. Man would forget his Relation to God, God would be unknown to be Soveraign of the World, were he careleſs of the breaches of his own Order. * *The Lord is known by his Judgments which he Executes;* Is it not a part of his Goodneſs to preſerve the indiſpenſible Order between himſelf and his Creatures? His own Soveraignty which is good, and the ſubjection of the Creature to him as Soveraign, which is alſo good; The one would not be maintained in its due place, nor the other reſtrained in due limits without puniſhment. Would it be a goodneſs in him to ſee Goodneſs it ſelf trampled upon conſtantly, without ſome time or other appearing for the relief of it? Is it not a Goodneſs to ſecure his own Honor, to prevent further Evil? Is it not a Goodneſs to diſcourage Men by Judgments, ſometimes from a contempt and ill uſe of his Bounty; as well as ſometimes patiently to bear with them, and wait upon them for a Reformation? Muſt God be bad to Himſelf, to be kind to his Enemies? And ſhall it be accounted an unkindneſs and a mark of Evil in him not to ſuffer himſelf to be always outrag'd and defy'd? The World is wrong'd by Sin, as well as God is injur'd by it. How could God be good to himſelf, if he righted not his own Honor? Or be a good Governor of the World, if he did not ſometimes witneſs againſt the Injuries it receives ſometimes from the works of his hands? Would he be good to himſelf as a God, to be careleſs of his own Honor? Or good as the Rector of the World, and be regardleſs of the Worlds Confuſion?

† Pſ.

* Pſal. 9. 16

That

That God ſhould give an Eternal Good to that Creature that declines its Duty, and deſpiſeth his Soveraignty, is not agreeable to the goodneſs of his Wiſdom, or that of his Righteouſneſs; 'Tis a part of Gods Goodneſs to love himſelf: Would he love his Soveraignty, if he ſaw it daily ſlighted, without ſometimes diſcovering how much he values the Honor of it? Would he have any eſteem for his own Goodneſs, if he Beheld it trampled upon, without any Will to vindicate it? Doth Mercy deſerve the name of Cruelty, becauſe it pleads againſt a Creature that hath ſo often abuſed it; and hath refuſed to have any pity exerciſed towards it in a Righteous and Regular way? Is Soveraignty deſtitute of Goodneſs, becauſe it preſerves its Honor againſt one that would not have it reign over him? Would he not ſeem by ſuch a regardleſneſs to renounce his own Eſſence, undervalue and undermine his own Goodneſs, if he had not an implacable Averſion to whatſoever is contrary to it? If Men turn Grace into Wantonneſs, is it not more reaſonable he ſhould turn his Grace into Juſtice?

All his Attributes, which are parts of his Goodneſs, engage him to puniſh Sin; without it his Authority would be vilified, his Purity ſtain'd, his Power derided, his Truth diſgraced, his Juſtice ſcorn'd, his Wiſdom ſlighted: He would be thought to have diſſembled in his Laws, and be judged, according to the Rules of Reaſon, to be void of true Goodneſs.

4. *Puniſhment is not the primary intention of God.* 'Tis his Goodneſs that he hath no mind to Puniſh; and therefore he hath put a bar to Evil by his Prohibitions and Threatnings, that he might prevent Sin, and conſequently any occaſions of ſeverity againſt his Creature*: The Principal Intention of God in his Law, was to encourage Goodneſs, that he might reward it; And when by the commiſſion of Evil God is provoked to Puniſh, and takes the Sword into his hand, he doth not act againſt the Nature of his Goodneſs, but againſt the firſt intention of his Goodneſs in his Precepts, which was to Reward: As a good Judge principally intends in the Exerciſe of his Office, to protect good Men from Violence, and maintain the honor of the Laws; yet conſequently to puniſh bad Men, without which, the Protection of the Good would not be ſecured, nor the honor of the Law be ſupported: And a good Judge in the Exerciſe of his Office, doth principally intend the incouragement of the Good, and wiſheth there were no Wickedneſs that might occaſion Puniſhment; and when he doth Sentence a Malefactor in order to the Execution of him, he doth not act againſt the goodneſs of his Nature, but purſuant to the Duty of his Place; but wiſheth he had no occaſion for ſuch ſeverity. Thus God ſeems to ſpeak of himſelf; † He calls the act of his Wrath, his *Strange Work*, *his Strange Act*; A Work not againſt his Nature, as the Governor of the World; but againſt his firſt Intention as Creator, which was to manifeſt his Goodneſs: Therefore he moves with a ſlow pace in thoſe Acts, brings out his Judgments with relentings of heart, and ſeems to caſt out his Thunderbolts with a trembling hand: *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men**: And therefore he *delights not in the death of a Sinner*†: Not in Death as Death, in Puniſhment as Puniſhment, but as it reduceth the ſuffering Creature to the Order of his Precept, or reduceth him into order under his Power, or reforms others who are Spectators of the Puniſhment upon a Criminal of their own Nature: God only hates the Sin, not the Sinner: He deſires only the deſtruction of the one, not the miſery of the other: The Nature of a Man doth not diſpleaſe him, becauſe it is a Work of his own Goodneſs; but the Nature of the Sinner diſpleaſeth him, becauſe it is a Work of the Sinners own extravagance. Divine Goodneſs pitcheth not its hatred primarily upon the Sinner, but upon the Sin: But ſince he cannot puniſh the Sin, without puniſhing the Subject to which it cleaves, the Sinner falls under his laſh. Who ever regards a good Judge as an Enemy to the Malefactor, but as an Enemy to his Crime, when he doth Sentence and Execute him?

* Zarnovecius, *de ſatisfact. Part.* 1. *c.* 1. *p.* 3, 4.

† Iſaiah 28. 2

* Lam. 3. 3.

† Ezek. 33. 11.

* Suarez. *Vol.* 1. *de Deo lib.* 3. *cap.* 7. *p.* 146.

5. *Judg-*

5. *Judgments in the world have a goodneſs in them, therefore they are no Impeachments of the Goodneſs of God.*

1. *A Goodneſs in their Preparations.* He ſends not Judgments without giving Warnings: His Juſtice is ſo far from extinguiſhing his Goodneſs, that his Goodneſs rather ſhines out in the preparations of his Juſtice: He gives Men time, and ſends them Meſſengers to perſwade them to another temper of mind, that he may change his Hand, and exerciſe his Liberality, where he threatned his Severity. When the *Heathen* had Preſages of ſome Evil upon their Perſons or Countries, they took them for invitations to Repentance, excited themſelves to many acts of Devotion, implored his Favor, and often Experimented it. The *Ninivites*, upon the Proclamation of the deſtruction of their City by *Jonah*, fell to Petitioning him; whereby they ſignified, That they thought him good, though he were juſt, and more prone to Pity than Severity; and their humble Carriage cauſed the Arrows he had ready againſt them, to drop out of his hands *. When he brandiſheth his Sword, he wiſhes for ſome to ſtand in that Gap to mollifie his anger, that he might not ſtrike the fatal blow; † *I ſought for a man among them that ſhould make up the Hedge, and ſtand in the Gap before me in the Land, that I ſhould not deſtroy it.* He was deſirous that his Creatures might be in a capacity to receive the marks of his bounty *: This he ſignified, not obſcurely to *Moſes*, *Exod.* 32. 10. when he ſpoke to him to let him alone, that his anger might wax hot againſt the People, after they had made a Golden Calf and Worſhipped it. *Let me alone*, ſaid God: Not that *Moſes* reſtrained him, ſaith *Chryſoſtom*, who ſpake nothing to him, but ſtood ſilent before him, and knew nothing of the Peoples Idolatry; But God would give him an occaſion of praying for them, that he might exerciſe his Mercy towards them; yet in ſuch a manner, that the People being ſtruck with a ſenſe of their Crime, and the horrour of Divine Juſtice, they might be amended for the future; when they ſhould underſtand that their Death was not averted by their own Merit or Interceſſion, but by *Moſes* his Patronage of them, and pleading for them. As we ſee ſometimes Maſters and Fathers angry with their Servants and Children, and preparing themſelves to puniſh them, but ſecretly wiſh ſome Friend to intercede for them, and take them out of their hands: There is a *Goodneſs* ſhining in the preparations of his Judgments.

* Jonah 3. 9, 10.
† Ezek. 22. 30.
* Creſſel *Antholog. Decad.* 2. p. 162.

2. *A Goodneſs in the Execution of them.* They are good, as they ſhew God diſaffected to Evil, and conduce to the glory of his Holineſs, and deter others from preſumptuous Sins: † *I will be glorified in all that draw near unto me*; in his Judgment upon *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the ſons of *Aaron*, for Offering ſtrange Fire.

† Deut. 10. 3.

By them God preſerves the excellent Footſteps of his own Goodneſs in his Creation and his Law; and curbs the Licentiouſneſs of Men, and contains them within the bounds of their Duty. *Thy Judgments are good*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt* *, *i. e.* Thy Judicial proceedings upon the Wicked: For he deſires God there, to turn away by ſome ſignal act, the reproach the Wicked caſt upon him. Can there be any thing more miſerable than to live in a World full of Wickedneſs, and void of the Marks of Divine Goodneſs and Juſtice to repreſs it? Were there not Judgments in the World, Men would forget God, be inſenſible of his Government of the World, neglect the Exerciſes of Natural and Chriſtian Duties; Religion would be at its laſt gaſp, and expire among them, and Men would pretend to break Gods Precepts by Gods Authority. Are they not good then, as they reſtrain the Creature from further Evils? Affright others from the ſame Crimes, which they were inclinable to commit? He ſtrikes ſome, to reform others that are Spectators; As *Apollonius* tam'd Pigeons, by beating Dogs before them. Puniſhments are Gods gracious Warnings to others, not to venture upon thoſe Crimes which they ſee attended with ſuch Judgments. The Cenſers of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and

* Pſal. 119. Pſal. 39.

Abiram were to be wrought into Plates for a covering of the Altar, to abide there as a *Memento* to others, not to approach to the Exerciſe of the Prieſtly Office, without an authoritative Call from God *; And thoſe Judgments exerciſed in the former Ages of the World, were intended by Divine Goodneſs for warnings, even in Evangelical Times. *Lot*'s Wife was turned into a Pillar of Salt, to prevent Men from Apoſtacy: That uſe Chriſt himſelf makes of it, in the Exhortation againſt *turning back* †. And, * *The Righteous ſhall waſh his Feet in the Blood of the Wicked.* When God ſhall drench his Sword in the Blood of the Wicked, the Righteous ſhall take occaſion from thence to purifie themſelves, and reform their ways, and look to the paths of their Feet. Would not Impunity be hurtful to the World, and Men receive incouragement to Sin, if Severities ſometimes did not bridle them from the practice of their Inclinations? Sometimes the Sinner himſelf is reform'd, and ſometimes remov'd from being an Example to others. Though Thunder be an affrightning noiſe, and Lightning a ſcaring flaſh, yet they have a liberal Goodneſs in them, in ſhattering and conſuming thoſe contagious Vapors which burden and infect the Air, and thereby render it more clear and healthful.

Num. 16. 38, 40.

† Luke 17. 32, 33.

* Pſal. 58. 10.

Again, There are few acts of Divine Juſtice upon a People, but are in the very Execution of them attended with demonſtrations of his Goodneſs to others: He is a Protector of his own, while he is a Revenger on his Enemies; When he rides upon his Horſes in *anger* againſt ſome, his Chariots are *Chariots of Salvation* to others*. Terror makes way for Salvation: The overthrow of *Pharaoh*, and the ſtrength of his Nation, compleated the deliverance of the *Iſraelites*. Had not the *Egyptians* met with their Deſtruction, the *Iſraelites* had unavoidably met with their Ruine, againſt all the Promiſes God had made to them, and to the defamation of his former Juſtice in the former Plagues upon their Oppreſſors. The death of *Herod* was the ſecurity of *Peter*, and the reſt of the malic'd Chriſtians. The gracious deliverance of good Men is often occaſion'd by ſome ſevere ſtroak upon ſome eminent Perſecutor: The deſtruction of the Oppreſſor is the reſcue of the Innocent.

* Hab. 3. 8.

Again, Where is there a Judgment but leaves more Criminals behind than it ſweeps away, that deſerved to be involved in the ſame fate with the reſt? More *Egyptians* were left behind to poſſeſs and enjoy the goodneſs of their fruitful Land, than they were that were hurried into another World by the overflowing Waves; Is not this a Mark of goodneſs as well as ſeverity?

Again, Is it not a goodneſs in him not to pour out Judgments according to the greatneſs of his Power? To go gradually to work with thoſe, whom he might in a moment blow to deſtruction with one breath of his Mouth?

Again, He ſometimes exerciſeth Judgments upon ſome, to form a new Generation for himſelf; He deſtroy'd an old World, to raiſe a new one more Righteous; As a Man pulls down his own Buildings, to erect a ſounder and more ſtately Fabrick. To ſum up what hath been ſaid in this particular; How could God be a Friend to Goodneſs, if he were not an Enemy to Evil? How could he ſhew his enmity to Evil, without revenging the abuſe and contempt of his Goodneſs? God would rather have the Repentance of a Sinner, than his puniſhment; but the Sinner would rather expoſe himſelf to the ſevereſt frowns of God, than purſue thoſe Methods wherein he hath ſetled the Conveyances of his kindneſs; *You will not come to me, that you might have Life*, ſaith Chriſt. How is Eternity of puniſhment inconſiſtent with the Goodneſs of God? Nay, How can God be good without it? If wickedneſs always remain in the Nature of Man, Is it not fit the Rod ſhould always remain on the Back of Man? Is it a want of goodneſs that keeps an incorrigible Offender in Chains, in a Bridewell? While Sin remains, it's fit it ſhould be puniſhed: Would not God elſe be an Enemy to his own Goodneſs; and ſhew favor to that which doth abuſe it, and is contrary to it? He hath threatned Eternal Flames to Sinners, that he might the more ſtrongly excite them to a Reformation of their Ways, and a Practice of his Precepts.

In thoſe Threatnings he hath manifeſted his Goodneſs; And can it be bad in him to defend what his Goodneſs hath Commanded, and Execute what his Goodneſs hath Threatned? His Truth is alſo a part of his Goodneſs; for it is nothing but his Goodneſs performing that which it oblig'd him to do. That is the firſt thing, Severe Judgments in the World are no Impeachments of his Goodneſs.

2. *The Afflictions God inflicts upon his Servants, are no violations of his Goodneſs.* Sometimes God afflicts Men for their Temporal and Eternal good; for the good of their Grace in order to the good of their Glory; which is a more excellent Good than Afflictions can be an Evil. The Heathens reflected upon *Ulyſſes* his hardſhip as a Mark of *Jupiters* goodneſs and love to him, that his Virtue might be more conſpicuous. By ſtrong Perſecutions brought upon the Church, her Lethargy is Cur'd, her Chaff Purg'd, the glorious Fruit of the Goſpel brought forth in the lives of her Children; The number of her Proſelytes multiply, and the ſtrength of her weak ones is increaſed, by the Teſtimonies of Courage and Conſtancy which the ſtronger preſent to them in their Sufferings. Do thoſe good Effects ſpeak a want of Goodneſs in God, who brings them into this condition? By thoſe he cures his People of their Corruptions, and promotes their Glory by giving them the honour of ſuffering for the Truth, and raiſeth their Spirits to a Divine pitch. The Epiſtles of *Paul* to the *Epheſ. Philip.* and *Coloſ.* wrote by him while he was in *Nero*'s Chains, ſeem to have a higher ſtrain than ſome of thoſe he wrote when he was at liberty.

As for Afflictions, they are Marks of a greater meaſure of Fatherly Goodneſs than he diſcovers to thoſe that live in an uninterrupted Proſperity, who are not dignifi'd with that glorious Title of *Sons*, as thoſe are that *he chaſteneth* *. Can any queſtion the goodneſs of the Father that Corrects his Child to prevent his Vice and Ruine, and breed him up to Virtue and Honour? It would be a Cruelty in a Father leaving his Child without Chaſtiſement, to leave him to that Miſery an ill Education would reduce him to, *God judges us that we might not be condemned with the world* †. Is it not a *greater Goodneſs* to ſeparate us from the World to Happineſs by his Scourge, than to leave us to the condemnation of the World for our Sins? Is it not a greater Goodneſs to make us ſmart here, than to ſee us ſcorcht hereafter? As he is our Shepherd, it is no part of his Enmity or ill will to us, to make us feel ſometimes the weight of his Shepherds Crook, to reduce us from our Stragling. The *viſiting our Tranſgreſſions with Rods, and our Iniquities with Stripes*, is one of the Articles of the Covenant of Grace, wherein the greateſt luſtre of his Goodneſs appears *. The advantage and gain of our Afflictions is a greater Teſtimony of his Goodneſs to us, than the pain can be of his Unkindneſs: The Smart is well recompenced by the acceſſion of clearer Graces.

* Heb. 12. 6. 7.

† 1 Cor. 11. 32.

* Pſal. 89. 33.

It is rather a high Mark of his Goodneſs, than an Argument for the want of it, that he treats us as his Children, and will not ſuffer us to run into that Deſtruction we are more ambitious of, than the Happineſs he hath prepared for us, and by Afflictions he fits us for the partaking of, by *imparting his Holineſs* together with the inflicting his Rod †. That is the third thing, God is Good.

The Fourth thing is, *The manifeſtation of this Goodneſs in Creation, Redemption*, and *Providence*.

† Heb. 12. 10.

1. *In Creation.* This is apparent from what hath been ſaid before, That no other Attribute could be the Motive of his *Creating*, but his Goodneſs; His Goodneſs was the Cauſe that he made any thing, and his Wiſdom was the Cauſe that he made every thing in Order and Harmony: He pronounced *every thing Good, i. e.* ſuch as became his Goodneſs to bring forth into Being,

and reſted in them more, as they were Stamps of his Goodneſs, than as they were Marks of his Power, or Beams of his Wiſdom: And if all Creatures were able to anſwer to this Queſtion, *What that was which created them?* The Anſwer would be, Almighty Power, but employed by the Motion of Infinite Goodneſs*. All the varieties of Creatures are ſo many Apparitions of this Goodneſs. Though God be one, yet he cannot appear as a God, but in variety. As the greatneſs of Power is not manifeſt but in variety of Works, and an Acute Underſtanding not diſcover'd, but in variety of Reaſonings; ſo an Infinite Goodneſs is not ſo apparent, as in variety of Communications.

* Cuſan, p. 228.

1. *The Creation proceeds from Goodneſs.* 'Tis the *Goodneſs* of God to extract ſuch multitude of things from the depths of nothing. Becauſe God is Good, things have a Being; If he had not been Good, nothing could have been Good; Nothing could have imparted that which it poſſeſſed not: Nothing but Goodneſs could have communicated to things an Excellency, which before they wanted. Being is much more Excellent than nothing. By this Goodneſs therefore the whole Creation was brought out of the dark Womb of Nothing: This formed their Natures, this beautified them with their ſeveral Ornaments and Perfections, whereby every thing was enabled to act for the good of the Common World. God did not Create things becauſe he was a living Being; but becauſe he was a Good Being: No Creature brought forth any thing in the World meerly becauſe it is; but becauſe it is Good, and by a communicated Goodneſs fitted for ſuch a Production. If God had been the Creating Principle of things, only as he was a Living Being, or as he was an Underſtanding Being; then all things ſhould have partaken of Life and Underſtanding; becauſe all things were to bear ſome Characters of the Deity upon them. If by Underſtanding ſolely God were the Creator of all things, all things ſhould have born the Mark of the Deity upon them, and ſhould have been more or leſs Underſtanding; but he Created things as he was Good, and by Goodneſs he renders all things more or leſs like himſelf; Hence every thing is accounted more noble, not in regard of its Being, but in regard of the Beneficialneſs of its Nature. The Being of things was not the End of God in Creating, but the Goodneſs of their Being: God did not reſt from his Works, becauſe they were his Works, *i.e.* becauſe they had a Being, but becauſe they had a *Good Being*; * becauſe they were naturally *uſeful* to the Univerſe: Nothing was more pleaſing to him, than to behold thoſe Shadows and Copies of his own *Goodneſs* in his Works.

* Gen. 1.

† Petav. *Theolog. Dogmat. Tom.* 1. p. 402.
* Leſſius *de Perfect. div.* p. 100.

2. *Creation was the firſt act of Goodneß without himſelf.* † When he was alone from Eternity, he contented himſelf with himſelf, abounding in his own Bleſſedneſs, delighting in that abundance: He was incomprehenſively rich in the poſſeſſion of an unſtain'd Felicity. *This Creation was the firſt Efflux of his Goodneſs without himſelf: For the work of Creation cannot be called a work of Mercy: Mercy ſuppoſeth a Creature miſerable; but that which hath no Being, is ſubject to no Miſery: For to be miſerable, ſuppoſeth a Nature in Being, and deprived of that Good which belongs to the pleaſure and felicity of Nature; but ſince there was no Being, there could be no Miſery: The Creation therefore was not an act of Mercy, but an act of ſole Goodneſs: and therefore it was the Speech of an *Heathen*, That *when God firſt ſet upon the Creation of the World, he transform'd himſelf into Love and Goodneſs*, Εις ἔρωτα μεταβλῆθαι τὸν Θεὸν μέλλοντα δημιουργεῖν. This led forth and animated his Power, the firſt moment it drew the Univerſe out of the Womb of Nothing; And

† Pherecydes.

3. *There is not one Creature but hath a Character of his Goodneſs.* The whole World is a Map to Repreſent, and a Herald to proclaim this Perfection: 'Tis as difficult not to ſee ſomething of it in every Creature with the Eye of our Minds, as it is not to ſee the Beams of the Shining Sun with thoſe of our Bodies.

Bodies. * *He is good to all*: He is therefore good in all; Not a drop of the Creation, but is a drop of his Goodneſs. * Pſal. 145. 9.

Theſe are the Colours worn upon the Heads of every Creature. As in every Spark the light of the Fire is manifeſted, ſo doth every grain of the Creation wear the viſible Badges of this Perfection. In all the Lights, the Father of Lights hath made the Riches of Goodneſs apparent; No Creature is ſilent in it, 'tis legible to all Nations in every work of his hands. That as it is ſaid of Chriſt, † *In the Volume of thy Book it is written of me*: In the Volume of the book of the Scripture 'tis written of me, and my Goodneſs in Redemption; So it may be ſaid of God, In the *Volume* of the Book of the Creature 'tis written of me, and my Goodneſs in Creation. Every Creature is a Page in this Book, whoſe *Line is gone through all the Earth, and their words to the end of the World* †. Though indeed the leſs goodneſs in ſome is obſcur'd by the more reſplendent Goodneſs he hath imparted unto others: What an admirable piece of goodneſs is it to communicate Life to a Fly? How ſhould we ſtand gazing upon it, till we turn our Eye inwards, and view our own Frame, which is much more raviſhing? † Pſal. 40. 7. * Pſal. 19. 4.

But let us ſee the Goodneſs of God in the Creation Man.

1. *In the Being and Nature of Man.* God hath with a liberal hand conferr'd upon every Creature the beſt Being it was capable of in that Station and Order, and conducing to that end and uſe in the World he intended it for: But when you have run over all the meaſures of Goodneſs God hath poured forth upon other Creatures, you will find a greater fulneſs of it in the Nature of Man, whom he hath placed in a more ſublime Condition, and endued with choicer Prerogatives than other Creatures: He was made but little lower than the Angels, and much more loftily crown'd with glory and honour than other Creatures †. Had it not been for Divine Goodneſs, this excellent Creature had lain wrapt up in the Abyſs of nothing: Or if he had call'd it out of nothing, there might have been leſs of Skill, and leſs of Goodneſs diſplay'd in the forming of it, and a leſſer kind of Being imparted to it, than what he hath conferr'd. † Pſal. 8. 5.

1. *How much of Goodneſs is viſible in his Body*? God drew out ſome part of the Duſt of the Ground, and Copy'd out this Perfection, as well as that of his Power, on that mean Matter, by erecting it into the form of Man, quickning that Earth by the Inſpiration of a *living Soul* *: Of this Matter he compoſed an excellent Body in regard of the Majeſty of the Face, Erectneſs of its Stature, and Grace of every part: How neatly hath he wrought this *Tabernacle of Clay, this Earthly Houſe*, as the *Apoſtle* calls it †? A curious wrought piece of Needle-work, a Comely Artifice; * an Embroider'd Caſe for an Harmonious Lute: What *variety of Members*, with a due proportion, without confuſion, beautiful to ſight, excellent for uſe, powerful for ſtrength? It hath Eyes to conduct its Motion, to ſerve in Matter for the Food and delight of the Underſtanding: Ears to let in the pleaſure of Sounds, to convey Intelligence of the Affairs of the World, and the Counſels of Heaven to a more noble Mind: It hath a Tongue to expreſs, and ſound forth what the learn'd Inhabitant in it thinks; and Hands to act what the Inward Counſellor directs; and Feet to ſupport the Fabrick: 'Tis temper'd with a kindly Heat and an Oily moiſture for Motion, and endued with conveyances for Air to qualifie the fury of the Heat, and nouriſhment to ſupply the decays of Moiſture: 'Tis a Cabinet fitted by Divine Goodneſs for the encloſing a rich Jewel; a Palace made of Duſt, to lodge in it the Viceroy of the World: An Inſtrument diſpos'd for the operations of the Nobler Soul, which he intended to unite to that refined Matter: What is there in the ſituation of every part, in the proportion of every Member, in the uſefulneſs of every Limb and String to the Offices of the Body, and Service of the Soul? What is there in the whole Structure that doth not inform us of the goodneſs of God? * Gen. 2. 7. † 2 Cor. 5. 1. * Pſal. 139. 15.

2. But what is this *to that goodneſs which ſhines in the Nature of the Soul?* Who can expreſs the wonders of that Comlineſs that is wrapt up in this Mask of Clay? A *Soul* endued with a clearneſs of Underſtanding and freedom of Will: Faculties no ſooner fram'd, but they were able to produce the Operations they were intended for; A Soul that excelled the whole World, that comprehended the whole Creation; A Soul that evidenced the extent of its Skill, in *giving names* to all that variety of Creatures, which had iſſued out of the hand of Divine Power*; A Soul able to diſcover the Nature of other Creatures, and manage and conduct their motions. In the Ruines of a Palace we may ſee the Curioſity diſplay'd, and the coſt expended in the building of it; In the Ruines of this fallen Structure, we ſtill find it capable of a mighty Knowledge, a Reaſon able to regulate Affairs, govern States, order more Mighty and Maſſy Creatures, find out witty Inventions; There is ſtill an Underſtanding to irradiate the other Faculties, a Mind to contemplate its own Creator, a Judgment to diſcern the differences between Good and Evil, Vice and Virtue, which the Goodneſs of God hath not granted to any lower Creature. Theſe Excellent Faculties, together with the Power of Self reflection, and the ſwiftneſs of the Mind in running over the things of the Creation, are aſtoniſhing Gleams of the vaſt goodneſs of that Divine Hand which ennobled this Frame. To the other Creatures of this World, God had given out ſome ſmall Mites from his Treaſury; but in the Perfections of Man, he hath opened the more ſecret parts of his Exchequer, and liberally beſtow'd thoſe Doles, which he hath not expended upon the other Creatures on Earth.

* Gen. 2. 19.

3. Beſides this, He did not only make Man ſo noble a Creature in his Frame, but *he made him after his own Image in Holineſs.* He imparted to him a Spark of his own Comlineſs, in order to a communion with himſelf in Happineſs, had Man ſtood his ground in his Tryal, and uſed thoſe Faculties well, which had been the Gift of his Bountiful Creator: He *made Man after his Image*, after his own Image; † That as a Coyn bears the Image of the Prince, ſo did the Soul of Man the *Image of God*: Not the Image of Angels, though the ſpeech be in the Plural Number, [*Let us make Man.*] 'Tis not to a Creature, but to a Creator; Let *us* that are his Makers, make him in the Image of his Makers. God Created Man, Angels did not Create him; God Created Man in his *own* Image, not therefore in the Image of Angels: The Nature of God, and the Nature of Angels are not the ſame. Where in the whole Scripture is Man ſaid to be made after the Image of Angels? God made Man not in the Image of Angels, to be conformed to them as his Prototype; but in the Image of the Bleſſed God, to be conformed to the Divine Nature: That as he was conform'd to the Image of his Holineſs, he might alſo partake of the Image of his Bleſſedneſs, which without it could not be attained: For as the felicity of God could not be clear without an unſpotted Holineſs, ſo neither can there be a glorious Happineſs without Purity in the Creature; This God provided for in his Creation of Man, giving him ſuch accompliſhments in thoſe two Excellent Pieces of Soul and Body, that nothing was wanting to him but his own Will, to inſtate him in an invariable Felicity. He was poſſeſſed with ſuch a Nature by the hand of Divine Goodneſs, ſuch a loftineſs of Underſtanding, and purity of Faculties, that he might have been for ever happy as well as the ſtanding Angels: And he was placed in ſuch a Condition, that moved the envy of fallen Spirits; He had as much Grace beſtow'd upon him, as was proportionable to that Covenant God then made with him: The Tenor of which was, That his Life ſhould continue ſo long as his Obedience, and his Happineſs endure ſo long as his Integrity: And as God by Creation had given him an Integrity of Nature, ſo he had given him a power to perſiſt in it, if he would. Herein is the Goodneſs of God diſplay'd, that he made Man after his own Image.

† Gen. 1, 26, 27.

4. As

4. As to the Life of Man in this World, *God by an immenſe Goodneſs Copied out in him the whole Creation, and made him an Abridgment of the higher and lower World*; a little World in a greater one. The Link of the two Worlds, of Heaven and Earth, as the Spiritual and Corporeal Natures are united in him, the Earth in the Duſt of his Body, and the Heavens in the Chryſtal of his Soul: He hath the upper Springs of the Life of Angels in his Reaſon, and the neather Springs of the Life of Animals in his Senſe. God diſplay'd thoſe Virtues in Man, which he had diſcover'd in the reſt of the lower Creation; but beſides the communication which he had with Earth in his Nature, God gave him a participation with Heaven in his Spirit. A meer Bodily Being he hath given to the Heavens, Earth, Elements; a Vegetative Life, or a Life of Growth he hath vouchſafed to the Plants of the Ground: He hath ſtretched out his Liberality more to Animals and Beaſts by giving them Senſe. All theſe hath his goodneſs linkt in Man, Being, Life, Senſe, with a richer Dole than any of thoſe Creatures have receiv'd in a Rational Intellectual Life, whereby he approacheth to the Nature of Angels. This ſome of the *Jews* underſtood. **God breathed into his Noſtrils the Breath of Life, and Man became a living Soul*, חיים Breath of Lives in the *Hebrew*; not one ſort of Life, but that variety of Lives which he had imparted to other Creatures: All the Perfections ſcattered in other Creatures, do unitedly meet in Man: So that *Philo* might well call him *every Creature, the Model of the whole Creation*: His Soul is Heaven, and his Body is Earth †. So that the Immenſity of his Goodneſs to Man, is as great as all that Goodneſs you behold in Senſitive and Intelligible things. * Gen. 2. 7. † Eugubin. *lib. 5. cap. 9.*

5. *All this was free Goodneſs.* God Eternally poſſeſſed his own Felicity in himſelf, and had no need of the Exiſtence of any thing without himſelf for his ſatisfaction. Man before his Being could have no good qualities to invite God to make him ſo Excellent a Fabrick: For being nothing, he was as unable to allure and merit, as to bring himſelf into Being; Nay, he Created a Multitude of Men, who he foreſaw would behave themſelves in as ungrateful a manner; as if they had not been his Creatures, but had beſtow'd that rich variety upon themſelves without the hand of a Superior Benefactor.

How great is this Goodneſs, that hath made us Models of the whole Creation, tied together Heaven and Earth in our Nature, when he might have rankt us among the lower Creatures of the Earth, made us meer Bodies as the Stones, or meer Animals as the Brutes, and denied us thoſe Capacious Souls, whereby we might both know him and enjoy him? What could Man have been more, unleſs he had been the Original, which was impoſſible? He could not be greater than to be an Image of the Deity, an Epitome of the whole Creation. Well may we cry out with the Pſalmiſt, * *O Lord, our Lord, How Excellent is thy Name*, the Name of thy Goodneſs *in all the Earth?* How more particularly in Man: *What is Man that thou art mindful of him?* What is a little Clod of Earth and Duſt, that thou ſhouldeſt ennoble him with ſo rich a Nature, and Engrave upon him ſuch Characters of thy Immenſe Being? * Pſal. 8. 1, 4.

6. *The Goodneſs of God appears in the Conveniencies he provided for, and gave to Man.* As God gave him a Being Morally perfect in regard of Righteouſneſs, ſo he gave him a Being Naturally perfect in regard of delightful Conveniencies, which was the fruit of Excellent Goodneſs; Since there was no quality in Man, to invite God to provide him ſo rich a World, nor to beſtow upon him ſo Comely a Being.

7. *The World was made for Man.* Since Angels have not need of any thing in this World, and are above the Conveniencies of Earth and Air, it will follow, that Man being the nobleſt Creature on the Earth, was the more

more immediate End of the viſible Creation. All inferior things are made to be ſubſervient to thoſe that have a more excellent Prerogative of Nature; and therefore all things for Man, who exceeds all the reſt in Dignity: As Man was made for the honour of God, ſo the World was made for the ſupport and delight of Man, in order to his performing the Service due from him to God. The Empire God ſetled Man in as his Lieutenant over the Works of his Hands, when he gave him poſſeſſion of *Paradiſe*, is a clear manifeſtation of it: God put all things under his Feet, and gave him a deputed Dominion over the reſt of the Creatures under himſelf, as the abſolute Sovereign; * *Thou madeſt him to have Dominion over the Works of thy Hands, thou haſt put all things under his Feet, all Sheep and Oxen, yea, and the Beaſts of the Field, the Foul of the Air, and the Fiſh of the Sea, yea, and whatſoever paſſeth through the Paths of the Sea.* What leſs is witneſs'd to by the Calamity all Creatures were ſubjected to by the Corruption of Mans Nature? Then was the Earth Curs'd, and a black Cloud flung upon the Beauty of the Creation, and the ſtrength and vigor of it languiſheth to this day under the Curſe of God †, and *groans under that vanity the Sin of Man ſubjected it to* *. The Treaſons of Man againſt God, brought Miſery upon that which was fram'd for the uſe of Man: As when the Majeſty of a Prince is violated by the Treaſon and Rebellion of his Subjects, all that which belongs to them, and was before the free Gift of the Prince to them, is forfeit, their Habitations, Palaces, Cattle, all that belongs to them bear the Marks of his Sovereign fury: Had not the Delicacies of the Earth been made for the uſe of Man, they had not fallen under the Indignation of God upon the Sin of Man.

* Pſal. 8. 6, 7, 8.

† Gen. 2. 17, 18.

* Rom. 8. 20, 22.

God Crown'd the Earth with his Goodneſs to gratify Man; gave Man a right to ſerve himſelf of the delightful Creatures he had provided; † yea, and after Man had forfeited all by Sin, and God had waſht again the Creature in a Deluge, he renews the Creation, and delivers it again into the hand of Man, binding all Creatures to pay a Reſpect to him, and Recognize him as their Lord, either ſpontaneouſly or by force; * and commiſſions them all to fill the heart of Man with *food and gladneſs*: And he loves all Creatures as they conduce to the good of, and are ſerviceable to his prime Creature which he ſet up for his own glory: And therefore when he loves a Perſon, he loves what belongs to him: He takes care of *Jacob* and his Cattle: Of Penitent *Nineveh* and their Cattle: † As when he ſends Judgments upon Men, he deſtroys their Goods.

† Gen. 1. 28, 29, 30.

* Gen. 9. 2, 3.

† Jonah. 4. 11.

2. *God richly furniſht the World for Man.* He did not only erect a ſtately Palace for his Habitation, but provided all kind of Furniture as a Mark of his Goodneſs for the Entertainment of his Creature Man: He Archt over his Habitation with a beſpangled Heaven, and Floor'd it with a ſolid Earth, and ſpread a curious wrought Tapeſtry upon the Ground where he was to tread, and ſeemed to ſweep all the Rubbiſh of the Chaos to the two uninhabitable Poles. When at the firſt Creation of the Matter the Waters cover'd the Earth, and rendred it uninhabitable for Man, God drain'd them into the proper Chanels he had founded for them, and ſet a bound that they might not paſs over, that they turn not again to *cover the Earth* *. They *fled* and *haſted away* to their proper Stations, † as if they were ambitious to deny their own Nature, and content themſelves with an Impriſonment for the convenient Habitation of him, who was to be appointed Lord of the World. He hath ſet up ſtanding Lights in the Heaven, to direct our Motion and to regulate the Seaſons: The Sun was Created, that Man might ſee to *go forth to his Labour* *: Both Sun and Moon though ſet in the Heaven, were form'd to *give light* on the Earth †. The Air is his Aviary, the Sea and Rivers his Fiſh-ponds, the Valleys his Granary, the Mountains his Magazine; The firſt afford Man Creatures for Nouriſhment, the other Metals for Perfection: The Animals were Created for the ſupport of the Life of Man, the Herbs of the Ground were provided for the maintenance of their Lives, and gentle Dews,

* Gen. 1. 9.

† Pſal. 104. 7, 8, 9.

* Pſal. 104. 22, 23.

† Gen. 1. 15, 17.

Dews and moiſtening Showers, and in ſome places ſlimy Flouds appointed to render the Earth fruitful, and capable to offer to Man and Beaſt what was fit for their Nouriſhment. He hath peopled every Element with a variety of Creatures both for neceſſity and delight; all furniſht with uſeful qualities for the Service of Man. There is not the moſt deſpicable thing in the whole Creation, but it is endued with a Nature to contribute ſomething for our Welfare; either as Food to nouriſh us when we are Healthful, or as Medicine to Cure us when we are Diſtemper'd, or as a Garment to Cloath us when we are Naked, and Arm us againſt the Cold of the Seaſon, or as a refreſhment when we are weary, or as a delight when we are ſad; All ſerve for Neceſſity or Ornament, either to ſpread our Table, beautify our Dwellings, furniſh our Cloſets, or ſtore our Wardrobes: * *The whole Earth is full of his Riches.* Nothing but by the rich Goodneſs of God is exquiſitely accommodated in the numerous brood of things, immediately or mediately for the uſe of Man; All in the iſſue conſpire together to render the World a delightful Reſidence for Man. And therefore all the living Creatures were brought by God to attend upon Man after his Creation, to receive a Mark of his Dominion over them by the *impoſition of their Names* †. He did not only give variety of Senſes to Man, but provided variety of delightful Objects in the World for every Senſe: The Beauties of Light and Colours for our Eye, the Harmony of Sounds for our Ear, the Fragrancy of Odours for our Noſtrils, and a Delicious Sweetneſs for our Palates: Some have qualities to pleaſure all, every thing a quality to pleaſure one or other: He doth not only preſent thoſe things to our view, as rich Men do in Oſtentation their Goods: He makes us the Enjoyers as well as the Spectators, and gives us the Uſe as well as the Sight: and therefore he hath not only given us the Sight, but the Knowledge of them. He hath ſet up a Sun in the Heavens, to expoſe their outward Beauty and Conveniencies to our Sight; and the Candle of the Lord is in us, to expoſe their inward qualities and Conveniencies to our Knowledge, that we might ſerve our ſelves of, and rejoyce in all this Furniture wherewith he hath garniſht the World; and have wherewithal to employ the inquiſitiveneſs of our Reaſon, as well as gratify the pleaſure of our Senſe: and particularly, God provided for Innocent Man a delightful Manſion-houſe, a place of more ſpecial Beauty and Curioſity, the Garden of *Eden*, a delightful Paradiſe, a Model of the Beauties and pleaſures of another World, wherein he had placed whatſoever might contribute to the felicity of a Rational, and Animal Life, the Life of a Creature compoſed of Mire and Duſt, of Senſe and Reaſon *: Beſides the other Delicacies conſign'd in that place to the uſe of Man, there was a Tree of Life provided to maintain his Being, and nothing denied in the whole compaſs of that Territory but one Tree, that of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which was no Mark of an ill will in his Creator to him, but a Reſerve of God's abſolute Soveraignty, and a Trial of Mans voluntary Obedience. What blur was it to the Goodneſs of God, to reſerve one Tree for his own propriety, when he had given to Man in all the reſt ſuch numerous Marks of his Rich Bounty and Goodneſs? What *Iſrael* after Mans Fall enjoyed ſenſibly, *Nehemiah* calls *great Goodneſs* †. How inexpreſſible then was that Goodneſs manifeſted to Innocent Man, when ſo ſmall a part of it indulg'd to the *Iſraelites* after the Curſe upon the Ground, is call'd as truly it Merits, ſuch great Goodneſs? How can we paſs through any part of this great City, and caſt our Eyes upon the well furniſht Shops, ſtor'd with all kinds of Commodities, without reflections upon this Goodneſs of God, ſtarting up before our Eyes in ſuch varieties, and plainly telling us, that he hath accommodated all things for our uſe, ſuited things both to ſupply our need, content a reaſonable Curioſity, and delight us in our aims at, and paſſage to our Supream End?

* Pſal. 104. 24.

† Gen. 2. 19, 20.

* Gen. 2. 9.

† Neh. 9. 25.

3. *The Goodneſs of God appears in the Laws he hath given to Man, the Covenant he made with him.* It had not been agreeable to the Goodneſs of God,

to

to let a Creature governable by Law, be without a Law to regulate him, his Goodneſs then which had broke forth in the Creation, had ſuffer'd an Eclipſe and obſcurity in his Government. As Infinite Goodneſs was the Motive to Create, ſo Infinite Goodneſs was the Motive of his Government. And this appears;

1. *In the fitting the Law to the Nature of Man.* It was rather below than above his ſtrength; he had an integrity in his Nature to anſwer the Righteouſneſs of the Precept. * God Created *Man upright*; his Nature was ſuited to the Law, and the Law to his Nature; it was not above his underſtanding to know it, nor his Will to embrace it, nor his paſſions to be regulated by it: The Law and his Nature were like two exact ſtraight Lines, touching one another in every part when joyned together: God exacted no more by his Law, than what was written by Nature in his Heart: He had a knowledge by Creation to obſerve the Law of his Creation, and he fell not for want of a Righteouſneſs in his Nature: He was enabled for more than was commanded him, but wilfully indiſpoſed to leſs than he was able to perform. The Precepts were eaſie, not only becoming the Authority of a Sovereign to exact, but the Goodneſs of a Father to demand, and the Ingenuity of a Creature and a Son to pay. † *His Commands are not grievous*; the obſervance of them had fill'd the Spirit of Man with an extraordinary Contentment. It had been no leſs a pleaſure and a delightful ſatisfaction to have kept the Law in a Created State, than it is to keep it in ſome meaſure in a renew'd State: The renewed Nature finds a ſuitableneſs in the *Law* to kindle a *delight* *: It could not then have any wiſe ſhook the Nature of an upright Creature, nor have been a burden too heavy for his Shoulders to bear. Though he had not a Grace given him above Nature, yet he had not a Law given him that ſurmounted his Nature: It did not exceed his Created ſtrength, and was ſuited to the Dignity and Nobility of a Rational Nature: It was a *juſt Law*, † and therefore not above the Nature of the Subject that was bound to obey it. And had it been impoſſible to be obſerved, it had been unrighteous to be Enacted: It had not been a matter of Divine Praiſe, and that ſeven times a day; as it is, **Seven times a day do I Praiſe thee becauſe of thy Righteous Judgments.* The Law was ſo Righteous, that *Adam* had every whit as much reaſon to bleſs God in his Innocence for the Righteouſneſs of it, as *David* had with the Reliques of Enmity againſt it: His Goodneſs ſhines ſo much in his Law, as merits our Praiſe of him, as he is a Sovereign Law-giver, as well as a Gracious Benefactor in the imparting to us a Being.

* Eccleſ. 7. 29.

† 1 John 5. 3.

* Pſal. 1. 2.

† Rom. 7. 12.

* Pſal. 119. 164.

2. *In fitting it for the Happineſs of Man.* For the ſatisfaction of his Soul, which finds a *Reward in* the very act of *keeping* it, † *Great peace* in the *loving* it; for the preſervation of Human Society, wherein conſiſts the External felicity of Man. It had been inconſiſtent with Divine Goodneſs, to enjoyn Man any thing that ſhould be oppreſſive and uncomfortable. Bitterneſs cannot come from that which is altogether Sweet: Goodneſs would not have oblig'd the Creature to any thing, but what is not only free from damaging him, but wholly conducing to his welfare, and Perfective of his Nature. Infinite Wiſdom could not order any thing, but what was agreeable to Infinite Goodneſs. As his Laws are the moſt Rational, as being the contrivance of Infinite Wiſdom: ſo they are the beſt, as being the Fruit of Infinite Goodneſs. His Laws are not only the acts of his Sovereign Authority, but the Effluxes of his Loving-Kindneſs, and the Conductors of Man to an enjoyment of a greater Bounty. He minds as well the promotion of his Creatures Felicity, as the aſſerting his own Authority: As good Princes make Laws for their Subjects benefit, as well as their own honour. What was ſaid of a more difficult and burdenſome Law long after Mans fall, may much more be ſaid of the eaſie Law of Nature in the ſtate of Mans Innocence, that it was *for our good* *. He never pleaded with the *Iſraelites* for the obſervation of his Commands upon the account of his Authority, ſo much as upon the ſcore of their *benefit* by them. *

† Pſal. 119. 165.

* Deut. 10. 12, 13. Deut. 4. 40.

And

And when his Precepts were broken, he ſeems ſometimes to be more griev'd for Mens impairing their own felicity by it, than for their violating his Authority; † *Oh that thou hadſt hearken'd to my Commandments, then had thy Peace been as a River!* Goodneſs cannot preſcribe a thing prejudicial: whatſoever it enjoyns, is beneficial to the Spiritual and Eternal Happineſs of the Rational Creature: This was both the deſign of the Law given, and the end of the Law. Chriſt in his Anſwer to the Young Mans Queſtion, refers him to the Moral Law, (which was the Law of Nature in *Adam*) as that whereby Eternal Life was to be gained: which evidenceth, that when the Law was firſt given as the Covenant of Works, it was for the happineſs of Man; and the end of giving it was, that Man might have Eternal Life by it: There would elſe be no ſtrength or truth in that Anſwer of Chriſt to that Ruler. And therefore *Stephen* calls the Law given by *Moſes*, which was the ſame with the Law of Nature in *Adam*, * *The living Oracles*: He enjoyned Mens Services to them not ſimply for his own Glory, but his Glory in Mens Welfare: As if there were any Being better than himſelf, his Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs would guide him to love that better than himſelf; becauſe it is Good and Righteous to love that beſt which is moſt amiable: So if there were any that could do us more good, and ſhour down more happineſs upon us than himſelf, he would be content we ſhould obey that as Sovereign, and Steer our courſe according to his Laws: † *If God be God, follow him, but if* Baal, *then follow him*: If the obſervance of the Precepts of *Baal* be more beneficial to you; If you can advance your Nature by his Service, and gain a more mighty Crown of Happineſs than by mine, follow him with all my heart: I never intended to enjoyn you any thing to impair, but increaſe your Happineſs. The chief deſign of God in his Law, is the Happineſs of the Subject; and Obedience is intended by him, as a means for the attaining of Happineſs, as well as preſerving his own Sovereignty. This is the reaſon why he wiſhed that *Iſrael* had walked in his ways, *that their time might have endured for ever*, Pſal. 81. 13, 15, 16. And by the ſame reaſon, this was his intendment in his Law given to Man, and his Covenant made with Man at the Creation, that he might be fed with the fineſt part of his Bounty, and be ſatisfied with Honey out of the Eternal Rock of Ages. To Paraphraſe his Expreſſion there. The Goodneſs of God appears further;

† Eſaiah 48. 18.

* Acts 7. 38.

† Kings 18. 21.

3. *In engaging Man to Obedience by Promiſes and Threatnings.* A Threatning is only mentioned, *Gen.* 2. 17. but a Promiſe is implied: If Eternal Death were fixed for Tranſgreſſion, Eternal Life was thereby deſign'd for Obedience: And that it was ſo, the Anſwer of Chriſt to the Ruler evidenceth, that the firſt intendment of the Precept was the Eternal Life of the Subject, order'd to obey it.

1. *God might have acted in ſetling his Law only as a Sovereign.* Though he might have dealt with Man upon the ſcore of his abſolute Dominion over him as his Creature, and ſignified his pleaſure upon the right of his Sovereignty, threatning only a Penalty if Man tranſgreſſed, without the promiſing a bountiful acknowledgment of his Obedience by a Reward as a Benefactor; yet he would treat with Man in gentle Methods, and Rule him in a tract of Sweetneſs as well as Soveraignty; He would preſerve the Rights of his Dominion in the Authority of his Commands, and honour the condeſcenſions of his Goodneſs in the allurements of a Promiſe. He that might have ſolely demanded a compliance with his Will, would kindly Article with him, to oblige him to obſerve him out of love to himſelf as well as Duty to his Creator; that he might have both the intereſt of avoiding the Threatned Evil to affright him, and the intereſt of attaining the promiſed Good to allure him to Obedience. How doth he value the Title of Benefactor above that of a

Lord! when he ſo kindly ſolicites, as well as Commands, and engageth to Reward that Obedience which he might have abſolutely claim'd as his due, by enforcing fears of the ſevereſt Penalty. His Sovereignty ſeems to ſtoop below it ſelf for the elevation of his *Goodneſs*; and he is pleaſed to have his Kindneſs more taken notice of than his Authority. Nothing imported more condeſcenſion than his bringing forth his Law in the Nature of a Covenant, whereby he ſeems to humble himſelf, and vail his Superiority, to treat with Man as his equal, that the very manner of his Treatment might oblige him in the richeſt Promiſes he made to draw him, and the ſtarting Threatnings he pronounced to link him to his Obedience: And therefore is it obſervable, that when after the Tranſgreſſion of *Adam* God comes to deal with him, he doth not do it in that thundering Rigor, which might have been expected from an enrag'd Sovereign, but in a gentle Examination, **Haſt thou eaten of the Tree whereof I commanded thee, that thou ſhouldſt not eat*? To the Woman he ſaid no more than, *What is this that thou haſt done*? And in the *Scripture* we find, when he cites the *Iſraelites* before him for their Sin, he Expoſtulates with them not ſo much upon the abſolute right he had to challenge their Obedience, as upon the equity and reaſonableneſs of his Law, which they had tranſgreſt: That by the ſame argument of *ſweetneſs* wherewith he would attract them to their Duty, he might *ſhame* them after their *Offence*†.*

* Gen. 3. 11, 13.

† Iſaiah 1. 2.
* Ezek. 18. 25.

2. *By the Threatnings he manifeſts his Goodneſs as well as by his Promiſes.* He Promiſes that he might be a Rewarder, and Threatens that he might not be a Puniſher; the one is to elevate our *hope*, and the other to excite our *fear*, the two Paſſions whereby the Nature of Man is manag'd in the World. He imprints upon Man Sentiments of a Miſery by Sin in his thundring Comminations, that he might engage him the more to embrace and be guided by the Motives of Sweetneſs in his gracious Promiſes. The deſign of them was to preſerve Man in his due bounds, that God might not have occaſion to blow upon him the Flames of his Juſtice; to ſupreſs thoſe irregular Paſſions, which the Nature of Man (though Created without any diſorder) was capable of entertaining upon the appearance of ſuitable Objects; and to keep the Waves from ſwelling upon any turning Wind, that ſo Man being modeſt in the uſe of the Goodneſs God had allowed him, might ſtill be capable of freſh ſtreams of Divine Bounty, without ever falling under his Righteous Wrath for any Tranſgreſſion. What a proſpect of Goodneſs is in this proceeding, to diſcloſe Mans Happineſs to be as durable as his Innocence; and ſet before a Rational Creature the extreameſt Miſery due to his Crime, to affright him from neglecting his Creator, and making unworthy Returns to his Goodneſs? What could be done more by Goodneſs to ſuit that paſſion of fear which was implanted in the Nature of Man, than to aſſure him he ſhould not degenerate from the Righteouſneſs of his Nature, and violate the Authority of his Creator, without falling from his own Happineſs, and ſinking into the moſt deplorable Calamity?

3. *The Reward he promiſed, manifeſts yet further his Goodneſs to Man.* It was his Goodneſs to intend a Reward to Man: No neceſſity could oblige God to Reward Man, had he continued obedient in his Created State: For in all Rewards which are truly Merited, beſides ſome kind of equality to be conſider'd between the Perſon doing Service, and the Perſon Rewarding, and alſo between the Act performed, and the Reward beſtow'd, there muſt alſo be conſider'd the condition of the Perſon doing the Service, that he is not oblig'd to do it as a Duty, but is at his own choice whether to offer it or no: But Man being wholly dependent on God in his Being and Preſervation, having nothing of his own, but *what he had receiv'd* from the hands of Divine Bounty, † his Service was due by the ſtrongeſt Obligation to God: But there was no natural Engagement on God to return a Reward to him; for Man could return nothing of his own, but that only which he had received from

† 1 Cor. 4. 7.

from his Creator: It muſt be pure Goodneſs that gives a gracious Reward for a due Debt, to receive his own from Man, and return more than he had received. A Divine Reward doth far ſurmount the value of a Rational Service.

It was therefore a mighty Goodneſs to ſtipulate with Man, that upon his Obedience he ſhould enjoy an Immortality in that Nature. * The Article on Mans part was Obedience, which was neceſſarily juſt, and founded in the Nature of Man: He had been unjuſt, ungrateful, and violated all Laws of Righteouſneſs, had he committed any act unworthy of one that had been ſo great a Subject of Divine Liberality: But the Article on Gods part of giving a perpetual Bleſſedneſs to Innocent Man, was not founded upon Rules of ſtrict Juſtice and Righteouſneſs, for that would have argu'd God to be a Debtor to Man; but that God cannot be to the Work of his hands that had receiv'd the Materials of his Being and Acting from him, as the Veſſel doth from the Potter. But this was founded only on the Goodneſs of the Divine Nature, whereby he cannot but be kind to an innocent and holy Creature. The Nature of God inclin'd him to it by the Rules of Goodneſs, but the Service of Man could not claim it by the Rules of Juſtice without a Stipulation: So that the Covenant whereby God oblig'd himſelf to continue the Happineſs of Man upon the continuance of his Obedience, in the Original of it, ſprings from pure Goodneſs, though the performance of it upon the fulfilling Condition requir'd in the Creature, was founded upon the Rules of Righteouſneſs and Truth, after Divine Goodneſs had brought it forth.

* Amyrald. *Diſſertat.* p. 637, 638.

God did Create Man for a Reward and Happineſs: Now Gods implanting in the Nature of Man a deſire after Happineſs, and ſome higher Happineſs than he had in Creation inveſted him in, doth evidence that God did not Create Man only for his own Service, but for his attaining a greater Happineſs. All Rational Creatures are poſſeſſed with a Principle of ſeeking after Good, the higheſt Good, and God did not plant in Man this Principle in vain: It had not been Goodneſs to put this Principle in Man, if he had deſign'd never to beſtow a Happineſs on Man for his Obedience; This had been Repugnant to the Goodneſs and Wiſdom of God; and the *Scripture* doth very Emphatically expreſs, the Felicity of Man to be the deſign of God in the firſt forming him and moulding a Creature, as well as working him a new Creature, † *He that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing, is God*: He framed this Earthly Tabernacle for a Reſidence in an Eternal Habitation, and a better Habitation than an Earthly Paradiſe. What we expect in the Reſurrection, that very ſame thing God did in Creation intend us for; but ſince the Corruption of our Natures, we muſt undergo a diſſolution of our Bodies, and may have juſt reaſon of a deſpondency, ſince Sin hath ſeem'd to change the courſe of Gods Bounty, and brought us under a Curſe. He hath given us the Earneſt of his Spirit, as an aſſurance that he will perform that very ſelf ſame thing, the conferring that Happineſs upon renewed Creatures for which he firſt form'd Man in Creation, when he compacted his Earthly Tabernacle of the Duſt of the Ground, and rear'd it up before him.

† 2 Cor. 5. 1. 5.

4. *It was a mighty Goodneſs that God ſhould give Man an Eternal Reward.* That an Eternity of Reward was promiſed, is implied in the Death that was threatned upon Tranſgreſſion: Whatſoever you conceive the threatned Death to be, either for Nature, or duration upon Tranſgreſſion; of the ſame Nature and duration you muſt ſuppoſe the Life to be, which is implied upon his conſtancy in his integrity. As Sin would render him an Eternal Object of Gods hatred, ſo his Obedience would render him an Eternally amiable Object to his Creator, as the ſtanding Angels are preſerved and confirmed in an intire Felicity and Glory. Though the threatning be only expreſt by God, * yet the other is implied, and might eaſily be concluded from it by *Adam*. And one reaſon why God only expreſt the Threatning, and not the Promiſe, was, be-

* Gen. 2. 17.

cauſe man might collect ſome hopes and expectations of a perpetual Happineſs from that Image of God which he beheld in himſelf, and from the large Proviſion he had made for him in the World, and the Commiſſion given him to Increaſe and Multiply, and to Rule as a Lord over his other Works; whereas he could not ſo eaſily have imagined himſelf capable of being expos'd to ſuch an extraordinary Calamity as an Eternal Death, without ſome ſignification of it from God. 'Tis eaſily concludable, that Eternal Life was ſuppoſed to be promiſed, to be conferr'd upon him if he ſtood, as well as Eternal Death to be inflicted on him if he Rebell'd*. Now this Eternal Life was not due to his Nature, but it was a pure Beam, and Gift of Divine Goodneſs: For there was no proportion between Mans Service in his Innocent Eſtate, and a Reward ſo great both for Nature and duration: It was a higher Reward than can be imagined either due to the Nature of Man, or upon any Natural Right claimable by his Obedience. All that could be expected by him, was but a Natural Happineſs, not a Supernatural: As there was no neceſſity upon the account of Natural Righteouſneſs, ſo there was no neceſſity upon the account of the Goodneſs of God to elevate the Nature of Man to a Supernatural Happineſs, meerly becauſe he Created him: For though it be neceſſary for God, when he would Create, in regard of his Wiſdom, to Create for ſome End, yet it was not neceſſary that End ſhould be a Supernatural End and Happineſs, ſince a Natural Bleſſedneſs had been ſufficient for Man. And though God in Creating Angels and Men intellectual and Rational Creatures, did make them neceſſary for himſelf and his own Glory, yet it was not neceſſarily for him to order either Angels or Men to ſuch a Felicity as conſiſts in a clear Viſion, and ſo high a Fruition of himſelf: for all other things are made by him for himſelf, and yet not for the Viſion of himſelf. God might have Created Man only for a Natural Happineſs, according to the Perfection of his Natural Faculties, and had dealt Bountifully with him, if he had never intended him a Supernatural Bleſſedneſs, and an Eternal Recompence: But what a largeneſs of Goodneſs is here, to deſign Man in his Creation for ſo rich a Bleſſedneſs as an Eternal Life, with the Fruition of himſelf? He hath not only given to Man all things which are neceſſary, but deſign'd for Man that which the poor Creature could not imagine: He garniſht the Earth for him, and garniſht him for an Eternal Felicity, had he not by ſlighting the Goodneſs of God ſtript himſelf of the preſent, and forfeited his future Bleſſedneſs.

* Suarez, *de Gratia Vol.* 1. *p.* 126, 127.

2. *The Second thing is the manifeſtation of this Goodneſs in Redemption.* The whole Goſpel is nothing but one entire Mirror of Divine Goodneſs: The whole of Redemption is wrapt up in that one Expreſſion of the Angels Song, *Luke* 2 14. *Good will towards Man.* The Angels Sang but one Song before, which is upon Record, but the Matter of it ſeems to be the Wiſdom of God chiefly in Creation. *Job* 38. 7. *compar.* 9. *v.* 5, 6, 8, 9. The Angels are there meant by the *Morning Stars*; The viſible Stars of Heaven were not diſtinctly form'd, when the Foundations of the Earth were laid: And the Title of the Sons of God verifies it, ſince none but Creatures of underſtanding are digniſi'd in Scripture with that Title. There they Celebrate his Wiſdom in Creation; here his *Goodneſs in Redemption*, which is the intire Matter of the Song.

1. *Goodneſs was the Spring of Redemption.* All and every part of it owes only to this Perfection the appearance of it in the World. This only excited Wiſdom to bring forth from ſo great an Evil as the Apoſtacy of Man, ſo great a Good as the Recovery of him. When Man fell from his Created Goodneſs, God would evidence that he could not fall from his Infinite Goodneſs: That the greateſt Evil could not ſurmount the ability of his Wiſdom to contrive, nor the Riches of his Bounty to preſent us a Remedy for it. Divine Goodneſs would not ſtand by a Spectator, without being Reliever of that Miſery Man had plung'd himſelf into; but by aſtoniſhing Methods it would

would recover him to Happineſs, who had wreſted himſelf out of his hands, to fling himſelf into the moſt deplorable Calamity: And it was the greater, ſince it ſurmounted thoſe Natural Inclinations, and thoſe ſtrong Provocations, which he had to ſhower down the Power of his Wrath. What could be the Source of ſuch a Procedure, but this Excellency of the Divine Nature; Since no violence could force him, nor was there any Merit to perſwade to ſuch a Reſtoration? This under the name of his Love, is render'd the ſole cauſe of the Redeeming Death of the Son: It was to *commend his Love* with the higheſt Gloſs, and in ſo ſingular a manner that had not its parallel in Nature, nor in all his other Works, and reaches in the brightneſs of it beyond the manifeſted extent of any other Attribute*. It muſt be only a miraculous Goodneſs that induced him to expoſe the Life of his Son to thoſe difficulties in the World, and Death upon the Croſs for the freedom of ſordid Rebels: His great End was to give ſuch a demonſtration of the liberality of his Nature, as might be attractive to his Creature, remove its ſhakings and tremblings, and encourage its approaches to him. 'Tis in this he would not only manifeſt his Love, but aſſume the name of *Love*. By this Name the Holy Ghoſt calls him in relation to this good will manifeſted in his Son, † *God is Love. In this is manifeſted the love of God towards us, becauſe that God ſent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him.* He would take the Name he never expreſt himſelf in before. He was *Jehovah* in regard of the truth of his Promiſe; ſo he would be known of old: He is Goodneſs in regard of the grandeur of his Affection in the Miſſion of his Son: And therefore he would be known by the Name of *Love* now in the days of the Goſpel.

* Rom. 5. 8.

† 1 Joh. 4. 8, 9.

2. *It was a Pure Goodneſs.* He was under no obligation to pity our Miſery, and repair our Ruines: He might have ſtood to the terms of the firſt Covenant, and exacted our Eternal Death, ſince we had committed an infinite Tranſgreſſion: He was under no Tie to put off the Robes of a Judge for the Bowels of a Father, and erect a Mercy-ſeat above his Tribunal of Juſtice *. The reparation of Man had no neceſſary connexion with his Creation; It follows not, that becauſe Goodneſs had extracted us from nothing by a mighty Power, that it muſt lift us out of wilful Miſery by a mighty Grace. Certainly that God who had no need of Creating us, had far leſs need of Redeeming us: For ſince he Created one World, he could have as eaſily deſtroyed it and rear'd another. It had not been unbecoming the Divine Goodneſs or Wiſdom, to have let Man perpetually wallow in that Sink wherein he had plung'd himſelf, ſince he was Criminal by his own Will, and therefore Miſerable by his own fault: Nothing could neceſſitate this Reparation. If Divine Goodneſs could not be oblig'd by the Angelical Dignity to repair that Nature, he is further from any Obligation by the meanneſs of Man to repair Humane Nature. There was leſs neceſſity to reſtore Man, than to reſtore the fallen Angels: What could Man do to oblige God to a reparation of him, ſince he could not render him a Recompence for his Goodneſs manifeſted in his Creation? He muſt be much more impotent to render him a Debtor for the Redemption of him from Miſery. Could it be a ſalary for any thing we had done: Alas! we are ſo far from Meriting it, that by our daily Demerits, we ſeem ambitious to put a ſtop to any further Effuſions of it: We could not have complain'd of him, if he had left us in the Miſery we had courted, ſince he was bound by no Law to beſtow upon us the Recovery we wanted. When the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks of the Goſpel of *Redemption*, he giveth it the Title of the *Goſpel of the Bleſſed God* †. It was the Goſpel of a God abounding in his own Bleſſedneſs, which receiv'd no addition by Mans Redemption; If he had been bleſſed by it, it had been a goodneſs to himſelf, as well as to the Creature: It was not an Indigent Goodneſs needing the receiving any thing from us; but it was a pure Goodneſs, ſtreaming out of it ſelf, without bringing any thing into it ſelf for the Perfection of it: There was no Goodneſs in

* Rada *Controverſ. Part.* 3. p. 363.

† 2 Tim. 1. 11.

us

us to be the Motive of his Love, but his Goodneſs was the Fountain of our Benefit.

3. *It was a diſtinct Goodneſs of the whole Trinity.* In the Creation of Man, we find a general Conſultation, * without thoſe diſtinct Labours and Offices of each Perſon; and without thoſe rais'd Expreſſions and Marks of Joy and Triumph as at Mans Reſtoration. In this there are diſtinct Functions: The Grace of the *Father*, the Merit of the *Son*, and the Efficacy of the *Spirit*; The Father makes the Promiſe of Redemption, the Son Seals it with his Blood, and the Spirit applies it; the Father adopts us to be his Children, the Son Redeems us to be his Members, and the Spirit Renews us to be his Temples. In this the Father teſtifies himſelf well pleaſed in a Voice; The Son proclaims his own delight to do the Will of God; and the Spirit haſtens with the Wing of a Dove to fit him for his Work; And afterwards in his apparition in the likeneſs of Fiery Tongues, manifeſts his Zeal for the propagation of the Redeeming Goſpel.

* Gen. 1. 26.

4. *The Effects of it proclaim his great Goodneſs.* 'Tis by this we are deliver'd from the Corruption of our Nature, the Ruine of our Happineſs, the deformity of our Sins, and the puniſhment of our Tranſgreſſions: He frees us from the Ignorance wherewith we were darkned, and from the Slavery wherein we were fetter'd. When he came to make *Adams* Proceſs after his Crime, inſtead of pronouncing the Sentence of Death he had merited, he utters a Promiſe that Man could not have expected: His Kindneſs ſwells above his provoked Juſtice, and while he chaſeth him out of Paradiſe, he gives him hopes of regaining the ſame or a better Habitation; and is in the whole, more ready to prevent him with the *Bleſſings of his Goodneſs*, than charge him with the horror of his Crimes †: 'Tis a Goodneſs that pardons us more Tranſgreſſions than there are Moments in our Lives; and overlooks as many Follies as there are Thoughts in our Heart: He doth not only relieve our wants, but reſtores us to our Dignity. 'Tis a greater Teſtimony of Goodneſs to inſtate a Perſon in the higheſt Honour, than barely to ſupply his preſent Neceſſity; 'Tis an admirable Pity, whereby he was inclin'd to Redeem us, and an incomparable Affection whereby he was reſolv'd to exalt us. What can be deſir'd more of him than his Goodneſs hath granted? He hath ſought us out when we were loſt, and Ranſom'd us when we were Captives: He hath Pardon'd us when we were Condemn'd, and rais'd us when we were Dead. In Creation he rear'd us from nothing, in *Redemption* he delivers our Underſtanding from ignorance and vanity, and our Wills from impotence and obſtinacy, and our whole Man from a Death worſe than that nothing he drew us from by Creation.

† Gen. 3. 15.

5. Hence we may conſider the *height of this Goodneſs in Redemption to exceed that in Creation.* He gave Man a Being in Creation, but did not draw him from unexpreſſible Miſery by that act. His Liberality in the Goſpel doth infinitely ſurpaſs what we admire in the Works of Nature: His Goodneſs in the latter is more aſtoniſhing to our belief, than his Goodneſs in Creation is viſible to our Eye. There is more of his Bounty expreſt in that one *Verſe*, (* *So God loved the World that he gave his only begotten Son.*) than there is in the whole Volume of the World: 'Tis an incomprehenſible *So*; a *So*, that all the Angels in Heaven cannot Analyze, and few Comment upon, or underſtand the dimenſions of this *So*. In Creation he form'd an Innocent Creature of the Duſt of the Ground, in *Redemption* he reſtores a Rebellious Creature by the Blood of his Son: It is greater than that Goodneſs manifeſted in Creation.

* Joh. 3. 16.

1. *In regard of the difficulty of effecting it.* In Creation meer nothing was vanquiſht, to bring us into Being; In Redemption ſullen Enmity was conquer'd

quer'd for the enjoyment of our Reſtoration; In Creation he ſubdued a Nullity to make us Creatures; In Redemption his Goodneſs overcomes his Omnipotent Juſtice to reſtore us to Felicity; A word from the Mouth of Goodneſs inſpir'd the Duſt of Mens Bodies with a living Soul; but the Blood of his Son muſt be ſhed, and the Laws of Natural Affection ſeem to be overturn'd, to lay the Foundation of our renew'd Happineſs. In the firſt, Heaven did but ſpeak, and the Earth was form'd; In the ſecond, Heaven it ſelf muſt ſink to Earth, and be clothed with duſty Earth to reduce Mans Duſt to its Original State.

2. This Goodneſs is greater than that manifeſted in Creation, *in regard of its Coſt.* This was a more expenſive Goodneſs than what was laid out in Creation; *The redemption of one Soul is precious*†, much more coſtly than the whole Fabrick of the World, or as many Worlds as the underſtandings of Angels in their utmoſt extent can conceive to be Created: For the effecting of this God parts with his deareſt Treaſure, and his Son Eclipſes his choiceſt Glory; for this God muſt be made Man, Eternity muſt ſuffer Death, the Lord of Angels muſt weep in a Cradle, and the Creator of the World muſt hang like a Slave; he muſt be in a Manger in *Bethlehem*, and die upon a Croſs on *Calvary*: Unſpotted Righteouſneſs muſt be made Sin, and unblemiſht Bleſſedneſs be made a Curſe. He was at no other Expence than the Breath of his Mouth to form Man; the Fruits of the Earth could have maintained Innocent Man without any other Coſt; but his broken Nature cannot be heal'd without the invaluable Medicine of the Blood of God. View Chriſt in the Womb, and in the Manger, in his weary Steps and hungry Bowels, in his Proſtrations in the Garden, and in his clodded drops of Bloody Sweat; View his Head pierced with a Crown of Thorns, and his Face beſmeared with the Soldiers Slabber; View him in his march to *Calvary*, and his Elevation on the painful Croſs with his Head hanged down, and his Side ſtreaming Blood; View him pelted with the Scoffs of the Governours, and the Deriſions of the Rabble; And ſee in all this, what Coſt Goodneſs was at for Mans Redemption. In *Creation* his Power made the Sun to ſhine upon us, and in *Redemption* his Bowels ſent a Son to die for us.

† Pſal. 49. 8.

3. This Goodneſs of God in Redemption is greater than that manifeſted in Creation, *in regard of Mans deſert of the contrary.* In the Creation as there was nothing without him to allure him to the Expreſſions of his Bounty; ſo there was nothing that did damp the Inclinations of his Goodneſs: The nothing from whence the World was drawn, could never merit, nor demerit a Being, becauſe it was nothing: As there was nothing to engage him, ſo there was nothing to diſoblige him: As his Favour could not be merited, ſo neither could his Anger be deſerved. But in this he finds ingratitude againſt the former Marks of his Goodneſs, and Rebellion againſt the ſweetneſs of his Sovereignty: Crimes unworthy of the Dews of Goodneſs, and worthy of the ſharpeſt ſtroaks of Vengeance: And therefore the Scripture advanceth the honour of it above the Title of meer Goodneſs, to that of *Grace*†; becauſe Men were not only unworthy of a Bleſſing, but worthy of a Curſe. An Innocent Nothing more deſerves Creation, than a culpable Creature deſerves an exemption from Deſtruction. When Man fell, and gave occaſion to God to repent of his Created Work, his raviſhing Goodneſs ſurmounted the occaſions he had of repenting, and the provocations he had to the deſtruction of his Frame.

† Rom. 5. 2. Tit. 2. 11.

4. *It was a greater Goodneſs than was expreſt towards the Angels.*

1. *A greater Goodneſs than was expreſt towards the ſtanding Angels.* The Son of God did no more expoſe his Life for the confirmation of thoſe that ſtood, than for the reſtoration of thoſe that fell: The Death of Chriſt was not

not for the holy Angels, but for ſinful Man; They needed the Grace of God to confirm them, but not the Death of Chriſt to reſtore or preſerve them; They had a beloved Holineſs to be eſtabliſhed by the powerful Grace of God, but not any abominable Sin to be expiated and blotted out by the Blood of God; They had no Debt to pay but that of Obedience; but we had both a Debt of Obedience to the Precepts, and a Debt of Suffering to the Penalty after the Fall. Whether the Holy Angels were confirm'd by Chriſt, or no, is a *queſtion*: ſome think they were, from *Coloſ.* 1. 20. where *things in Heaven* are ſaid to be *reconcil'd*; but ſome think that place ſignifies no more than the Reconciliation of things in Heaven, if meant of the Angels, to things on Earth, with whom they were at Enmity in the Cauſe of their Soveraign; or the Reconciliation of things in Heaven to God, is meant the glorified Saints who were once in a State of Sin, and whom the Death of Chriſt upon the Croſs reached, though dead long before. But if *Angels* were confirm'd by Chriſt, it was by him not as a ſlain Sacrifice, but as the Soveraign head of the whole Creation, appointed by God to gather all things into one, which ſome think to be the intendment of, *Epheſ.* 1. 10. where all things, as well thoſe in Heaven, as thoſe on Earth are ſaid to be *gathered together in one in Chriſt.* Where is a Syllable in Scripture of his being Crucified for Angels, but only for Sinners? Not for the Confirmation of the one, but the Reconciliation of the other; ſo that the Goodneſs whereby God continued thoſe Bleſſed Spirits in Heaven through the effuſions of his Grace, is a ſmall thing to the reſtoring us to our forfeited Happineſs through the Streams of Divine Blood. The preſerving a Man in life, is a little thing and a ſmaller benefit than the raiſing a Man from Death. The reſcuing a Man from an ignominious Puniſhment lays a greater obligation than barely to prevent him from committing a capital Crime. The preſerving a Man ſtanding upon the top of a ſteep Hill is more eaſie, than to bring a Cripled and Tyſical Man from the bottom to the top. The continuance God gave to the Angels, is not ſo ſignal a Mark of Goodneſs, as the deliverance he gave to us, ſince they were not ſunk into Sin, nor by any Crime fallen into Miſery.

2. *His Goodneſs in Redemption is greater than any Goodneſs expreſſed to the Fallen Angels.* 'Tis the wonder of his Goodneſs to us, that he was mindful of Fall'n Man, and careleſs of Fall'n Angels; That he ſhould viſit Man, wallowing in Death and blood with the Day-ſpring from on high, and never turn the *Ægyptian* darkneſs of Devils into a chearful day: When they Sinn'd Divine Thunder daſht them into Hell; When Man Sinn'd Divine Blood wafts the Fallen Creature from his Miſery: The Angels wallow in their own Blood for ever, while Chriſt is made partaker of our Blood, and wallows in his Blood, that we might not for ever corrupt in ours; They tumbled down from Heaven, and Divine Goodneſs could not vouchſafe to catch them: Man tumbles down, and Divine Goodneſs holds out a hand drencht in the Blood of him, that was from the Foundations of the World, to lift us up, *Heb.* 2. 16. He ſpared not thoſe dignified Spirits, when they Revolted; and ſpared not puniſhing his Son for duſty Man, when he offended, when he might as well for ever have let Man lie in the Chains wherein he had intangled himſelf, as them. We were as fit Objects of Juſtice as they, and they as fit Objects of Goodneſs as we: they were not more wretched by their Fall than we, and the poverty of our Nature rendred us more unable to recover our ſelves, than the dignity of theirs did them; They were his *Reuben* his Firſt born, they were his Might and the beginning of his Strength, yet thoſe Elder Sons he neglected to prefer the Younger; They were the Prime and Golden Pieces of Creation, not laden with groſs Matter, yet they lie under the Ruines of their Fall, while Man, Lead in compariſon of them, is refin'd for another World.

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They ſeem'd to be fitter Objects of Divine Goodneſs in regard of the eminency of their Nature above the Humane: One Angel excelled in Endowments of Mind and Spirit, vaſtneſs of Underſtanding, greatneſs of Power, all the Sons of Men; they were more capable to praiſe him, more capable to ſerve him, and becauſe of the acuteneſs of their Comprehenſion, more able to have a due Eſtimate of ſuch a Redemption, had it been afforded them; yet that Goodneſs which had created them ſo Comely, would not lay it ſelf out in reſtoring the Beauty they had defaced. The Promiſe was of bruiſing the Serpents head for us, not of lifting up the Serpents head with us; Their Nature was not aſſum'd, nor any command given them to believe or repent: Not one Devil ſpar'd, not one Apoſtate Spirit recover'd, not one of thoſe eminent Creatures reſtor'd; Every one of them hath only a proſpect of Miſery, without any glimps of Recovery: They were ruin'd under one Sin, and we repair'd under many. All his Redeeming Goodneſs was laid out upon Man, *Pſal.* 144. 3. *What is man that thou takeſt knowledge of him, and the Son of man that thou makeſt account of him?* Making account of him above Angels; As they fell without any tempting them, ſo God would leave them to riſe without any aſſiſting them. I know the Schools trouble themſelves to find out the Reaſons of this peculiarity of Grace to Man, and not to them; becauſe the whole Humane Nature fell, but only a part of the Angelical; The one Sinned by a Seduction, and the other by a fullenneſs without any Tempter: Every Angel ſinned by his own proper Will, whereas *Adam*'s Poſterity Sinned by the Will of the firſt Man, the common Root of all. God would deprive the Devil of any Glory in the ſatisfaction of his envious deſire to hinder Man from attainment and poſſeſſion of that Happineſs which himſelf had loſt. The weakneſs of Man below the Angelical Nature might excite the Divine Mercy: And ſince all the things of the lower World were Created for Man, God would not loſe the Honor of his Works, by loſing the immediate End for which he framed them. And finally, becauſe in the Reſtoration of Angels, there would have been only a Reſtoration of one Nature, that was not comprehenſive of the Nature of Inferior Things: But after all ſuch Conjectures, Man muſt ſit down, and acknowledge Divine Goodneſs to be the only Spring without any other Motive. Since Infinite Wiſdom could have contrived a way for Redemption for Fallen Angels, as well as for Fallen Man, and reſtor'd both the one and the other; Why might not Chriſt have aſſumed their Nature as well as ours into the Unity of the Divine Perſon, and ſuffer'd the Wrath of God in their Nature for them, as well as in his Humane Soul for us? 'Tis as conceivable that two Natures might have been aſſum'd by the Son of God, as well as three Souls be in Man diſtinct, as ſome think there are.

3. To Enhance this Goodneſs yet higher; *It was a greater Goodneſs to us, than was for a time manifeſted to Chriſt himſelf.* To demonſtrate his Goodneſs to Man in preventing his Eternal Ruine, he would for a while with-hold his Goodneſs from his Son, by expoſing his Life as the price of our Ranſom; not only ſubjecting him to the deriſions of Enemies, deſertions of Friends, and malice of Devils, but to the unexpreſſible bitterneſs of his own Wrath in his Soul, as made an offering for Sin.

The Particle *ſo*, *John* 3. 16. ſeems to intimate this Supremacy of Goodneſs: He *ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son.* He ſo loved the World, that he ſeem'd for a time not to love his Son in compariſon of it, or equal with it. The Perſon to whom a Gift is given, is in that regard accounted more valuable than the Gift or Preſent made to him: Thus God valued our Redemption above the Worldly Happineſs of the Redeemer, and ſentenceth him to an Humiliation on Earth, in order to our Exaltation in Heaven: He was deſirous to hear him Groaning, and ſee him Bleeding, that we might not Groan under his Frowns, and Bleed under his Wrath: He

ſpared not him, that he might ſpare us; refuſed not to ſtrike him, that he might be well pleaſed with us; drench'd his Sword in the Blood of his Son, that it might not for ever be wet with ours; but that his Goodneſs might for ever triumph in our Salvation: He was willing to have his Son made Man, and die, rather than Man ſhould periſh, who had delighted to ruine himſelf; He ſeem'd to degrade him for a time from what he was *. But ſince he could not be united to any but to an intellectual Creature, he could not be united to any viler and more ſordid Creature than the Earthly Nature of Man. And when this Son in our Nature prayed, *That the Cup might paſs from him*, Goodneſs would not ſuffer it, to ſhew how it valued the manifeſtation of it ſelf in the Salvation of Man, above the preſervation of the Life of ſo dear a Perſon.

* Lingend *de Euchariſt.* p. 84, 85.

In particular wherein this Goodneſs appears;

1. *The firſt Reſolution to Redeem, and the means appointed for Redemption, could have no other inducement but Divine Goodneſs.* We cannot too highly value the Merit of Chriſt; but we muſt not ſo much extend the Merit of Chriſt, as to draw a value to Eclipſe the Goodneſs of God: Though we owe our Redemption, and the Fruits of it, to the death of Chriſt, yet we owe not the firſt Reſolutions of Redemption, and aſſumption of our Nature, the means of Redemption, to the merit of Chriſt. Divine Goodneſs only, without the aſſociation of any Merit, not only of Man, but of the Redeemer himſelf, begat the firſt purpoſe of our Recovery: He was ſingled out, and predeſtinated to be our Redeemer, before he took our Nature to Merit our Redemption. *God ſent his Son*, is a frequent Expreſſion in the Goſpel of St. *John* †. To what end did God ſend Chriſt, but to Redeem? * The purpoſe of Redemption therefore preceded the pitching upon Chriſt as the means and procuring cauſe of it, *i.e.* of our actual Redemption, but not of the Redeeming purpoſe; the end is always in intention before the means. *God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son*; The love of God to the World was firſt in Intention and the Order of Nature, before the will of giving his Son to the World. His Intention of ſaving was before the Miſſion of a Saviour: So that this Affection roſe not from the Merit of Chriſt, but the Merit of Chriſt was directed by this Affection. It was the Effect of it, not the Cauſe. Nor was the union of our Nature with his Merited by him; All his Meritorious acts were performed in our Nature: The Nature therefore wherein he performed it, was not Merited; that Grace which was not, could not Merit what it was: He could not Merit that Humanity, which muſt be aſſumed before he could Merit any thing for us, becauſe all Merit for us muſt be offer'd in the Nature which had offended. 'Tis true, *Chriſt gave himſelf*, but by the Order of Divine Goodneſs; he that begat him pitch'd upon him, and call'd him to this great Work: † He is therefore call'd, *The Lamb of God*, as being ſet apart by God to be a propitiating and appeaſing Sacrifice. He is the *Wiſdom of God*, ſince from the Father he reveals the Councel and Order of Redemption. In this regard, he calls God, *his God*, in the Prophet, *and in the Evangeliſt; † though he was big with affection for the accompliſhment, yet he came not to do his *own will*, but the will of Divine Goodneſs: His own will it was too, but not principally, as being the firſt Wheel in Motion, but ſubordinate to the Eternal will of Divine Bounty. It was by the will of God that he came, and by his will he drank the dreggy Cup of Bitterneſs. Divine Juſtice laid *upon him the Iniquity of us all*, but Divine Goodneſs intended it for our Reſcue: Divine Goodneſs ſingled him out, and ſet him apart: Divine Goodneſs invited him to it: Divine Goodneſs commanded him to effect it, and put a Law into his Heart, to biaſs him in the performing of it: Divine Goodneſs ſent him, and Divine Goodneſs moved Juſtice to bruiſe him; and after his Sacrifice, Divine Goodneſs accepted him, and careſſed him for it. So earneſt was it for our Redemption, as to give out ſpecial and irreverſible Or-

† John 3. 34. John 5. 24. John 17. 3.
* Leſſius.
† Heb. 5. 5.
* Iſaiah 49. 4.
† Joh. 20. 17.

ders:

ders: Death was commanded to be endured by him for us, and Life commanded to be imparted by him to us*. If God had not been the Mover, but had received the propoſal from another, he might have heard it, but was not bound to grant it: His Soveraign Authority was not under any Obligation to receive anothers Sponſion for the miſerable Criminal. As Chriſt is the head of Man, ſo *God is the head of Chriſt* †; He did nothing but by his directions, as he was not a Mediator but by the Conſtitution of Divine Goodneſs. As a *liberal Man deviſeth liberal things**, ſo did a bountiful God deviſe a bountiful act, wherein his kindneſs and love as a Saviour appeared: He was poſſeſſed with the reſolutions to manifeſt his Goodneſs in Chriſt *in the beginning of his way* †, before he deſcended to the act of Creation. This intention of Goodneſs preceded his making that Creature Man, who he foreſaw would fall, and by his fall disjoynt and entangle the whole Frame of the World without ſuch a proviſion.

* John 10. 16, 18.

† 1 Cor. 11. 3.

* Iſaiah 2. 8.

† Prov. 8. 22, 23.

2. *In Gods giving Chriſt to be our Redeemer, he gave the higheſt Gift that it was poſſible for Divine Goodneſs to beſtow.* As there is not a greater God than himſelf to be conceiv'd, ſo there is not a greater Gift for this great God to preſent to his Creatures: Never did God go farther in any of his excellent Perfections than this. 'Tis ſuch a Dole that cannot be tranſcended with a choicer: He is as it were come to the laſt Mite of his Treaſure. And though he could Create Millions of Worlds for us, he cannot give a greater Son to us. He could abound in the Expreſſions of his Power in new Creations of Worlds, which have not yet been ſeen, and in the luſtre of his Wiſdom in more ſtately Structures; but if he ſhould frame as many Worlds, as there are Mites of Duſt and Matter in this, and make every one of them as bright and glorious as the Sun; Though his Power and Wiſdom would be more ſignalized, yet his Goodneſs could not, ſince he hath not a choicer Gift to bleſs thoſe brighter Worlds withal, than he hath conferr'd upon this. Nor can Immenſe Goodneſs contrive a richer means to conduct thoſe Worlds to Happineſs, than he hath both invented for this World, and preſented it with. It cannot be imagin'd, that it can extend it ſelf farther, than to give a Gift equal with himſelf; a Gift as dear to him as himſelf. His Wiſdom, had it ſtudied Millions of Eternities, (excuſe the Expreſſion, ſince Eternity admits of no Millions, it being an interminable duration) it could have found out no more to give, this Goodneſs could have beſtow'd no more, and our Neceſſity could not have requir'd a greater Offering for our relief. When God intended in Redemption the manifeſtation of his higheſt Goodneſs, it could not be without the Donation of the choiceſt Gift. As when he would enſure our Comfort, he ſwears *by himſelf*, becauſe he cannot ſwear *by a greater**: So when he would enſure our Happineſs, he gives us his Son, becauſe he cannot give a Greater, being equal with himſelf. Had the Father given himſelf in Perſon, he had given one firſt in order, but not greater in Eſſence and glorious Perfections: It could have been no more than the Life of God, that ſhould then have been laid down for us; and ſo it was now, ſince the Humane Nature did not ſubſiſt but in his Divine Perſon.

* Heb. 6. 13.

1. *'Tis a greater Gift than Worlds, or all things purchaſed by him.* What was this Gift but *the Image of his Perſon, and the brightneſs of his Glory* †? What was this Gift, but one as Rich as Eternal Bleſſedneſs could make him? What was this Gift, but one that poſſeſſed the fulneſs of Earth, and the more Immenſe Riches of Heaven? 'Tis a more valuable Preſent, than if he preſented us with thouſands of Worlds of Angels and inferior Creatures, becauſe his Perſon is incomparably Greater, not only than all conceivable, but inconceivable Creations: We are more obliged to him for it, than if he had made us Angels of the higheſt Rank in Heaven, becauſe it is a Gift of more value than the whole Angelical Nature, becauſe he is an Infinite Perſon; and

† Heb. 1. 3.

therefore infinitely tranſcends whatſoever is finite, though of the higheſt Dignity. The Wounds of an Almighty God for us are a greater Teſtimony of Goodneſs, than if we had all the other Riches of Heaven and Earth. This perfection had not appeared in ſuch an aſtoniſhing grandeur, had it pardon'd us without ſo rich a ſatisfaction; that had been pardon to our Sin, not a God of our Nature. *God ſo loved the World*, that he pardon'd it, had not ſounded ſo great and ſo good, as God ſo loved the World, that he *gave his only begotten Son. Eſt aliquid in Chriſto formoſius Servatore.* There is ſomething in Chriſt more excellent and comely, than the Office of a Saviour; the greatneſs of his Perſon is more Excellent, than the Salvation procured by his Death: It was a greater gift than was beſtow'd upon innocent *Adam*, or the holy Angels. In the Creation, his Goodneſs gave us Creatures for our uſe: In our Redemption, his Goodneſs gives us what was deareſt to him for our Service; our Soveraign in Office to benefit us, as well as in a Royalty to govern us.

2. *It was a greater gift, becauſe it was his own Son.* Not an Angel. It had been a mighty Goodneſs to have given one of the lofty Seraphims; A greater Goodneſs to have given the whole Corporation of thoſe glorious Spirits for us; thoſe Children of the moſt High: But he gave that Son, whom he commands *all the Angels to worſhip**, and all Men to adore, and pay the *loweſt Homage to* †; that *Son* that is to be *honored* by us, as we *honor the Father**; that *Son* which was his *delight*; his *delights* in the *Hebrew*, wherein all the delights of the Father were gathered in one, as well as of the whole Creation; and not ſimply a *Son*, but an *only begotten Son*, upon which Chriſt lays the ſtreſs with an *Emphaſis* †. He had but one *Son* in Heaven or Earth, one Son from an unviewable Eternity, and that one Son he gave for a degenerate World; this Son he Conſecrated for *evermore a Prieſt**. *The word of the Oath makes the Son*; The peculiarity of his Sonſhip heightens the Goodneſs of the Donor. It was no meaner a Perſon that he gave to empty himſelf of his Glory, to fulfil an Obedience for us, that we might be rendred happy partakers of the Divine Nature. Thoſe that know the natural affection of a Father to a Son, muſt judge the affection of God the Father to the Son infinitely greater, than the affection of an Earthly Father to the Son of his Bowels. It muſt be an unparallell'd Goodneſs, to give up a Son that he loved with ſo ardent an Affection, for the Redemption of Rebels: Abandon a glorious Son to a diſhonorable Death, for the ſecurity of thoſe that had violated the Laws of Righteouſneſs, and endeavoured to pull the Soveraign Crown from his head Beſides, being an only Son, all thoſe Affections center'd in him, which in Parents would have been divided among a multitude of Children: So then, as it was a Teſtimony of the higheſt Faith and Obedience in *Abraham, to offer up his only begotten Son to God* †; So it was the Triumph of Divine Goodneſs, to give ſo great, ſo dear a Perſon for ſo little a thing as Man; and for ſuch a piece of nothing and vanity, as a Sinful World.

* Heb. 1. 6.
† Pſal. 2. 12.
* John 5. 23.
† Prov. 8. 30.
† John 3. 16.
* Heb. 7. 28.
† Heb. 11. 17.

3. And *this Son given to Reſcue us by his Death.* It was a gift to us; For our ſakes he deſcended from his Throne, and dwelt on Earth; For our ſakes he was *made Fleſh*, and infirm Fleſh; For our ſakes he was *made a Curſe*, and ſcorch'd in the Furnace of his Fathers Wrath; For our ſakes he went naked, arm'd only with his own Strength into the Liſts of that Combat with the Devils, that led us Captive. Had he given him to be a Leader for the conqueſt of ſome Earthly Enemies, it had been a great Goodneſs to diſplay his Banners, and bring us under his Conduct; but he ſent him to lay down his Life in the bittereſt and moſt inglorious manner, and expoſed him to a curſed Death for our Redemption from that dreadful Curſe which would have broken us to pieces, and irreparably have cruſh'd us. He gave him to us, to ſuffer for us as a Man, and redeem us as a God; to be a Sacrifice to expiate our Sin, by tranſlating the Puniſhment upon himſelf, which was merited by us.

Thus

Thus was he made low to exalt us, and debaſed to advance us, *made poor to enrich us* *; and Eclipſed to brighten our ſullied Natures, and Wounded that he might be a *Phyſician* for our Languiſhments: He was ordered to taſte the bitter Cup of Death, that we might drink of the Rivers of Immortal Life, and Pleaſures: To ſubmit to the frailties of the Humane Nature, that we might poſſeſs the Glories of the Divine: He was ordered to be a Sufferer, that we might be no longer Captives; and to paſs through the Fire of Divine Wrath, that he might purge our Nature from the droſs it had contracted. Thus was the Righteous given for Sin, the Innocent for Criminals, the Glory of Heaven for the Dregs of Earth, and the Immenſe Riches of a Deity expended to reſtock Man. * 2 Cor. 8. 9.

4. And *a Son that was exalted for what he had done for us by the order of Divine Goodneſs.* The Exaltation of Chriſt was no leſs a ſignal Mark of his Miraculous Goodneſs to us, than of his Affection to him; ſince he was obedient by Divine Goodneſs to die for us, his Advancement was for his Obedience to thoſe Orders. † The *Name* given to him *above every Name*, was a repeated Triumph of this Perfection; Since his Paſſion was not for himſelf, he was wholly Innocent, but for us who were Criminal. His advancement was not only for himſelf as Redeemer, but for us as Redeem'd: Divine Goodneſs center'd in him, both in his Croſs and in his Crown; for it was for the *purging our Sins he ſat down on the Right Hand of the Majeſty on High* *: And the whole Bleſſed Society of Principalities and Powers in Heaven admire this Goodneſs of God, and aſcribe to him *Honor, Glory, and Power* for advancing the *Lamb ſlain* †. Divine Goodneſs did not only give him to us, but gave him Power, Riches Strength, and Honor, for manifeſting this Goodneſs to us, and opening the Paſſages for its fuller Conveyances to the Sons of Men. Had not God had thoughts of a perpetual Goodneſs, he would not have ſetled him ſo near him, to manage our Cauſe, and teſtified ſo much Affection to him on our behalf. This Goodneſs gave him to be debas'd for us, and order'd him to be Enthron'd for us: As it gave him to us Bleeding, ſo it would give him to us Triumphing; that as we have a ſhare by Grace in the Merits of his Humiliation, we might partake alſo of the Glories of his Coronation; that from firſt to laſt, we may behold nothing but the Triumphs of Divine Goodneſs to fallen Man. † 2 Phil. 8. 9. * Heb. 1. 3. † Revel. 5. 11; 12, 13.

5. *In beſtowing this Gift on us, Divine Goodneſs gives whole God to us.* Whatſoever is great and excellent in the Godhead, the Father gives us, by giving us his Son: The Creator gives himſelf to us in his Son Chriſt. In giving Creatures to us, he gives the Riches of Earth; In giving himſelf to us, he gives the Riches of Heaven, which ſurmount all Underſtanding: 'Tis in this Gift he becomes our God, and paſſeth over the Title of all that he is, for our Uſe and Benefit, that every Attribute in the Divine Nature may be claim'd by us; not to be imparted to us, whereby we may be Deified; but employ'd for our welfare, whereby we may be Bleſſed. He gave himſelf in Creation to us, in the Image of his Holineſs; but in Redemption, he gave himſelf in the Image of his Perſon: He would not only communicate the Goodneſs without him, but beſtow upon us the infinite Goodneſs of his own Nature; That that which was his own End and Happineſs, might be our End and Happineſs, *viz.* Himſelf.

By giving his Son, he hath given Himſelf; and in both Gifts he hath given all Things to us: The Creator of all things is eminently all things: *He hath given all things into the Hands of his Son*, * and by conſequence given all things into the Hands of his Redeem'd Creatures, by giving them him to whom he gave all things; Whatſoever we were inveſted in by Creation, whatſoever we were deprived of by Corruption, and more, he hath depoſited in ſafe hands for our Enjoyment: And what can Divine Goodneſs do more * John 3. 35.

more for us? What further can it give unto us, than what it hath given, and in that Gift deſign'd for us?

3. *This Goodneſs is enhanc'd by conſidering the State of Man in the firſt Tranſgreſſion, and ſince.*

1. *Mans firſt Tranſgreſſion.* If we ſhould rip up every Vein of that firſt Sin, ſhould we find any want of Wickedneſs to excite a juſt Indignation? What was there but ingratitude to Divine Bounty, and Rebellion againſt Divine Soveraignty? The Royalty of God was attempted, the Supremacy of Divine Knowledge, above Mans own knowledge, envyed; the Riches of Goodneſs whereby he lived and breathed, ſlighted: There is a diſcontent with God upon an unreaſonable Sentiment, that God had denyed a Knowledge to him, which was his right and due; when there ſhould have been an humble acknowledgement of that unmerited Goodneſs, which had not only given him a Being above other Creatures, but placed him the Governor and Lord of thoſe that were inferior to him: What alienation of his Underſtanding was there from knowing God, and of his Will from loving him? A Debauch of all his Faculties: A Spiritual Adultery, in preferring not only one of Gods Creatures, but one of his deſperate Enemies before him; thinking him a Wiſer Counſellor than Infinite Wiſdom, and imagining him poſſeſſed with kinder Affections to him, than that God who had newly Created him. Thus he joyns in League with Hell againſt Heaven, with a Fallen Spirit againſt his Bountiful Benefactor, and enters into Society with Rebels, that juſt before commenc'd a War againſt his and their common Soveraign: He did not only falter in, but caſt off the Obedience due to his Creator; endeavored to purloin his Glory, and actually murder'd all thoſe that were vertually in his Loyns.

* Rom. 5. 12. * *Sin entered into the World* by him, *and Death by Sin, and paſſed upon all men,* taking them off from their Subjection to God, to be Slaves to the damn'd Spirits, and Heirs of their Miſery; And after all this, he adds a foul Imputation on God, taxing him as the Author of his Sin, and thereby ſtains the Beauty of his Holineſs. But notwithſtanding all this, God ſtops not up the Flood-gates of his Goodneſs, nor doth he entertain Fiery Reſolutions againſt Man, but brings forth a healing Promiſe; and ſends not an Angel upon Commiſſion, to Reveal it to him, but Preaches it himſelf to this Forlorn and Rebel-

† Gen. 3 15. lious Creature. †

2. *Could there be any thing in this Fallen Creature, to allure God to the Expreſſion of his Goodneſs?* Was there any good Action in all his Carriage, that could plead for a readmiſſion of him to his former State? Was there one good Quality left, that could be an Orator to perſwade Divine Goodneſs to ſuch a gracious Procedure? Was there any Moral Goodneſs in Man after this Debauch, that might be an Object of Divine Love? What was there in him, that was not rather a Provocation, than an Allurement? Could you expect, that any Perfection in God ſhould find a Motive in this ungrateful Apoſtate, to open a Mouth for him, and be an Advocate to ſupport him, and bring him off from a Juſt Tribunal? Or after Divine Goodneſs had begun to pity and plead for Man, is it not wonderful that it ſhould not diſcontinue the Plea,

‡ Gen. 3. 12. after it found Mans Excuſe to be as black as his Crime *; and his carriage upon his Examination, to be as diſobliging as his firſt Revolt? It might well be expected, that all the Perfections in the Divine Nature, would have entered into an Aſſociation eternally to treat this Rebel according to his deſerts. What Attractives were there in a ſilly Worm, much leſs in ſuch compleat Wickedneſs, inexcuſable Enmity, infamous Rebellion, to deſign a Redeemer for him, and ſuch a Perſon as the Son of God to a Fleſhy Body, an Eclipſe of Glory, and an ignominious Croſs? The meanneſs of Man was further from alluring God to it, than the dignity of Angels.

3. *Was*

3. *Was there not a World of demerit in Man, to animate Grace as well as Wrath againſt him.* We were ſo far from deſerving the opening any Streams of Goodneſs, that we had merited Floods of devouring Wrath. What were all Men, but Enemies to God in a high manner? Every offence was Infinite, as being committed againſt a Being of Infinite Dignity; it was a ſtroke at the very Being of God; A reſiſtance of all his Attributes; it would degrade him from the height and perfection of his Nature; it would not by its good will ſuffer God to be God. If *he that hates his Brother, is a Murderer of his Brother*, he that hates his Creator, is a Murderer of the Deity; * and every *Carnal mind is enmity* to God †: Every Sin envies him his Authority by breaking his Precept; and envies him his Goodneſs by defacing the Marks of it: Every Sin comprehends in it more than Men or Angels can conceive: That God who only hath the clear apprehenſions of his own Dignity, hath the ſole clear apprehenſions of Sins Malignity. All Men were thus by Nature; thoſe that Sinned before the coming of the Redeemer, had been in a ſtate of Sin; thoſe that were to come after him would be in a ſtate of Sin by their Birth, and be Criminals as ſoon as ever they were Creatures. All Men, as well the Glorifi'd as thoſe in the Fleſh, at the coming of the Redeemer, and thoſe that were to be born after, were conſider'd in a ſtate of Sin by God, when he bruis'd the Redeemer for them: All were filthy and unworthy of the Eye of God: All had employ'd the Faculties of their Souls, and the Members of their Bodies, which they enjoyed by his Goodneſs, againſt the Intereſt of his Glory. Every Rational Creature had made himſelf a Slave to thoſe Creatures over whom he had been appointed a Lord; ſubjected himſelf as a Servant to his Inferior, and ſtrutted as a Superior againſt his Liberal Soveraign, and by every ſin rendred himſelf more a Child of Satan, and Enemy of God, and more worthy of the Curſes of the Law, and the Torments of Hell: Was it not now a mighty Goodneſs that would ſurmount thoſe high Mountains of Demerit, and elevate ſuch Creatures by the Depreſſion of his Son? Had we been poſſeſſed of the Higheſt Holineſs, a Reward had been the natural effect of Goodneſs: It was not poſſible that God ſhould be unkind to a Righteous and Innocent Creature: His Grace would have Crown'd that, which had been ſo agreeable to him: He had been a denier of Himſelf, had he numbred Innocent Creatures in the Rank of the Miſerable. But to be kind to an Enemy: To run Counter to the vaſtneſs of Demerit in Man, was a Superlative Goodneſs; a Goodneſs triumphing above all the provocations of Men, and Pleas of Juſtice. It was an abounding Goodneſs of Grace: * *Where Sin abounded, Grace did much more abound,* ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν, It ſwell'd above the heights of Sin, and triumphed more than all his other Attributes.

* Joh. 1. 3, 15.
† Rom. 8. 7.

* Rom. 5. 20.

4. *Man was reduced to the loweſt Condition.* Our Crimes had brought us to the loweſt Calamity; we were brought to the duſt, and prepar'd for Hell. *Adam* had not the boldneſs to Requeſt, and therefore we may judge he had not the leaſt hopes of Pardon; he was ſunk under Wrath, and could have expected no better an Entertainment, than the Tempter, whoſe ſollicitations he ſubmitted to: We had caſt the Diadem from our Heads, and loſt all our Original Excellency: We were loſt to our own Happineſs, and loſt to our Creators Service, when he was ſo kind as to ſend his Son to ſeek us, *Matth.* 18. 11. and ſo liberal as to expend his Blood for our cure and preſervation. How great was that Goodneſs that would not abandon us in our Miſery, but remit our Crimes, and reſcue our Perſons, and ranſom our Souls by ſo great a Price from the Rights of Juſtice, and horrors of Hell, we were ſo fitted for?

5. *Every Age multiplied Provocations.* Every Age of the World proved more degenerate; The Traditions which were purer and more lively among *Adams* immediate Poſterity, were more dark among his further Deſcendents,

ſcendants. Idolatry, whereof we have no Marks in the old World before the Deluge, was frequent afterwards in every Nation: Not only the knowledge of the true God was loſt, but the Natural Reverential Thoughts of a Deity were expelled. Hence gods were dubb'd according to Mens humors; and not only Human Paſſions, but Bruti ſh Vices aſcrib'd to them: As by the Fall we were become leſs than Men, ſo we would fancy God no better than a Beaſt, ſince
* Rom. 1.21. Beaſts were worſhipped as Gods *; yea, fancied God no better than a Devil; ſince that Deſtroyer was Worſhipped inſtead of the Creator, and a Homage paid to the Powers of Hell that had ruin'd them, which was due to the Goodneſs of that Benefactor, who had made them and preſerved them in the World. The vileſt Creatures were Deifi'd; Reaſon was debas'd below Common Senſe:
† Iſa. 44.14, 16, 17. And Men ador'd one end of a *Log*, while they *warmed themſelves with the other* †; as if that which was Ordain'd for the Kitchin, were a fit Repreſentation for God in the Temple. Thus were the Natural Notions of a Deity deprav'd; the whole World drench'd in Idolatry; And though the *Jews* were free from that groſs abuſe of God, yet they were ſunk alſo into loathſom Superſtitions, when the Goodneſs of God brought in his deſign'd Redeemer and Redemption into the World.

6. *The impotence of Man enhanceth this Goodneſs.* Our own Eye did ſcarce pity us, and it was impoſſible for our own hands to relieve us; we were inſenſible of our Miſery, in love with our Death; we courted our Chains, and the
* Tit. 3.3. noiſe of our fettering Luſts were our Muſick, * *ſerving diverſe Luſts and Pleaſures.* Our Luſts were our Pleaſures; Satans Yoke was as delightful to us to bear, as to him to impoſe: Inſtead of being his Oppoſers in his attempts againſt us, we were his voluntary Seconds, and every whit as willing to embrace, as he was to propoſe his Ruining Temptations. As no Man can recover himſelf from Death, ſo no Man can recover himſelf from Wrath; he is as unable to Redeem, as to Create himſelf; he might as ſoon have ſtrip'd himſelf of his Being, as put an end to his Miſery; his Captivity would have been endleſs, and his Chains remedileſs, for any thing he could do to knock them off, and deliver himſelf; he was too much in love with the Sink of ſin, to leave wallowing in it, and under too powerful a hand, to ceaſe frying in the Flames of Wrath. As the Law could not be obeyed by Man, after a corrupt Principle had enter'd into him, ſo neither could Juſtice be ſatisfied by him after his Tranſgreſſion. The Sinner was indebted, but Bankrupt; As he was unable to pay a mite of that Obedience he owed to the Precept, becauſe of his Enmity; ſo he was unable to ſatisfie what he owed to the Penalty, becauſe of his Feebleneſs: He was as much without
† Rom. 8.7. love to obſerve the one, as *without ſtrength* to bear the other: † He could not, becauſe of his *Enmity*, *be ſubject to the Law*, or compenſate for his Sin, becauſe
* Rom. 5.6. he was * *without ſtrength.* His ſtrength to offend was great; but to deliver himſelf, a meer nothing. Repentance was not a thing known by Man after the Fall, till he had hopes of Redemption; and if he had known and exerciſed it, what compenſation are the Tears of a Malefactor for an Injury done to the Crown, and attempting the Life of his Prince? How great was Divine Goodneſs; not only to pity Men in this ſtate, but to provide a ſtrong Redeemer for them? *O Lord my*
‡ Pſal. 19.14. *Strength, and my Redeemer*, ſaid the Pſalmiſt ‡: When he found out a Redeemer for our Miſery, he found out a ſtrength for our Impotency.

To conclude this: Behold the *Goodneſs of God*, when he had thus unhandſomely dealt with him; had nothing to allure his Goodneſs, Multitudes of Provocations to incenſe him, were reduced to a Condition as low as could be, fit to the Matter of his Scoffs, and the Sport of Divine Juſtice, and ſo weak that we could not repair our own Ruines; then did he open a Fountain of freſh Goodneſs in the Death of his Son, and ſent forth ſuch delightful Streams, as in our Original Creation, we could never have taſted; Not only overcame the Reſentments of a Provoked Juſtice, but magnified it ſelf by

by our lowneſs, and ſtrengthned it ſelf by our weakneſs: His Goodneſs had before Created an Innocent, but here it ſaves a Malefactor; and ſends his Son to die for us, as if the Holy of Holies were the Criminal, and the Rebel the Innocent. It had been a pompous Goodneſs, to have given him as a King; but a Goodneſs of greater Grandeur, to expoſe him as a Sacrifice for Slaves and Enemies: Had *Adam* remain'd Innocent, and proved thankful for what he had received, it had been great Goodneſs to have brought him to glory; But to bring Filthy and Rebellious *Adam* to it, ſurmounts by unexpreſſible degrees, that ſort of Goodneſs he had Experimented before; Since it was not from a light Evil, a tolerable Curſe unawares brought upon us, but from the Yoke we had willingly ſubmitted to, from the power of Darkneſs we had courted, and the Furnace of Wrath we had kindled for our ſelves. What are we dead Dogs, that he ſhould behold us with ſo gracious an Eye? This Goodneſs is thus enhanced, if you conſider the State of Man in his firſt Tranſgreſſion, and after.

4. *This Goodneſs further appears in the high advancement of our Nature, after it had ſo highly offended.* By Creation, we had an affinity with Animals in our Bodies, with Angels in our Spirits, with God in his Image; but not with God in our Nature, till the Incarnation of the Redeemer. *Adam* by Creation was the Son of God, * but his Nature was not one with the Perſon of God: He was his Son as Created by him, but had no affinity to him by vertue of Union with him: But now Man doth not only ſee his Nature in multitudes of Men on Earth, but by an aſtoniſhing Goodneſs, beholds his Nature united to the Deity in Heaven: That as he was the Son of God by Creation, he is now the Brother of God by Redemption; for with ſuch a Title doth that Perſon, who was the *Son* of God as well as the *Son* of Man, honor his Diſciples †: And becauſe he is of the ſame Nature with them, he *is not aſhamed to call them brethren*, Heb. 2. 11.

* Luke 3. 38.

† John 20. 17.

Our Nature, which was infinitely diſtant from, and below the Deity, now makes one Perſon with the Son of God. What Man ſinfully aſpired to, God hath graciouſly granted, and more: Man aſpired to a likeneſs in knowledge, and God hath granted him an affinity in union. It had been aſtoniſhing Goodneſs to Angelize our Natures; but in Redemption, Divine Goodneſs hath acted higher, in a ſort to Deifie our Natures. In Creation, our Nature was exalted above other Creatures on Earth; in our Redemption, our Nature is exalted above all the Hoſt of Heaven: We were higher than the Beaſts, as Creatures, but *lower than the Angels*; * But by the Incarnation of the Son of God, our Nature is elevated many ſteps above them. After it had ſunk it ſelf by Corruption below the Beſtial Nature, and as low as the Diabolical, the *fulneſs of the Godhead dwells in our Nature bodily*, † but never in the Angels, Angelically. The Son of God deſcended to dignifie our Nature, by aſſuming it, and aſcended with our Nature to have it crown'd above thoſe ſtanding Monuments of Divine Power and Goodneſs. * That Perſon that deſcended in our Nature into the Grave, and in the ſame Nature was raiſed up again, is in that ſame Nature ſet at the right hand of God in Heaven, *far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named.* Our Refined Clay by an indiſſoluble union with this Divine Perſon, is honored to ſit for ever upon a Throne above all the Tribes of *Seraphims* and *Cherubins*; and the Perſon that wears it, is the head of the good Angels, and the conqueror of the bad; The one are put under his Feet, and the other commanded to adore him, *that purged our Sins in our Nature* †: That Divine Perſon in our Nature receives Adoration from the Angels; but the Nature of Man is not ordered to pay any Homage and Adorations to the Angels. How could Divine Goodneſs to Man more magnifie it ſelf? As we could not have a lower deſcent than we had by Sin, How could we have a higher aſcent, than by a Subſtantial Participation of a Divine Life in our

* Pſal. 8. 5.

† Coloſ. 2. 9.

* 1 Epheſ. 20. 21.

† Heb. 1. 3, 6.

Nature in the Unity of a Divine Perſon? Our Earthly Nature is joyned to a Heavenly Perſon; our undone Nature united to *one equal with God**. It may truly be ſaid, that Man is God, which is infinitely more glorious for us, than if it could be ſaid, Man is an Angel. If it were Goodneſs to advance our Innocent Nature above other Creatures, the advancement of our degenerate Nature above Angels, deſerves a higher Title than meer Goodneſs. 'Tis a more gracious act, than if all men had been transformed into the pure Spiritual Nature of the loftieſt Cherubins.

* Phil. 2. 6.

5. This Goodneſs is manifeſt in *the Covenant of Grace made with us, whereby we are freed from the rigor of that of Works.* God might have inſiſted upon the terms of the old Covenant, and requir'd of Man the improvement of his Original Stock; but God hath condeſcended to lower terms, and offer'd Man more gracious Methods, and mitigated the rigor of the firſt, by the ſweetneſs of the ſecond.

1. *'Tis Goodneſs, that he ſhould condeſcend to make another Covenant with Man.* To ſtipulate with Innocent and Righteous *Adam* for his Obedience, was a ſtoop of his Soveraignty: Though he gave the Precept as a Soveraign Lord, yet in his Covenanting, he ſeems to deſcend to ſome kind of equality with that Duſt and Aſhes with whom he treated. Abſolute Soveraigns do not uſually Covenant with their People, but exact Obedience and Duty, without binding themſelves to beſtow a Reward; and if they intend any, they reſerve the purpoſe in their own Breaſts, without treating their Subjects with a ſolemn declaration of it. There was no obligation on God to enter into the *firſt Covenant*, much leſs after the violation of the firſt, to the ſettlement of a *new*. If God ſeem'd in ſome ſort to equal himſelf to Man in the *firſt*, he ſeem'd to deſcend below himſelf in treating with a Rebel upon more condeſcending terms in the *ſecond*. If his Covenant with Innocent *Adam* was a ſtoop of his Soveraignty, this with Rebellious *Adam* ſeems to be a ſtripping himſelf of his Majeſty in favor of his Goodneſs; As if his happineſs depended upon us, and not ours upon him. 'Tis a *Humiliation of himſelf to behold the things in Heaven*, the glorious Angels, as well as *things on Earth*, mortal Men; † much more to bind himſelf in gracious bonds to the glorious Angels, and much more if to Rebel Man. In the firſt Covenant there was much of Soveraignty as well as Goodneſs; In the ſecond there is leſs of Soveraignty, and more of Grace: In the firſt there was a righteous Man for a holy God; In the ſecond, a polluted Creature for a pure and provoked God: In the firſt he holds his Scepter in his hand, to rule his Subjects: In the ſecond, he ſeems to lay by his Scepter, to Court and *Eſpouſe a Beggar*: * In the firſt he is a *Lord*; in the ſecond a *Husband*, and binds himſelf upon gracious Conditions to become a Debtor. How ſhould this Goodneſs fill us with an humble aſtoniſhment, as it did *Abraham*, when *he fell on his face*, when he heard God ſpeaking of making a Covenant with him! † And if God ſpeaking to *Iſrael* out of the Fire, and making them to hear his voice out of Heaven, that he might inſtruct them, was a Conſideration whereby *Moſes* would heighten their admiration of Divine Goodneſs, and engage their affectionate *obedience* to him*; How much more admirable is it for God to ſpeak ſo kindly to us through the pacifying Blood of the Covenant, that ſilenc'd the terrors of the old, and ſetled the tenderneſs of the new?

† Pſal. 113. 6.

* Hoſea 2. 18, 19, 20.

† Gen. 17. 2, 3.

* Deut. 4. 32, 36, 40.

2. His Goodneſs is ſeen *in the Nature and Tenor of the New Covenant.* There are in this Richer Streams of Love and Pity. The Language of one was, *Die* if thou Sin; that of the other, *Live* if thou Believeſt †: The Old Covenant was founded upon the Obedience of Man; the New is not founded upon the Inconſtancy of Mans Will, but the Firmneſs of Divine Love, and the valuable Merit of Chriſt. The *Head* of the Firſt Covenant was *Humane*

* Turretti. ſer. 2. 3.

and

and mutable; the *head* of the ſecond is *Divine* and immutable. The Curſe due to us by the breach of the *firſt*, is taken off by the indulgence of the *ſecond*: * We are by it ſnach'd from the Jaws of the Law, to be wrapt up in the boſom of *Grace*: † For you *are not under the Law, but under Grace*; from the Curſe and condemnation of the Law, to the ſweetneſs and forgiveneſs of Grace. Chriſt bore the one, being *made a Curſe for us*, * that we might enjoy the ſweetneſs of the other; By this we are brought from Mount *Sinai*, the Mount of Terror, to Mount *Sion*, the Mount of Sacrificing, the Type of the great *Sacrifice* †: That Covenant brought in *Death upon one Offence*, this Covenant offers Life after many *Offences* *: That involved us in a Curſe, and this enricheth us with a Bleſſing: The breaches of that expell'd us out of *Paradiſe*, and the embracing of this admits us into Heaven. This Covenant demands, and admits of that Repentance, whereof there was no mention in the firſt: That demanded Obedience, not Repentance upon a failure; and though the Exerciſes of it had been never ſo deep in the fall'n Creature, nothing of the Laws ſeverity had been remitted by any vertue of it. Again, the firſt Covenant demanded exact Righteouſneſs, but conveyed no cleanſing vertue upon the contracting any Filth. The firſt, demands a continuance in the Righteouſneſs conferr'd in Creation; the ſecond, imprints a gracious heart in Regeneration. *I will pour clean water upon you*; *I will put a new Spirit within you*, was the voice of the ſecond Covenant, not of the firſt. Again, as to Pardon: *Adams* Covenant was to puniſh him, not to pardon him if he fell; That threatned Death upon Tranſgreſſion, this remits it; That was an Act of Divine Soveraignty, declaring the Will of God, this is an Act of Divine Grace, paſſing an Act of Oblivion on the Crimes of the Creature: That, as it demanded no Repentance upon a failure, ſo it promiſed no Mercy upon Guilt: That convened our Sin, and condemned us for it; this clears our Guilt, and comforts us under it. The firſt Covenant related us to God as a Judge; every Tranſgreſſion againſt it forfeited his Indulgence as a Father; The ſecond delivers us from God as a condemning Judge, to bring us under his Wing as an affectionate Father: In the one there was a dreadful Frown to ſcare us; in the other, a healing Wing to cover and relieve us. Again, in regard of Righteouſneſs: That demanded our performance of a Righteouſneſs in and by our ſelves, and our own ſtrength; This demands our acceptance of a Righteouſneſs higher than ever the ſtanding Angels had: The Righteouſneſs of the firſt Covenant, was the Righteouſneſs of a Man; the Righteouſneſs of the ſecond, is the *Righteouſneſs* of a God †. Again, in regard of that Obedience it demands, it exacts not of us, as a neceſſary condition, the perfection of Obedience, but the ſincerity of Obedience; an uprightneſs in our intention, not an unſpottedneſs in our action; an integrity in our aims, and an induſtry in our compliance with Divine Precepts, * *Walk before me, and be thou perfect, i. e.* ſincere. What is hearty in our Actions is accepted, and what is defective is over-looked, and not charg'd upon us, becauſe of the Obedience and Righteouſneſs of our ſurety. The firſt Covenant rejected all our ſervices after Sin; the ſervices of a Perſon under the ſentence of Death are but dead Services; This accepts our imperfect ſervices after Faith in it; That adminiſtred no ſtrength to obey, but ſuppoſed it; This ſuppoſeth our inability to obey, and confers ſome ſtrength for it, † *I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my Statutes.* Again, in regard of the Promiſes; * The old Covenant had good, but the new hath *better Promiſes*, of Juſtification after Guilt, and Sanctification after Filth, and Glorification at laſt of the whole Man. In the firſt, there was proviſion againſt Guilt, but none for the removal of it: Proviſion againſt Filth, but none for the cleanſing of it: Promiſe of Happineſs implied, but not ſo great a one as that *Life and Immortality* in Heaven, *brought to light by the Goſpel.* † Why ſaid to be *brought to light* by the Goſpel? becauſe it was not only buried upon the fall of Man under the Curſes of the Law, but it was not ſo obvious to the conceptions

* Rom. 8. 1.
† Rom. 6. 14.
* Gal. 3. 13.
† Heb. 12. 18, 22.
* Rom. 5. 16, 17.
† 2 Cor. 5. 21.
* Gen. 17. 1.
† Ezek. 36. 27.
* Heb. 8. 6.
† 2 Tim. 1. 10.

ceptions of Man in his Innocent State. Life indeed was implied to be promiſed upon his ſtanding, but not ſo glorious an Immortality diſcloſed, to be reſerved for him, if he ſtood. As it is a Covenant of better Promiſes, ſo a Covenant of ſweeter Comforts; Comforts more choice, and Comforts more durable; An *everlaſting Conſolation, and a good Hope*, are the fruits of *Grace*, *i. e.* the Covenant of Grace *: In the whole there is ſuch a love diſcloſed, as cannot be expreſt; The Apoſtle leaves it to every Mans mind to conceive it, if he could, *what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be call'd the ſons of God* †. It inſtates us in ſuch a manner of the love of God as he bears to his Son the Image of his Perſon; * *That the World may know, that thou haſt loved them, as thou haſt loved me.*

* 2 Theſſ. 2. 16.

† 1 Joh. 3. 1.

* John 17. 23.

3. This Goodneſs appears *in the choice gift of himſelf which he hath made over in this Covenant.* You know how it runs in Scripture, *I will be their God, and they ſhall be my People* †: A propriety in the Deity is made over by it. As he gave the Blood of his Son to Seal the Covenant, ſo he gave himſelf as the Bleſſing of the Covenant; *He is not aſhamed to be called their God.* * Though he be environ'd with millions of Angels, and preſides over them in an unexpreſſible Glory, he is not aſhamed of his condeſcenſions to Man, and to paſs over Himſelf as the propriety of his People, as well as to take them to be his. 'Tis a diminution of the ſenſe of the place, to underſtand it of God as Creator; what reaſon was there for God to be aſham'd of the Expreſſions of his Power, Wiſdom, Goodneſs in the Works of his Hands? but we might have reaſon to think, there might be ſome ground in God, to be aſhamed in making himſelf over in a Deed of Gift to a mean Worm, and a filthy Rebel; this might ſeem a diſparagement to his Majeſty; but God is not aſham'd of a Title ſo mean, as the God of his deſpis'd People. A Title below thoſe others, of the *Lord of Hoſts, glorious in Holineſs, fearful in Praiſes, doing Wonders, riding on the wings of the Wind, walking in the Circuits of Heaven.* He is no more aſham'd of this Title of being our God, than he is of thoſe other that ſound more glorious: He would rather have his Greatneſs vail to his Goodneſs, than his Goodneſs be confin'd by his Majeſty. He is not only our God, but our God as he is the God of Chriſt. He is not aſham'd to be our Propriety, and Chriſt is not Aſham'd to own his People in a Partnerſhip with him in this Propriety; † *I aſcend to my God, and your God.* This of Gods being our God, is the quinteſſence of the Covenant, the Soul of all the Promiſes: In this he hath promiſed whatſoever is Infinite in him, whatſoever is the Glory and Ornament of his Nature for our uſe: Not a part of him, or one ſingle Perfection, but the whole vigor and ſtrength of all. As he is not a God without Infinite Wiſdom, and Infinite Power, and Infinite Goodneſs, and Infinite Bleſſedneſs, *&c.* ſo he paſſes over in this Covenant all that which preſents him as the moſt adorable Being to his Creatures: He will be to them as Great, as Wiſe, as Powerful, as Good as he is in himſelf. And the aſſuring us in this Covenant to be our God, imports alſo that he will do as much for us, as we would do for our ſelves, were we furniſh'd with the ſame Goodneſs, Power, and Wiſdom: In being our God, he teſtifies 'tis all one, as if we had the ſame Perfections in our own power to employ for our uſe; For he being poſſeſſed with them, 'tis as much, as if we our ſelves were poſſeſſed with them for our own advantage, according to the Rules of Wiſdom, and the ſeveral Conditions we paſs through for his Glory; but this muſt be taken with a relation to that Wiſdom, which he obſerves in his proceedings with us as Creatures, and according to the ſeveral Conditions we paſs through for his Glory. Thus Gods being ours, is more than if all Heaven and Earth were ours beſides: 'Tis more than if we were fully our own, and at our own diſpoſe; it makes *all things that God hath ours* *. And therefore not only all Things he hath Created, but all Things that he can Create: Not only all Things that he hath contrived, but all Things that he can contrive: For in being ours, his Power is ours, his poſſible Power

* Jer. 32. 38. Heb. 11. 16.

† John 20. 17.

* 1 Cor. 3. 22.

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as well as his active Power; his Power, whereby he can effect more than he hath done; and his Wiſdom, whereby he can contrive more than he hath done; ſo that if there were need of employing his Power to Create many Worlds for our good, he would not ſtick at it; for if he did, he would not be our God in the extent of his Nature, as the Promiſe intimates. What a rich Goodneſs, and a fulneſs of Bounty is there in this ſhort Expreſſion, as full as the Expreſſion of a God can make it to be Intelligible, to ſuch Creatures as we are?

4. This Goodneſs is further manifeſt *in the Confirmation of the Covenant.* His Goodneſs did not only condeſcend to make it for our Happineſs, after we had made our ſelves Miſerable, but further condeſcended to ratifie it in the ſolemneſt manner for our aſſurance, to over-rule all the Deſpondencies unbelief could raiſe up in our Souls. The reaſon why he confirmed it by an Oath, was to ſhew *the immutability of his glorious Counſel*; not to tie himſelf to keep it: For his Word and Promiſe is in it ſelf as immutable as his Oath: They were *two immutable things, his Word*, and *his Oath*, one as unchangeable as the other; but for the ſtrength of our Conſolation, that it might have no reaſon to ſhake and totter *: He would condeſcend as low as was poſſible for a God to do for the ſatisfaction of the dejected Creature. When the firſt Covenant was broken, and it was impoſſible for Man to fulfil the terms of it, and mount to Happineſs thereby, he makes another: And as if we had reaſon to diſtruſt him in the firſt, he ſolemnly ratifies it in a higher manner than he had done the other, and ſwears by himſelf, that he will be true to it, not ſo much out of an Election of himſelf, as the Object of the Oath. † *Becauſe he could not ſwear by a greater, he ſwears by himſelf*; whereby the Apoſtle clearly intimates, that Divine Goodneſs was raiſed to ſuch a height for us, that if there had been any thing elſe more ſacred than Himſelf, or that could have puniſhed him if he had broken it, that he would have ſworn by, to ſilence any diffidence in us, and confirm us in the reality of his Intentions. Now if it were a mighty mark of Goodneſs, for God to ſtoop to a Covenanting with us; it was more for a Soveraign to bind himſelf ſo ſolemnly, to be our Debtor in a Promiſe, as well as he was our Soveraign in the Precept, and ſtoop ſo low in it to ſatisfie the diſtruſts of that Creature, that deſerved for ever to lie ſoaking in his own Ruines, for not believing his bare Word. What Abſolute Prince would ever ſtoop ſo low, as to Article with Rebellious Subjects, whom he could in a moment ſet his Foot upon and cruſh; much leſs countenance a cauſeleſs diſtruſt of his Goodneſs by the addition of his Oath, and thereby bind his own hands, which were unconfin'd before, and free to do what he pleaſed with them?

* Heb. 6. 17, 18.

† Heb. 6. 13.

5. This Goodneſs of God is remarkable alſo *in the Condition of this Covenant, which is Faith.* This was the eaſieſt Condition in its own Nature, that could be imagin'd: No difficulty in it but what proceeds from the pride of Mans Nature, and the obſtinacy of his Will: It was not impoſſible in its ſelf; it was not the old Condition of perfect Obedience: It had been mighty Goodneſs to ſet us up again upon our old Stock, and reſtore us to the Tenor and Condition of the Covenant of Works, or to have requir'd the burdenſom Ceremonies of the Law. Nor is it an exact knowledge he requires of us; all Mens underſtandings being of a different ſize, they had not been capable of this. It was the moſt reaſonable Condition, in regard of the Excellency of the things propoſed, and the effects following upon it; Nay, it was neceſſary. It had been a want of Goodneſs to himſelf and his own Honor; he had caſt that off, had he not inſiſted on this Condition of Faith; it being the loweſt he could condeſcend to with a *ſalvo* for his Glory. And it was a Goodneſs to us; 'tis nothing elſe he requires, but a willingneſs to accept what he hath contrived, and acted for us: And no Man can be happy againſt his will; without this belief at leaſt, Man could

could never voluntary have arriv'd to his Happineſs. The Goodneſs of God is evidenced in that,

Firſt, *'Tis an eaſie Condition, not impoſſible.*

1. *It was not the Condition of the Old Covenant.* The Condition of that was an entire Obedience to every Precept, with a Mans whole ſtrength, and without any flaw or crack. But the Condition of the Evangelical Covenant, is a ſincere, though weak Faith; He hath ſuited this Covenant to the Miſery of Mans fall'n Condition: He conſiders our weakneſs, and that we are but Duſt, and therefore exacts not of us an entire, but a ſincere Obedience. Had God ſent Chriſt to expiate the Crime of *Adam*, reſtore him to his Paradiſe Eſtate, and repair in Man the ruin'd Image of Holineſs, and after this to have renewed the Covenant of Works for the future, and ſetled the ſame Condition in exacting a compleat Obedience for the time to come; Divine Goodneſs had been above any accuſation, and had deſerv'd our higheſt admiration in the pardon of former Tranſgreſſions, and giving out to us our firſt Stock. But Divine Goodneſs took larger ſtrides: He had tried our firſt Condition, and found his mutable Creature quickly to violate it: Had he demanded the ſame now, 'tis likely it had met with the ſame iſſue as before, in Mans Diſobedience and Fall; we ſhould have been *as Men, as Adam,* **tranſgreſſing the Covenant*, and then we muſt have lain groaning under our Diſeaſe, and wallowing in our Blood, unleſs Chriſt had come to die for the Expiation of our new Crimes; for every Tranſgreſſion had been a violation of that Covenant, and a forfeiture of our Right to the benefits of it. If we had broke it but in one tittle, we had rendred our ſelves uncapable to fulfil it for the future; that one Tranſgreſſion had ſtood as a Bar againſt the Pleas of after Obedience. But God hath wholly laid that Condition aſide as to us, and ſetled that of Faith, more eaſie to be perform'd, and to be renew'd by us. 'Tis Infinite Grace in him, that he will accept of Faith in us, inſtead of that perfect Obedience, he requir'd of us in the Covenant of Works.

* Hoſ. 6. 7.

2. It is eaſie, not like *the burdenſome Ceremonies appointed under the Law.* He exacts not now the Legal Obedience, expenſive Sacrifices, troubleſom Purifications and Abſtinencies, that *Yoak of Bondage*, † which they were *not able to bear.* * He treats us not as Servants, or Children in their Nonage under the Elements of the World, nor requires thoſe innumerable bodily Exerciſes that he exacted of them: He demands not 1000 *of Lambs*, and *Rivers of Oyl*; but he requires a *ſincere* Confeſſion and Repentance in order to our abſolution; an *unfain'd Faith*, in order to our Bleſſedneſs, and elevation to a Glorious Life. He requires only that we ſhould believe what he ſaith, and have ſo good an opinion of his Goodneſs and Veracity, as to perſwade our ſelves of the reality of his Intentions, confide in his Word, and rely upon his Promiſe, cordially embrace his Crucified Son, whom he hath ſet forth as the means of our Happineſs, and have a ſincere reſpect to all the Diſcoveries of his Will. What can be more eaſie than this? Though ſome in the days of the *Apoſtles*, and others ſince, have endeavored to introduce a multitude of legal Burthens, as if they envied God the Expreſſions of his Goodneſs, or thought him guilty of too much Remiſsneſs, in taking off the Yoak, and treating Man too favorably.

† Gal. 5. 1.
* Acts 15. 10.

3. *Nor is it a clear knowledge of every Revelation*, that is the Condition of this Covenant. God in his kindneſs to Man, hath made Revelations of himſelf, but his Goodneſs is manifeſted in obliging us to believe him, not fully to underſtand him. He hath made them by ſufficient Teſtimonies as clear to our Faith, as they are incomprehenſible to our Reaſon: He hath reveal'd a Trinity of Perſons in their diſtinct Offices in the buſineſs of Redemption, without which Revelation of a Trinity, we could not have a right Notion and Scheme of Redeeming Grace. But ſince the clearneſs of Mens underſtanding is ſullied by

by the Fall, and hath loſt its Wings to fly up to a Knowledge of ſuch ſublime Things as that of the Trinity, and other Myſteries of the Chriſtian Religion: God hath manifeſted his Goodneſs in not obliging us to underſtand them, but to believe them, and hath given us reaſon enough to believe it to be his Revelation, (both from the Nature of the Revelation it ſelf, and the way and manner of propagating it; which is wholly Divine, exceeding all the Methods of Humane Art) though he hath not extended our Underſtandings to a Capacity to know them, and render a reaſon of every Myſtery. He did not require of every *Iſraelite*, or of any of them that were ſtung by the Fiery Serpents, that they ſhould underſtand, or be able to diſcourſe of the Nature and Qualities of that Braſs of which the Serpent upon the Pole was made, or by what Art that Serpent was formed, or in what manner the ſight of it did operate in them for their Cure; it was enough that they did believe the Inſtitution and Precept of God, and that their own Cure was aſſured by it: It was enough if they caſt their Eyes upon it according to the direction. The Underſtandings of Men are of ſeveral Sizes and Elevations, one higher than another: If the Condition of this Covenant had been a greatneſs of Knowledge, the moſt acute Men had only enjoyed the Benefits of it. But it is Faith, which is as eaſie to be performed by the Ignorant and Simple, as by the Strongeſt and moſt Towring Mind: 'Tis that which is within the compaſs of every Mans Underſtanding. God did not require, that every one within the Verge of the Covenant, ſhould be able to Diſcourſe of it to the Reaſons of Men: He requir'd not that every Man ſhould be a Philoſopher, or an Orator, but a Believer. What could be more eaſie than to lift up the Eye to the Brazen Serpent, to be Cur'd of a Fiery Sting? What could be more facile than a Glance, which is done without any pain, and in a moment? 'Tis a Condition may be perform'd by the weakeſt as well as the ſtrongeſt: Could thoſe that were bitten in the moſt Vital part, caſt up their Eyes, though at the laſt gaſp, they would ariſe to health by the expulſion of the Venom.

2. As 'tis Eaſie, ſo 'tis *Reaſonable*. Repent and Believe, is that which is requir'd by Chriſt and the Apoſtles, for the enjoyment of the Kingdom of Heaven: 'Tis very reaſonable, that things ſo great and glorious, ſo beneficial to Men, and reveal'd to them by ſo ſound an Authority, and an unerring Truth, ſhould be believed. The Excellency of the thing diſclos'd, could admit of no lower a Condition than to be believ'd and embrac'd. There is a ſort of Faith, that is a Natural Condition in every thing: All Religion in the World, though never ſo falſe, depends upon a ſort of it; for unleſs there be a belief of future things, there would never be a hope of Good, or a fear of Evil, the two great Hinges upon which Religion Moves. In all kinds of Learning, many things muſt be believ'd, before a progreſs can be made. Belief of one another is neceſſary in all acts of Humane Life; without which, Humane Society would be unlink'd and diſſolv'd. What is that Faith that God requires of us in this Covenant, but a *willingneſs* of Soul to take God for our God, Chriſt for our Mediator, and the Procurer of our Happineſs *? What Prince could require leſs upon any Promiſe he makes his Subjects, than to be believed as true, and depended on as good? That they ſhould accept his Pardon, and other gracious Offers, and be ſincere in their Allegiance to him, avoiding all things that may offend him, and purſuing all things that may pleaſe him: Thus God, by ſo ſmall and reaſonable a Condition as Faith, lets in the Fruits of Chriſts Death into our Soul, and wraps us up in the fruition of all the Priviledges purchas'd by it. So much he hath condeſcended in his Goodneſs, that upon ſo ſlight a Condition we may plead his Promiſe, and humbly challenge by vertue of the Covenant thoſe good things he hath promiſed in his Word: 'Tis ſo reaſonable a Condition, that if God did not require it in the Covenant of Grace, the Creature were obliged to perform it: For the publiſhing any Truth from God, naturally calls for Credit to be given it

* Rev. 22. 17

it by the Creature, and an entertainment of it in Practice. Could you offer a more reaſonable Condition your ſelves, had it been left to your choice? Should a Prince proclaim a Pardon to a profligate Wretch, would not all the World cry ſhame of him, if he did not believe it upon the higheſt aſſurances? and if Ingenuity did not make him ſorry for his Crimes, and careful in the Duty of a Subject, ſurely the World would cry ſhame of ſuch a Perſon.

5. 'Tis *a neceſſary Condition.*

1. *Neceſſary for the Honor of God.* A Prince is diſparag'd if his Authority in his Law, and if his Graciouſneſs in his Promiſes be not accepted and believed. What Phyſician would undertake a Cure, if his Precepts may not be Credited? 'Tis the firſt thing in the order of Nature, that the Revelation of God ſhould be believed, that the reality of his Intentions in inviting Man to the acceptance of thoſe Methods he hath preſcribed for their attaining their chief Happineſs, ſhould be acknowledged. 'Tis a debaſing Notion of God, that he ſhould give a Happineſs, purchaſed by Divine Blood, to a Perſon that hath no value for it, nor any abhorrency of thoſe Sins that occaſion'd ſo great a Suffering, nor any will to avoid them: Should he not vilifie himſelf, to beſtow a Heaven upon that Man, that will not believe the offers of it, nor walk in thoſe ways that leads to it? That walks ſo, as if he would declare, there was no truth in his Word, nor holineſs in his Nature? Would not God by ſuch an Act verifie a Truth in the Language of their Practice, *viz.* That he were both falſe and impure, careleſs of his Word, and negligent of his Holineſs? As God was ſo deſirous to enſure the Conſolation of Believers, that if there had been a greater Being than Himſelf to atteſt, and for him to be reſponſible to, for the confirmation of his Promiſe, he would willingly have ſubmitted to him, and have made him the Umpire; * *He ſwore by himſelf, becauſe he could not ſwear by a greater.* By the ſame reaſon, Had it ſtood with the Majeſty and Wiſdom of God to ſtoop to lower Conditions in this Covenant, for the reducing of Man to his Duty and Happineſs, he would have done it; but his Goodneſs could not take lower ſteps with the preſervation of the Rights of his Majeſty, and the Honor of his Wiſdom. Would you have had him wholly ſubmitted to the obſtinate will of a Rebellious Creature, and be ruled only by his terms? Would you have had him receiv'd Men to Happineſs, after they had heightned their Crimes by a contempt of his Grace as well as of his Creating Goodneſs, and have made them bleſſed under the guilt of their Crimes without an acknowledgment? Should he glorifie one that will not believe what he hath reveal'd, nor repent of what himſelf hath committed; and ſo ſave a Man after a repeated unthankfulneſs to the moſt immenſe Grace that ever was, or can be diſcovered and offer'd, without a deteſtation of his Ingratitude, and a voluntary acceptance of his Offers? 'Tis neceſſary for the honor of God, that Man ſhould accept of his terms, and not give Laws to him, to whom he is obnoxious as a guilty Perſon, as well as Subject as a Creature.

* Heb. 6. 19.

Again, It was very equitable and neceſſary for the Honor of God, that ſince Man fell by an unbelief of his Precept and Threatning, he ſhould not riſe again without a belief of his Promiſe, and caſting himſelf upon his Truth in that: Since he had vilified the Honor of his Truth in the Threatning: Since Man in his Fall would lean to his own underſtanding againſt God, 'tis fit that in his Recovery, the higheſt Powers of his Soul, his Underſtanding and Will ſhould be ſubjected to him in an intire Reſignation. Now, whereas Knowledge ſeems to have a Power over its Object, *Faith* is a full ſubmiſſion to that which is the Object of it. Since Man intended a glorying in himſelf; the Evangelical Covenant directs its whole Battery againſt it, that Men may *glory in nothing* but Divine Goodneſs †. Had Man perform'd exact Obedience by his own Strength, he had had ſomething in himſelf as the Matter

† 1 Cor. 1. 29, 30, 31.

of

of his Glory. And though after the Fall Grace made it ſelf illuſtrious, in ſetting him up upon a new Stock, yet had the ſame condition of exact Obedience been ſetled in the ſame manner. Man would have had ſomething to glory in, which is ſtruck off wholly by Faith; whereby Man in every act muſt go out of himſelf for a ſupply, to that Mediator which Divine Goodneſs and Grace hath appointed.

2. Tis *neceſſary for the happineſs of Man.* That can be no contenting Condition wherein the Will of Man doth not concur. He that is forced to the moſt delicious Diet, or to wear the braveſt Apparel, or to be ſtor'd with abundance of Treaſure, cannot be happy in thoſe things without an eſteem of them, and delight in them: If they be nauſeous to him, the indiſpoſition of his mind is a dead Fly in thoſe Boxes of precious Ointment. Now *Faith* being a ſincere willingneſs to accept of Chriſt, and to come to God by him; and *Repentance* being a deteſtation of that, which made Mans ſeparation from God, 'tis impoſſible he could be voluntarily happy without it: Man cannot attain and enjoy a true happineſs without an operation of his underſtanding about the Object propoſed, and the means appointed to enjoy it: There muſt be a knowledge of what is offer'd, and of the way of it, and ſuch a knowledge as may determine the Will, to affect that end, and embrace thoſe means; which the Will can never do, till the underſtanding be fully perſwaded of the truth of the Offerer, and the goodneſs of the Propoſal it ſelf, and the conveniency of the means for the attaining of it. 'Tis neceſſary in the nature of the thing, that what is reveal'd, ſhould be believ'd to be a Divine Revelation. God muſt be judged true in the promiſing Juſtification, and Sanctification, the means of Happineſs; and if any Man deſires to be partaker of thoſe Promiſes, he muſt deſire to be Sanctified; and how can he deſire that which is the Matter of thoſe Promiſes, if he wallow in his own Luſts, and deſire to do ſo, a thing repugnant to the Promiſe it ſelf? Would you have God force Man to be happy againſt his Will? Is it not very reaſonable, he ſhould demand the conſent of his reaſonable Creature, to that Bleſſedneſs he offers him? The new Covenant is a *Marriage Covenant* *, which implies a conſent on our parts, as well as a conſent on Gods part; That is no Marriage, that hath not the conſent of both parties. Now Faith is our actual conſent, and Repentance and ſincere Obedience are the Teſtimonies of the Truth and reality of this Conſent. * Hoſ. 2. 16, 19, 20.

6. *Divine Goodneſs is eminent in his Methods of treating with Men to embrace this Covenant.* They are Methods of gentleneſs and ſweetneſs: 'Tis a wooing Goodneſs, and a bewailing Goodneſs; His Expreſſions are with ſtrong motions of affection: He carrieth not on the Goſpel by force of Arms: He doth not ſolely menace Men into it, as Worldly Conquerors have done: He doth not as *Mahomet*, plunder Mens Eſtates, and wound their Bodies, to imprint a Religion on their Souls: He doth not erect Gibbets, and kindle Faggots, to ſcare Men to an entring into Covenant with him. What Multitudes might he have raiſed by his power, as well as others? What Legions of *Angels* might he have Rendezvouz'd from Heaven, to have beaten Men into a profeſſion of the Goſpel? Nor doth he only interpoſe his Soveraign Authority in the Precept of Faith, but uſeth Rational Expoſtulations to move Men voluntarily to comply with his Propoſals; † *Come now ſaith the Lord, let us reaſon together.* He ſeems to call Heaven and Earth to be judge, whether he had been wanting in any reaſonable ways of Goodneſs, to overcome the perverſity of the Creature; * *Hear O Heavens, and give ear O Earth, I have nouriſhed and brought up Children.* What various encouragements doth he uſe agreeable to the Nature of Men, endeavouring to perſwade them with all tenderneſs, not to deſpiſe their own Mercies, and be Enemies to their own Happineſs? He would allure us by his Beauty, and win us by his † Iſaiah 1. 18. * Iſaiah 1. 2.

Mercy. He uſes the Arms of his own Excellency, and our neceſſity to prevail upon us; and this after the higheſt provocations. When *Adam* had trampl'd upon his Creating Goodneſs, it was not cruſht; and when Man had caſt it from him, it took the higher rebound: When the Rebels provocation was freſh in his mind, he ſought him out with a Promiſe in his hand, though *Adam fled from him out of enmity*, as well as *fear**. And when the *Jews* had outrag'd his Son, whom he loved from Eternity, and made the Lord of Heaven and Earth bow down his Head like a Slave on the Croſs, yet in that place where the moſt horrible wickedneſs had been committed, muſt the Goſpel be preached: The *Law* muſt *go forth out of that Sion*, and the *Apoſtles* muſt not ſtir from thence, till they had received the promiſe of the Spirit, and publiſht the Word of Grace in that ungrateful City, whoſe Inhabitants yet ſwelled with indignation againſt the Lord of Life, and the Doctrine he had preached among them: † He would overlook their indignities out of tenderneſs to their Souls; and expoſe the Apoſtles to the peril of their Lives, rather than expoſe his Enemies to the fury of the Devil.

Gen. 3.

† Luke 24. 47.
* Acts 1. 4, 5.

1. *How affectionately doth he invite Men?* What multitudes of alluring Promiſes, and preſſing Exhortations are there every where ſprinkled in the Scripture, and in ſuch a paſſionate manner, as if God were ſolely concern'd in our good, without a glance on his own glory? How tenderly doth he wooe flinty hearts, and expreſs more pity to them, than they do to themſelves? With what affection do his Bowels riſe up to his Lips in his Speech in the Prophet, * *Hearken to me O my People, and give ear unto me O my Nation, my People, my Nation?* Melting Expreſſions of a tender God, ſolliciting a rebellious People, to make their retreat to him: He never emptied his hand of his Bounty, nor deveſted his Lips of thoſe charitable Expreſſions. He ſent *Noah* to move the Wicked of the old World to an embracing of his Goodneſs, and frequent Prophets to the provoking *Jews*; and as the World continued, and grew up to a taller ſtature in Sin, he ſtoops more in the manner of his Expreſſions. Never was the World at a higher pitch of Idolatry, than at the firſt publiſhing the Goſpel; yet when we ſhould have expected him to be a puniſhing, he is a beſeeching God. The Apoſtle fears not to uſe the Expreſſion for the glory of Divine Goodneſs, † *We are Ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us.* The beſeeching voice of God is in the voice of the Miniſtry, as the voice of the Prince is in that of the *Herald*: 'Tis as if Divine Goodneſs did kneel down to a Sinner with wringed Hands and blubber'd Cheeks, intreating him not to force him to re-aſſume a Tribunal of Juſtice in the nature of a Judge, ſince he would Treat with Man upon a Throne of Grace in the nature of a Father; yea, he ſeems to put himſelf into the poſture of the Criminal, that the offending Creature might not feel the puniſhment due to a Rebel. 'Tis not the condeſcenſion, but the intereſt of a Traitor to creep upon his knees in Sackcloth to his Sovereign, to beg his life: But it is a Miraculous Goodneſs in the Sovereign to creep in the loweſt poſture to the Rebel, to importune him not only for an amity to him, but a love to his own Life and Happineſs: This he doth not only in his general proclamations, but in his particular wooings, thoſe inward courtings of his Spirit, ſolliciting them with more diligence (if they would obſerve it) to their Happineſs, than the Devil tempts them to the ways of their Miſery. As he was firſt in Chriſt, reconciling the World, when the World looked not after him; ſo he is firſt in his Spirit, wooing the World to accept of that Reconciliation, when the World will not liſten to him. How often doth he flaſh up the Light of Nature, and the Light of the Word in Mens hearts, to move them not to lie down in ſparks of their own kindling, but to aſpire to a better happineſs, and prepare them to be ſubject to a higher Mercy; If they would improve his preſent intreaties to ſuch an end? And what are his Threanings deſign'd for, but to move the Wheel of

† Iſai. 51. 4.

† 2 Cor. 5. 20.

our

our Fears, that the Wheel of our Deſire and Love might be ſet on Motion for the embracing his Promiſe? They are not ſo much the Thunders of his Juſtice, as the loud Rhetorick of his good Will, to prevent Mens Miſery under the Viols of Wrath. 'Tis his kindneſs to ſcare Men by Threatnings, that Juſtice might not ſtrike them with the Sword: 'Tis not the deſtruction, but the preſerving Reformation that he aims at: *He hath no pleaſure in the death of the Wicked*; This he confirms by his *Oath*. * His threatnings are gracious Expoſtulations with them, *Why will ye die O houſe of Iſrael?* They are like the noiſe a favourable Officer makes in the Street, to warn the Criminal he comes to ſeize upon, to make his eſcape: He never uſed his Juſtice to cruſh Men; till he had uſed his kindneſs to allure them. All the dreadful deſcriptions of a future Wrath, as well as the lively deſcriptions of the happineſs of another World, are deſigned to perſwade Men: The Honey of his Goodneſs is in the Bowels of thoſe roaring Lions; ſuch pains doth Goodneſs take with Men, to make them Candidates for Heaven. * Ezek. 33. 11.

2. *How readily doth he receive Men, when they do return?* We have *David's* Experience for it; † *I ſaid, I will confeſs my Tranſgreſſions unto the Lord, and thou forgaveſt the iniquity of my Sin, Selah.* A ſincere look from the Creature draws out his Arms, and opens his Boſom; he is ready with his Phyſick to heal us, upon a reſolution to acquaint him with our Diſeaſe, and by his Medicines prevents the putting our Reſolution into a Petition. The *Pſalmiſt* adds a *Selah* to it, as a ſpecial Note of Thankfulneſs for Divine Goodneſs. He doth not only ſtand ready to receive our Petitions, while we are ſpeaking, but *anſwers us before we call*; * liſtening to the Motions of our hearts, as well as to the ſupplications of our Lips: He is the true Father that hath a quicker pace in meeting, than the Prodigal hath in returning; Who would not have his Embraces and Careſſes interrupted by his Confeſſion; † The Confeſſion follows, doth not precede the Fathers Compaſſion. How doth he rejoyce in having an opprtunity to expreſs his Grace, when he hath prevail'd with a Rebel to throw down his Arms and lie at his Feet; and this becauſe *he delights in Mercy*? * He delights in the Expreſſions of it from himſelf, and the acceptance of it by his Creature. † Pſal. 32. 5. * Iſai. 65. 24. † Luke 15. 20, 21, 22. * Mic. 7. 18.

3. *How meltingly doth he bewail Mans wilful refuſal of his Goodneſs?* 'Tis a mighty Goodneſs to offer Grace to a Rebel, a mighty Goodneſs to give it him after he hath a while ſtood off from the terms: An aſtoniſhing Goodneſs to regret and lament his wilful perdition. He ſeems to utter thoſe words in a ſigh. † *Oh that my People had hearkened unto me, and* Iſrael *had walked in my way!* 'Tis true, God hath not Humane Paſſions, but his Affections can not be expreſt otherwiſe in a way intelligible to us: The Excellency of his Nature is above the Paſſions of Men, but ſuch Expreſſions of himſelf manifeſt to us the ſincerity of his Goodneſs; and that were he capable of our Paſſions, he would expreſs himſelf in ſuch a manner as we do. And we find incarnate Goodneſs bewailing with tears and Sighs the ruine of *Jeruſalem*: * By the ſame reaſon that when a Sinner returns, there is joy in Heaven, upon his obſtinacy there is ſorrow on Earth. The one is as if a Prince ſhould Cloath all his Court in Triumphant Scarlet upon a Rebels Repentance: And the other, as if a Prince ſhould put himſelf, and his Court in Mourning for a Rebels obſtinate refuſal of a Pardon, when he lies at his Mercy. Are not now theſe affectionate invitations, and deep bewailings of their perverſity high Teſtimonies of Divine Goodneſs? Do not the unwearied repetitions of Gracious Encouragements deſerve a higher name than that of meer Goodneſs? What can be a ſtronger Evidence of the ſincerity of it, than the ſound of his ſaving voice in our enjoyments, the motion of his Spirit in our hearts, and his Grief for the neglect of all? Theſe are not Teſtimonies of any want of Goodneſs in his Nature to anſwer us, or willingneſs to expreſs it to his † Pſal. 81. 13. * Luke 19. 42.

Creature. Hath he any mind to deceive us, that thus entreats us? The Majeſty of his Nature is too great for ſuch ſhifts; or if it were not, the deſpicableneſs of our condition would render him above the uſing any. Who would charge that Phſician with want of kindneſs, that freely offers his Sovereign Medicine, importunes Men by the love they have to their health to take it, and is diſſolved into tears and ſorrow, when he finds it rejected by their peeviſh and conceited humour?

7. *Divine Goodneſs is eminent in the Sacraments he hath affixt to this Covenant, eſpecially in the Lords Supper.* As he gave himſelf in his Son, ſo he gives his Son in the Sacrament; He doth not only give him as a Sacrifice upon the Croſs for the Expiation of our Crimes, but as a Feaſt upon the Table for the nouriſhment of our Souls: In the one he was given to be offer'd; in this he gives him to be partaked of, with all the Fruits of his Death: Under the Image of the Sacramental Signs, every Believer doth eat the Fleſh, and drink the Blood of the great Mediator of the Covenant. The words of Chriſt, *This is my Body and this is my Blood*, are true to the end of the World*. This is the moſt delicious Viand of Heaven, the moſt exquiſite dainty food, God can feed us with; the delight of the Deity, the admiration of Angels: A Feaſt with God is great, but a Feaſt on God is greater. Under thoſe Signs that Body is preſented; that which was conceived by the Spirit, inhabited by the Godhead, bruiſed by the Father to be our Food, as well as our Propitiation, is preſented to us on the Table: That Blood which ſatisfied Juſtice, waſht away our guilt on the Croſs, and pleads for our Perſons at the Throne of Grace: That Blood which ſilenc'd the Curſe, pacifi'd Heaven, and purg'd Earth, is given to us for our refreſhment. This is the *Bread* ſent *from Heaven*, the true *Manna*; The Cup is the *Cup of Bleſſing*, and therefore a Cup of Goodneſs†. 'Tis true, Bread doth not ceaſe to be Bread, nor the Wine ceaſe to be Wine; neither of them loſe their Subſtance, but both acquire a Sanctification, by the relation they have to that which they repreſent, and give a nouriſhment to that Faith that receives them. In thoſe God offers us a remedy for the Sting of Sin, and troubles of Conſcience: He gives us not the Blood of a meer Man, or the Blood of an incarnate Angel, but of God bleſſed for ever: A Blood that can ſecure us againſt the wrath of Heaven, and the tumults of our Conſciences: A Blood that can waſh away our Sins, and beautifie our Souls: A Blood that hath more ſtrength than our Filth, and more prevalency than our Accuſer: A Blood that ſecures us againſt the terrors of Death, and purifies us for the Bleſſedneſs of Heaven. The Goodneſs of God complies with our Senſes, and condeſcends to our weakneſs: He inſtructs us by the Eye, as well as by the Ear: He lets us ſee, and taſte, and feel him, as well as hear him: He vails his Glory under Earthly Elements, and informs our underſtanding in the Myſteries of Salvation by Signs familiar to our Senſes; and becauſe we cannot with our Bodily Eyes behold him in his Glory, he preſents him to the Eyes of our Minds in Elements, to affect our underſtandings in the repreſentations of his Death. The Body of Chriſt Crucified is more viſible to our Spiritual ſenſe, than the inviſible Deity could be viſible in his Fleſh upon Earth: And the Power of his Body and Blood is as well experimented in our Souls, as the power of his Divinity was ſeen by the *Jews* in his miraculous actions in his Body in the World. 'Tis the Goodneſs of God, to mind us frequently of the great things Chriſt hath purchaſed; That as himſelf would not let them be out of his mind, to communicate them to us, ſo he would give us means to preſerve them in our minds, to adore him for them, and requeſt them of him; whereby he doth evidence his own ſolicitouſneſs, that we ſhould not be depriv'd by our own forgetfulneſs of that Grace, Chriſt hath purchaſed for us: It was to remember the Redeemer, and *ſhew his Death till he came**.

* Matth. 26. 26, 28.

† 1 Cor. 10. 15.

* 1 Cor. 11. 25, 26.

1. *His*

1. *His Goodneſs is ſeen in the end of it, which is a ſealing the Covenant of Grace.* * The common Nature and End of Sacraments is to Seal the Covenant they belong to, and the truths of the Promiſes of it. The legal Sacraments of Circumciſion and the Paſſover ſealed the legal Promiſes and the Covenant in the Judaical Adminiſtration of it: And the Evangelical Sacraments ſeal the Evangelical Promiſes, as a Ring confirms a contract of Marriage, and a Seal the Articles of a compact: By the ſame reaſon Circumciſion is call'd a *Seal of the Righteouſneſs of Faith* †, other Sacraments may have the ſame Title: God doth atteſt, that he will remain firm in his Promiſe, and the Receiver atteſts he will remain firm in his Faith. In all Reciprocal Covenants there are mutual Engagements, and that which ſerves for a Seal on the part of the one, ſerves for a Seal alſo on the part of the other: God obligeth himſelf to the performance of the Promiſe, and Man engageth himſelf to the performance of his Duty. The thing confirm'd by this Sacrament is the perpetuity of this Covenant in the Blood of Chriſt, whence it is called *the New Teſtament*, or Covenant *in the Blood of Chriſt* *. In every repetition of it, God by preſenting confirms his reſolution to us, of ſticking to this Covenant for the Merit of Chriſts Blood; and the Receiver by eating the Body, and drinking the Blood, engageth himſelf to keep cloſe to the Condition of Faith, expecting a full Salvation, and a bleſſed Immortality upon the Merit of the ſame Blood alone. This *Sacrament* could not be called the *New Teſtament* or *Covenant*, if it had not ſome relation to the Covenant; and what it can be but this, I do not underſtand. The Covenant it ſelf was confirm'd *by the Death of Chriſt* †, and thereby made unchangeable both in the Benefits to us, and the Condition requir'd of us; but he Seals it to our Senſe in a Sacrament to give us ſtrong conſolation: Or rather the Articles of the Covenant of Redemption between the Father and the Son, agreed on from Eternity, were accompliſht on Chriſts part by his Death, on the Fathers part by his Reſurrection; Chriſt performed what he promiſed in the one, and God acknowledged the validity of it, and performs what he had promiſed in the other. The Covenant of Grace founded upon this Covenant of Redemption is ſealed in the Sacrament; God owns his ſtanding to the terms of it, as ſealed by the Blood of the Mediator, by preſenting him to us under thoſe Signs, and gives us a right upon Faith to the enjoyment of the Fruits of it: As the right of a Houſe is made over by the delivery of the Key, and the right of Land tranſlated by the delivery of a Turf; whereby he gives us aſſurance of his reality, and a ſtrong ſupport to our confidence in him; Not that there is any virtue and power of ſealing in the Elements themſelves, no more than there is in a Turf, to give an Infeoffment in a parcel of Land; but as the power of the one is derived from the Order of the Law, ſo the confirming power of the Sacrament is deriv'd from the Inſtitution of God. As the Oil wherewith Kings were anointed, did not of it ſelf confer upon them that Royal Dignity, but it was a ſign of their inveſtiture into Office, order'd by Divine Inſtitution. We can with no reaſon imagine, that God intended them as naked Signs or Pictures, to pleaſe our Eyes with the Image of them, to repreſent their own Figures to our Eyes, but to confirm ſomething to our underſtanding by the Efficacy of the Spirit accompanying them *: They convey to the Believing Receiver, what they repreſent, as the Great Seal of a Prince fixed to the Parchment, doth the Pardon of the Rebel as well as its own Figure. Chriſts Death, and the Grace of the Covenant is not only ſignified, but the Fruits and Merit of that Death communicated alſo. Thus doth Divine Goodneſs evidence it ſelf, not only in making a Gracious Covenant with us, but fixing Seals to it; not to ſtrengthen his own Obligation, which ſtood ſtronger than the Foundations of Heaven and Earth, upon the Credit of his Word, but to ſtrengthen our weakneſs, and ſupport our ſecurity, by ſomething which might appear more formal and ſolemn than a bare word. By this, the Divine Goodneſs provides

* Amyral, *Irenicum*, p. 16, 17.

† Rom. 4. 11.

* Luke 22. 20.

† Heb. 9. 15.

* Daille, *Mel. lang. part.* 1. p. 153.

vides againſt our Spiritual faintings, and ſhews us by real Signs as well as Verbal Declarations, that the Covenant ſealed by the Blood of Chriſt, is unalterable; and thereby would fortifie and mount our hopes to degrees in ſome meaſure ſuitable to the kindneſs of the Covenant, and the dignity of the Redeemers Blood. And it's yet a further degree of his Goodneſs, that he hath appointed us ſo often to Celebrate it, whereby he ſhews how careful he is to keep up our tottering Faith, and preſerve us conſtant in our obedience; obliging himſelf to the performance of his Promiſe, and obliging us to the payment of our Duty.

2. His Goodneſs is ſeen in the Sacrament *in giving us in it an union and communion with Chriſt.* There is not only a *Commemoration* of Chriſt dying, but a *Communication* of Chriſt living. The Apoſtle ſtrongly aſſerts it by way of Interrogation, * *The Cup of Bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Chriſt? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Chriſt?* In the Cup there is a communication of the Blood of Chriſt, a conveyance of a Right to the Merits of his Death, and the Bleſſedneſs of his Life: We are not leſs by this made one Body with Chriſt, than we are by *Baptiſm*: † And *put on Chriſt* living in this, as well as in Baptiſm; * That as his taking our infirm Fleſh, was a real Incarnation, ſo the giving us his Fleſh to eat, is a Myſtical Incarnation in Believers, whereby they become one Body with him as Crucified, and one Body with him as Riſen; For if Chriſt himſelf be receiv'd by Faith in the Word, † He is no leſs received by Faith in the Sacrament. When the Holy Ghoſt is ſaid to be receiv'd, the Graces or Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt are receiv'd; So when Chriſt is receiv'd, the Fruits of his Death are really partaked of. The *Iſraelites* that eat of the Sacrifices, did *partake of the Altar* *, *i.e.* had a communion with the God of *Iſrael*, to whom they had been Sacrificed; and thoſe that *eat of the Sacrifices* offer'd to Idols, had a *fellowſhip with Devils*, to whom thoſe Sacrifices were offer'd, *Verſe* 20. Thoſe that partake of the Sacraments in a due manner, have a communion with that God to whom it was Sacrificed, and a communion with that Body which was Sacrificed to God; Not that the Subſtance of that Body and Blood is wrapped up in the Elements, or that the Bread and Wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Chriſt, but as they repreſent him, and by virtue of the Inſtitution are in Eſtimation himſelf, his own Body and Blood; by the ſame reaſon as he is call'd *Chriſt our Paſsover*, he may be call'd *Chriſt our Supper* †: For as they are ſo reckon'd to an unworthy Receiver, as if they were the real Body and Blood of Chriſt, becauſe by his not diſcerning the Lords Body in it, or making light of it as common Bread, he is judged *guilty of the Body and Blood of Chriſt*, guilty of treating him in as baſe a manner as the *Jews* did when they Crown'd him with Thorns: * By the ſame reaſon they muſt be reckon'd to a worthy Receiver, as the very Body and Blood of Chriſt: So that as the unworthy Receiver *eats and drinks Damnation*; the worthy Receiver *eats and drinks Salvation.* It would be an empty Myſtery, and unworthy of an Inſtitution by Divine Goodneſs, if there were not ſome communion with Chriſt in it: There would be ſome kind of deceit in the Precept, *Take, Eat*, and *Drink, this is my Body and Blood*, if there were not a conveyance of Spiritual vital influences to our Souls: For the natural End of eating and drinking is the nouriſhment and increaſe of the Body, and preſervation of Life, by that which we eat and drink. The infinite Wiſe, gracious and true God, would never give us empty Figures without accompliſhing that which is ſignified by them, and ſuitable to them. How great is this Goodneſs of God? he would have his Son in us, one with us, ſtraitly joyn'd to us, as if we were his proper Fleſh and Blood: In the Incarnation Divine Goodneſs united him to our Nature in the Sacrament, it doth in a ſort unite him with his purchas'd Priviledges to our Perſons; we have not a communion with a part or a Member of his Body, or a drop

* 1 Cor. 10. 16.

† 1 Cor. 12. 13.

* Gal. 3. 27.

† Coloſ. 2. 6.

* 1 Cor. 10. 18.

† 1 Cor. 5. 7.

* 1 Cor. 11. 27. 29.

of

of his Blood, but with his whole Body and Blood, repreſented in every part of the Elements. The Angels in the Heaven enjoy not ſo great a priviledge; They have the honour to be under him as their Head, but not that of having him for their Food; they behold him, but they do not taſte him. And certainly that Goodneſs that hath condeſcended ſo much to our weakneſs, would impart it to us in a very glorious manner, were we capable of it. But becauſe a Man cannot behold the Light of the Sun in its full ſplendor by reaſon of the infirmities of his Eyes, he muſt behold it by the help of a Glaſs, and ſuch a communication through a coloured and Opake-Glaſs, is as real from the Sun it ſelf, though not ſo glorious, but more ſhrowded and obſcure; 'Tis the ſame light that ſhines through that Medium, as ſpreads it ſelf gloriouſly in the open Air, though the one be Maskt, and the other open-Fac'd.

To conclude this, by the way we may take notice of the *neglect of this Ordinance*: If it be a token of Divine Goodneſs to appoint it, 'tis no ſign of our eſtimation of Divine Goodneſs to neglect it. He that values the kindneſs of his friend, will accept of his invitation, if there be not ſome ſtrong impediments in the way, or ſo much familiarity with him that his refuſal upon a light occaſion would not be unkindly taken. But though God put on the diſpoſition of a friend to us, yet he loſeth not the Authority of a Sovereign; and the humble familiarity he invites us to, doth not diminiſh the condition and duty of a Subject. A Sovereign Prince would not take it well, if a Favourite ſhould refuſe the offer'd honour of his Table. The Viands of God are not to be ſlighted. Can we live better upon our poor pittance, than upon his Dainties? Did not Divine Goodneſs condeſcend in it to the weakneſs of our Faith, and ſhall we conceit our Faith ſtronger than God thinks it? If he thought fit by thoſe Seals to make a Deed of Gift to us, ſhall we be ſo unmannerly to him, and ſuch enemies to the ſecurity he offers us over and above his word, as not to accept it? Are we unwilling to have our Souls enflamed with Love, our Hearts filled with comfort, and arm'd againſt the attempts of our Enemies? 'Tis true, there is a guilt of the Body and Blood of Chriſt contracted by a ſlightneſs in the manner of attending; Is it not alſo contracted by a refuſal and neglect? What is the language of it? If it ſpeaks not the death of Chriſt in vain, it ſpeaks the inſtitution of this Ordidance as a remembrance of his death to be a vanity, and no mark of Divine Goodneſs. Let us therefore put ſuch a value upon Divine Goodneſs in this Affair, as to be willing to receive the conveyances of his love, and freſh engagements of our Duty; the one is due from us to the kindeſs of our friend, and the other belongs to our Duty as his Subjects.

6. *By this Redemption God reſtores us to a more excellent condition than* Adam *had in Innocence.* Chriſt was ſent by Divine Goodneſs, not only to reſtore the Life *Adams* ſin had ſtript us of, but to give it more abundantly than *Adam's*, ſtanding could have conveyed it to us, * *I am come that they might have Life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* More abundantly for ſtrength, more abundantly for duration, a life abounding with greater felicity, and glory: The ſubſtance of thoſe better Promiſes of the *New Covenant*, than what attended the old. There are fuller ſtreams of Grace by Chriſt, than flowed to *Adam*, or could flow from *Adam*. As Chriſt never reſtored any to health and ſtrength, while he was in the World, but he gave them a greater meaſure of both than they had before; ſo there is the ſame kindneſs no queſtion manifeſted in our Spiritual condition. *Adams* life might have preſerv'd us, but *Adams* Death could not have reſcued either Himſelf or his Poſterity; but in our Redemption, we have a Redeemer, who hath *died to expiate our Sins*, and ſo Crowned with Life to ſave, and for ever preſerve our Perſons * *Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo*: So that by *Redeeming Goodneſs* the Life of a *Believer* is as perpetual as the Life of the *Redeemer* Chriſt. † *Adam* though Innocent was under the danger

* Joh. 10.10.

Rom. 5.10.

† Joh. 14.19.

ger of periſhing; a Believer though culpable, is above the fears of Mutability. *Adam* had a Holineſs in his Nature, but capable of being loſt; by *Chriſt* Believers have a Holineſs beſtowed, not capable of being rifled, but which will remain, till it be at laſt fully perfected: Though they have a power to change in their Nature; yet they are above an actual final change by the indulgence of Divine Grace. *Adam* ſtood by himſelf, Believers ſtand in a Root impoſſible to be ſhaken, or corrupted: By this means the *promiſe is ſure to all the Seed.* * Chriſt is a ſtronger Perſon than *Adam*, who can never break Covenant with God, and the Truth of God will never break Covenant with him. We are united to a more excellent head than *Adam*. Inſtead of a Root meerly Humane, we have a Root Divine, as well as Humane. In him we had the Righteouſneſs of a Creature meerly Humane: In this we have a Righteouſneſs Divine, the Righteouſneſs of God-man; the ſtock is no longer in our own hands, but in the hands of one that cannot imbezzle it, or forfeit it. Divine Goodneſs hath depoſited it ſtrongly for our ſecurity. The ſtamp we receive by the Divine Goodneſs from the ſecond *Adam*, is more noble, than that we ſhould have received from the firſt, had he remained in his created State: *Adam* was formed of the Duſt of the Earth, and the New Man is formed by the incorruptible Seed of the Word. And at the Reſurrection the Body of Man ſhall be endued with better qualities than *Adam* had at Creation. They ſhall be like that glorious Body, which is in Heaven in union with the Perſon of the *Son of God.* * *Adam* at the beſt, had but an Earthly Body, but the Lord from Heaven hath a *Heavenly Body*, the Image of which ſhall be born by the Redeemed Ones, as they have born the *Image* of the Earthly *. *Adam* had the Society of Beaſts, Redeemed ones expect by Divine Goodneſs in Redemption a commerce with Angels; as they are reconciled to them by his Death, they ſhall certainly come to converſe with them at the conſummation of their Happineſs. As they are made of one Family, ſo they will have a peculiar intimacy. *Adam* had a Paradiſe, and Redeem'd Ones a Heaven provided for them, a happier place with a richer Furniture. 'Tis much to give ſo compleat a Paradiſe to innocent *Adam*; but more to give Heaven to an ungrateful *Adam*, and his Rebellious Poſterity. It had been abundant Goodneſs, to have reſtor'd us to the ſame condition in that Paradiſe, from whence we were ejected; but a ſuper-abundant Goodneſs to beſtow upon us a better Habitation in Heaven, which we could never have expected. How great is that Goodneſs, when by ſin we were fallen to be worſe than nothing, that he ſhould raiſe us to be more than what we were! That reſtor'd us, not to the firſt ſtep of our Creation, but to many degrees of elevation beyond it. Not only reſtores us, but prefers us, not only ſtriking off our Chains, to ſet us free, but cloathing us with a Robe of Righteouſneſs, to render us honourable. Not only quenching our Hell, but preparing a Heaven; not regarniſhing an earthly, but providing a richer Palace: His Goodneſs was ſo great, that after it had reſcued us, it would not content it ſelf with the old Furniture, but makes all new for us in another World: A new Wine to drink; a new Heaven to dwell in; a more magnificent Structure for our Habitation; Thus hath Goodneſs prepared for us a ſtraiter Union, a ſtronger Life, a purer Righteouſneſs, an unſhaken ſtanding, and a fuller Glory. All more excellent than was within the compaſs of innocent *Adams* Poſſeſſion.

* Rom. 4. 16.

* Phil. 3. 21.

* Cor. 1. 15. 47, 48, 49.

7. *This Goodneſs in Redemption extends it ſelf to the lower Creation.* It takes in not only Man, but the whole Creation, except the Fallen Angels, and gives a participation of it to inſenſible Creatures; upon the account of this Redemption the Sun and all kind of Creatures were preſerv'd, which otherwiſe had ſunk into deſtruction upon the ſin of Man, and ceas'd from their Being, as Man had utterly ceas'd from his Happineſs. * *By him all things conſiſt.* The Fall of Man brought not only a miſery upon himſelf, but a Vanity upon the Creature: The Earth groaned under a Curſe for his ſake. They were

* Coloſſ. 1. 17.

were all created for the Glory of God, and the ſupport of Man in the performance of his Duty, who was obliged to uſe them for the honour of him that created them both. Had Man been true to his Obligations, and uſed the Creatures for that end, to which they were dedicated by the Creator; As God would have then rejoyced in his Works, ſo his Works would have rejoyced in the honour of anſwering ſo excellent an end. But when Man loſt his integrity, the Creatures loſt their Perfection; the honour of them was ſtain'd when they were debas'd to ſerve the Luſts of a Traitor, inſtead of ſupporting the Duty of a Subject, and employed in the defence of the Vices of Men againſt the Precepts and Authority of their common Sovereign. This was a vilifying the Creature, as it would be a vilifying the Sword of a Prince, which is for the maintenance of Juſtice, to be uſed for the Murder of an Innocent; and a diſhonouring a Royal Manſion, to make it a Storehouſe for a Dunghil. Had thoſe things the benefit of Senſe, they would groan under this diſgrace, and riſe up in indignation againſt them, that offered them this affront, and turned them from their proper end. When Sin entred, the Heavens that were made to ſhine upon Man, and the Earth that was made to bear and nouriſh an innocent Creature, were now ſubjected to ſerve a rebellious Creature. And as Man turn'd againſt God, ſo he made thoſe inſtruments againſt God, to ſerve his Enmity, Luxury, Senſuality. Hence the Creatures are ſaid to groan, * *The whole Creation groans and travels in pain together until now.* They would really groan, had they underſtanding to be ſenſible of the Outrage done them. * Rom. 8. 22.

The whole Creation, 'Tis the pang of univerſal Nature, the agony of the whole Creation, to be alienated from the Original uſe for which they were intended, and be diſ-joynted from their end, to ſerve the diſloyalty of a Rebel. The Drunkards Cup, and the Gluttons Table, the Adulterers Bed, and the proud Mans Purple would groan againſt the abuſer of them. But when all the fruits of Redemption ſhall be compleated, the Goodneſs of God ſhall pour it ſelf upon the Creatures, deliver them from the *Bondage of Corruption into the glorious liberty of the Children of God* *, they ſhall be reduced to their true end, and return'd in their original harmony. As the Creation doth paſſionately groan under its vanity, ſo it doth *earneſtly expect and wait for its deliverance at the time of the manifeſtation of the Sons of God.* The manifeſtation of the Sons of God is the attainment of the liberty of the Creature. They ſhall be freed from the vanity under which they are enſlav'd. As it entred by Sin, it ſhall vaniſh upon the total removal of Sin. What uſe they were deſign'd for in Paradiſe, they will have afterwards, except that of the nouriſhment of Men, who ſhall be as *Angels, neither eating nor drinking.* The Glory of God ſhall be ſeen and contemplated in them. It can hardly be thought that God made the World to be little a moment after he had reard it, ſullied by the Sin of Man, and turn'd from its original end, without thoughts of a reſtoration of it to its true end, as well as Man to his loſt happineſs. The World was made for Man: Man hath not yet enjoyed the Creature in the firſt intention of them; Sin made an interruption in that Fruition. As *Redemption* reſtores Man to his true end, ſo it reſtores the Creatures to their true uſe. The reſtoration of the World to its Beauty and Order, was the deſign of the Divine Goodneſs in the coming of Chriſt, as it is intimated in *Iſaiah* 11. 6, 7, 8, 9. As he *came not to deſtroy the Law, but to fulfil it*, ſo he came not to deſtroy the Creatures, but to repair them. To reſtore to God the honour and pleaſure of the Creation, and reſtore to the Creatures their felicity in reſtoring their Order. The Fall corrupted it, and the full Redemption of Men reſtores it. The laſt time is called not a time of deſtruction, but a *time of reſtitution*, and that *of all things* * of univerſal nature, the main part of the Creation at leaſt. All thoſe things which were the effects of Sin, will be aboliſht; the removal of the Cauſe beats down the effect. The diſorder and unrulineſs of the Creature ariſing from the venom of Mans tranſgreſſion, all the fierceneſs of one Creature * Rom. 8. 21. * V. 19. * Acts 3. 21.

againſt another ſhall vaniſh. The World ſhall be nothing but an univerſal ſmile. Nature ſhall put on triumphant Veſtments: There ſhall be no affrighting Thunders, choaking Miſts, venemous Vapours, or poyſonous Plants. It would not elſe be a reſtitution of all things. They are now ſubject to be waſted by Judgments for the ſin of their Poſſeſſor, but the perfection of Mans Redemptions ſhall free them from every miſery. They have an advancement at the preſent; for they are under a more glorious head, as being the poſſeſſion of *Chriſt* the heavenly *Adam* much ſuperiour to the firſt: As it's the glory of a Perſon to be a Servant to a Prince, rather than a Peaſant. And afterwards they ſhall be elevated to a better ſtate, ſharing in Man's happineſs, as well as they did in his miſery; As Servants are intereſted in the good Fortune of their Maſter, and better'd by his advance in his Princes favour. As Man in his firſt Creation was mutable and liable to ſin, ſo the Creatures were liable to vanity; But as Man by Grace ſhall be freed from the Mutability, ſo ſhall the Creatures be freed from the fears of an Invaſion, by the vanity that ſully'd them before. The condition of the Servants ſhall be Suited to that of their Lord, for whom they were deſign'd: Hence all Creatures are call'd upon to *rejoyce* upon the Perfection of Salvation, and the appearance of Chriſts Royal Authority in the World. * If they were to be deſtroyed, there would be no ground to invite them to triumph. Thus doth Divine Goodneſs ſpread its kind Arms over the whole Creation.

* Pſal. 96. 11. 12. Pſal. 98. 7. 8.

3. *The Third thing is the Goodneſs of God in his Government.* That Goodneſs that deſpiſed not their Creation, doth not deſpiſe their conduct. The ſame Goodneſs that was the head that fram'd them, is the helm that guides them; his Goodneſs hovers over the whole frame, either to prevent any wild diſorders unſuitable to his Creating end, or to conduct them to thoſe ends which might illuſtrate his Wiſdom and Goodneſs to his Creatures. His Goodneſs doth no leſs incline him to provide for them, than to frame them. 'Tis the natural inclination of Man to love what is purely the birth of his own ſtrength or skill. He is fond of preſerving his own Inventions, as well as laborious in inventing them. 'Tis the glory of a Man to preſerve them, as well as to produce them. God loves every thing which he hath made, which love could not be without a continued diffuſiveneſs to them, ſuitable to the end for which he made them. It would be a vain Goodneſs, if it did not intereſt it ſelf in *managing* the World, as well as *erecting* it: Without his Government every thing in the World would juſtle againſt one another: The beauty of it would be more defaced, it would be an unruly Maſs, a confus'd Chaos rather than a Κόσμος, a comely World. If Divine Goodneſs reſpected it when it was as nothing, It would much more reſpect it when it was ſomething by the ſole virtue of his Power and good Will to it, without any motive from any thing elſe than Himſelf, becauſe there was nothing elſe but Himſelf. But ſince he ſees his own ſtamp in things without Himſelf in the Creature, which is a kind of motive or moving Object to Divine Goodneſs to preſerve it, when there was nothing without Himſelf, that could be any motive to Him, to Create it: As when God hath created a Creature, and it falls into miſery, that miſery of the Creature, though it doth not neceſſitate his mercy, yet meeting with ſuch an affection as Mercy in his Nature, is a moving Object to excite it: As the repentance of *Nineveh* drew forth the exerciſe of his pity and preſerving goodneſs. Certainly ſince God is Good, he is Bountiful, and if Bountiful, he is Provident. He would ſeem to envy and malign his Creatures, if he did not provide for them, while he intends to uſe them: But infinite Goodneſs cannot be affected with envy: For all envy implies a want of that good in our ſelves, which we regard with ſo evil an eye in another. But God being infinitely bleſſed, hath not the want of any good, that can be a riſe to ſuch an uncomly diſpoſition. The *Jews* thought that Divine Goodneſs extended only to them in an immediate and particular Care, and left all other Nations and things to the guidance of Angels.

But

But the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* 107. a *Pſalm* calculated for the celebration of this Perfection, in the continued courſe of his *Providence* throughout all Ages of the World, aſcribes to Divine Goodneſs immediately all the advantages men meet with. He helps them in their actions, preſides over their motions, inſpects their ſeveral conditions, labours day and night in a perpetual care of them. The whole life of the World is linkt together by *Divine Goodneſs*. Every thing is order'd by him in the place where he hath ſet it, without which the world would be ſtript of that Excellency it hath by Creation.

1. Firſt, *This Goodneſs is evident in the care he hath of all Creatures.* There is a peculiar goodneſs to his People; but this takes not away his general goodneſs to the World: Though a Maſter of a Family hath a choicer affection to thoſe that have an Affinity to him in Nature, and ſtand in a nearer Relation as his Wife, Children, Servants; yet he hath a regard to his Cattle, and other Creatures he nouriſheth in his Houſe. All things are not only before his Eyes, but in his Boſom; He is the Nurſe of all Creatures, ſupplying their wants, and ſuſtaining them from that nothing they tend to. *The *Earth is full of his Riches*, not a creek or cranny but partakes of it. Abundant Goodneſs daily hovers over it, as well as hatcht it. *The whole World ſwims in the rich Bounty of the Creator, as the Fiſh do in the largeneſs of the Sea, and Birds in the ſpaciouſneſs of the Air. The Goodneſs of God is the River, that Waters the whole Earth. As a lifeleſs Picture caſts its Eye upon every one in the Room, ſo doth a living God upon every thing in the World. And as the Sun illuminates all things which are capable of partaking of its light, and diffuſeth its Beams to all things which are capable of receiving them; So doth God ſpread his Wings over the whole Creation, and neglects nothing, wherein he ſees a mark of his firſt creating Goodneſs.

* Pſal. 104. 24.

* *Guliel. Paraſicn.* p. 184.

His Goodneſs is ſeen, 1. *In preſerving all things.* **Oh Lord thou preſerveſt Man and Beaſt.* Not only Man, but Beaſts, and Beaſts as well as Men. Man, as the moſt excellent Creature, and Beaſts as being ſerviceable to Man, and Inſtruments of his Worldly Happineſs. He continues the Species of all things, concurs with them in their diſtinct Offices, and quickens the Womb of Nature. He viſits Man every day, and makes him feel the effects of his Providence, in giving him *fruitful ſeaſons, and filling his heart with food and gladneſs**, as witneſſes of his Liberality and Kindneſs to Man. *The Earth is viſited and watered by the River of God. He ſettles the furrows of the Earth, and makes it ſoft with Showers*, that the Corn may be nouriſhed in its Womb, and ſpring up to Maturity. *He crowns the year with his Goodneſs, and his paths drop fatneſs. The little Hills rejoyce on every ſide; The Paſtures are clothed with Flocks, and the Vallies are covered over with Corn*, as the *Pſalmiſt* elegantly*. He waters the ground by his Showers, and preſerves the little Seed from the Rapine of Animals. *He draws not out the evil Arrows of Famine*, as the expreſſion is*. Every day ſhines with new Beams of his Divine Goodneſs. The vaſtneſs of this City, and the multitudes of living Souls in it, is an aſtoniſhing Argument. What ſtreams of nouriſhing neceſſaries are daily convey'd to it? Every Mouth hath Bread to ſuſtain it, and among all the number of Poor in the Bowels and Skirts of it, how rare is it to hear of any ſtarv'd to death for want of it? Every day he *ſpreads a Table* for us, and that with varieties; and *fils* our *Cups**. He ſhortens not his hand, nor withdraws his Bounty: The Increaſe of one year by his Bleſſing, reſtores what was ſpent by the former. He is the *ſtrength of our Life**, continuing the vigour of our Limbs, and the health of our Bodies; ſecures us from *terrors by night, and the Arrows* of Diſeaſes *that fly by day**. *Sets a hedge about our Eſtates**, and defends them againſt the attempts of violence. Preſerves our Houſes from flames that might conſume them, and our perſons from the dangers that lie in wait for them. Wacheth over us *in our goings out, and our comings in**; and way-lays a Thouſand dangers we know not of. And em-

* Pſal. 36. 6.

* Acts 14. 17.

* Pſal. 65. 9, 10. & Pſal. 107. 35, 36.

* Ezek. 5. 16.

* Pſal. 23. 5.

* Pſal. 27. 1.

* Pſal. 91. 5.

* Job. 1. 10.

* Pſal. 121. 8.

employs the moſt glorious *Creatures in Heaven*, in the ſervice of mean *Men upon Earth**: Not by a faint Order, but a preſſing *Charge* over them, to *keep them in all his ways*. Thoſe that are his immediate Servants before his Throne, he ſends to Miniſter to them, that were once his Rebels. By an *Angel* he conducted the Affairs of *Abraham*:* And by an *Angel* ſecur'd the life of *Iſhmael*†: Glorious Angels for mean Man, Holy Angels for impure Man, Powerful Angels for weak Man. How in the midſt of great dangers, doth his ſudden light diſſipate out great darkneſs, and create a deliverance out of nothing? How often is he found a preſent help in time of trouble? When all other aſſiſtance ſeems to ſtand at a diſtance, He flies to us beyond our expectations, and raiſes us up on the ſudden from the pit of our dejectedneſs, as well as that of our danger, exceeding our wiſhes, and ſhooting beyond our deſires as well as our deſerts. How often in a time of confuſion, doth he preſerve an indefenſible place from the attacks of Enemies, like a ſpark in the midſt of a tempeſtuous Sea? the rage falls upon other places round about them, and by a ſecret Efficacy of Divine Goodneſs is not able to touch them. He hath peculiar preſervations for his *Iſrael in Egypt*, and his *Lots in Sodom*, his *Daniels in the Lyons Dens*, and his *Children* in a *fiery Furnace*. He hath a tenderneſs for all, but a peculiar affection to thoſe that are in Covenant with him.

* Pſal. 91. 11.

* Gen. 24. 7.
† Gen. 21. 17.

2. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen *in taking care of the animals and inanimate things*. Divine Goodneſs embraceth in its Arms the loweſt Worm as well as the loftieſt *Cherubim*: He provides Food for the *Crying Ravens*, * and a Prey for the Appetite of the *hungry Lion* †: He *opens his hand, and fills with good thoſe innumerable creeping things, both ſmall and great Beaſts, they are all waiters upon him, and all are ſatisfied by their bountiful Maſter* *. They are better provided for by the Hand of Heaven, than the beſt favourite is by an Earthly Prince: For *they are fill'd with good*. He hath made Channels in the wildeſt Deſarts for the watering of Beaſts, and Trees for the Neſts and *Habitation of Birds*.* As a Law-giver to the *Jews*, he took care that the poor Beaſt ſhould not be abuſed by the cruelty of Man: He provided for the eaſe of the labouring Beaſt in that Command of the Sabbath, wherein he provided for his own ſervice: The Cattle was to do *no work* on it *. He order'd that the Mouth of the *Ox* ſhould not be *Muzled*, while it trod out the Corn,† (it being the manner of thoſe Countreys to ſeparate the Corn from the Stalk by that means, as we do in this by Thraſhing) regarding it as a part of Cruelty to deprive the poor Beaſt of Taſting, and ſatisfying it ſelf with that, which he was ſo officious by his labour to prepare for the uſe of Man. And when any met with a Neſt of young Birds, though they might take the young to their uſe, they were forbidden to ſeize upon the *Dam*, that ſhe might not loſe the Objects of her Affection and her own liberty in one day *.

* Pſal. 147. 9.
† Pſal. 104. 21.
* Pſal. 104. 25, 26, 27, 28.
* Pſal. 104. 10, 12, 17.
* Ex. 20. 10.
† Deut. 25. 4.
* Deut. 22. 6.

And ſee how God enforceth this Precept with a threatning of a ſhortneſs of Life, if they tranſgreſt it? * *Thou ſhalt let the Dam go, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayeſt prolong thy days.* He would revenge the Cruelty to Dumb Creatures with the ſhortneſs of the Oppreſſors Life; Nor would he have Cruelty uſed to Creatures that were ſeparated for his Worſhip: He therefore provides, that a *Cow* or an *Ewe*, and their *young ones* ſhould *not be killed for Sacrifice in one day* *. All which Precepts ſay the *Jews*, are to teach Men mercifulneſs to their Beaſts; ſo much doth Divine Goodneſs bow down it ſelf, to take notice of thoſe mean Creatures, which Men have ſo little regard to, but for their own advantage: Yea, he is ſo good, that he would have Worſhip declin'd for a time in favour of a diſtreſſed Beaſt; the *helping a Sheep, or an Ox, or an Aſs out of a pit*, was indulged them even *on the Sabbath*-day, a day God had peculiarly Sanctify'd and order'd for his Service: * In this caſe he ſeems to remit for a time the Rights of the

* Deut. 22. 7.
* Levit. 22, 28.
* Matth. 12. 11. Luke. 14. 5.

Deity

Deity for the reſcue of a meer Animal. His Goodneſs extends not only to thoſe kind of Creatures that have Life, but to the inſenſible ones: He clothes the Graſs, and *arrays the Lillies of the Field* with a greater glory, than *Solomon* had upon his Throne *; And ſuch care he had of thoſe *Trees* which *bore Fruit* for the maintenance of Man or Beaſt, that he forbids any injury to be offer'd to them, and bars the Rapine and Violence, which by Soldiers uſeth to be practiſed, *Deut.* 20. 19. though it were to promote the conqueſt of their Enemy. How much Goodneſs is it, that he ſhould think of ſo ſmall a thing as Man! How much more that he ſhould concern himſelf in things, that ſeem ſo petty as Beaſts and Trees! Perſons ſeated in a Sovereign Throne, think it a debaſing of their Dignity to regard little things: But God, who is infinitely greater in Majeſty above the mightieſt Potentate, and the higheſt *Angel*, yet is ſo infinitely good, as to employ his Divine thoughts about the meaneſt things. He who poſſeſſes the praiſes of Angels, leaves not off the care of the meaneſt Creatures: And that Majeſty that dwells in a pure Heaven, and an unconceivable Light, ſtoops to provide for the eaſe of thoſe Creatures, that lie and lodge in the Dirt and Dung of the Earth. How ſhould we be careful not to uſe thoſe unmercifully, which God takes ſuch care of in his Law, and not to diſtruſt that Goodneſs, that opens his hand ſo liberally to Creatures of another Rank?

* Matth. 6. 28, 29.

3. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen *in taking care of the meaneſt Rational Creatures*: As Servants and Criminals. He provided for the liberty of Slaves, and would not have their Chains continue longer than the *Seventh yea*, unleſs they would voluntarily continue under the power of their Maſters; and that upon pain of his diſpleaſure, and the withdrawing his Bleſſing *. And though by the Laws of many Nations, Maſters had an abſolute power of Life and Death over their Servants, yet God provided that no Member ſhould be lam'd, not an *Eye*, no nor a *Tooth* ſtruck out, but the Maſter was to pay for his folly and fury the price of the *liberty of his Servant* *: He would not ſuffer the abuſed Servant to be any longer under the power of that Man, that had not Humanity to uſe him as one of the ſame Kindred and Blood with himſelf. And though thoſe Servants might be never ſo wicked, yet when unjuſtly afflicted, God would intereſt himſelf as their Guardian in their protection and delivery. And when a poor Slave had been provok't by the ſeverity of his Maſters fury, to turn fugitive from him, he was by Divine Order not to be delivered up again to his Maſters fury, but dwell in that City and with that Perſon, to whom he had *fled for refuge* *. And when publick Juſtice was to be adminiſtred upon the leſſer ſort of Criminals, the Goodneſs of God order'd the *number of blows*, not to exceed *Forty*, and left not the fury of Man to meaſure out the Puniſhment to exceſs *. And in any juſt quarrel againſt a provoking and injuring Enemy, he order'd them not to ravage with the *Sword*, till they had ſummon'd a Rendition of the place *. And as great a care he took of the Poor, that they ſhould have the *gleanings* both of the *Vineyard* and *Field*, † and not be forced to pay *Uſury for the Money lent them* *.

* Deut. 15. 18.

* Exod. 21. 26, 27.

* Deut. 25. 15, 16.

* Deut. 25.

* Deut. 20. 10.

† Levit. 19. 10. Lev. 25. 22. * Ex. 22. 25.

4. His Goodneſs is ſeen *in taking care of the wickedſt Perſons. The Earth is full of his Goodneſs* *. The wicked as well as the good enjoy it; they that dare lift up their hands againſt Heaven in the poſture of Rebels, as well as thoſe that lift up their Eyes in the condition of ſuppliants. To do good to a Criminal, far ſurmounts that goodneſs that flows down upon an Innocent Object: Now God is not only good to thoſe that have ſome degrees of goodneſs, but to thoſe that have the greateſt degrees of wickedneſs, to Men that turn his liberality into affronts of him, and have ſcarce an appetite to any thing but the violation of his Authority and Goodneſs. Though upon the fall of *Adam* we have loſt the pleaſant habitation of *Paradiſe*, and the Creatures made for our uſe are fall'n from their Original Excellency and Sweetneſs; yet

* Pſal. 37. 5.

yet he hath not left the World utterly incommodious for us, but yet ſtores it with things not only for the preſervation, but delight of thoſe that make their whole Lives invectives againſt this good God. *Manna* fell from Heaven for the *Rebellious* as well as for the Obedient *Iſraelites*. *Cain* as well as *Abel*, and *Eſau* as well as *Jacob* had the influences of his Sun, and the benefits of his Showers. The World is yet a kind of Paradiſe to the verieſt Beaſts among Mankind: The Earth affords its Riches, the Heavens its Showers, and the Sun its Light to thoſe that injure and blaſpheme him: **He makes his Sun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſends Rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt.* The wickedſt breath in his Air, walk upon his Earth, and drink of his Water as well as the beſt. The Sun looks with as pleaſant and bright an Eye upon a rebellious *Abſolom*, as a righteous *David*: The Earth yields its Plants and Medicines to one as well as to the other: 'Tis ſeldom that he deprives any of the faculties of their Souls, or any Members of their Bodies. God diſtributes his Bleſſings, where he might ſhoot his Thunders, and darts his Light on thoſe who deſerve an Eternal Darkneſs, and preſents the good things of the Earth, to thoſe that Merit the Miſeries of Hell; for *the Earth and the fulneſs thereof is the Lords*; *Every thing in it is *his* in Propriety, ours in Truſt: 'Tis *his* Corn, *his* Wine; †He never deveſted himſelf of the Propriety, though he grants us the Uſe; And by thoſe good things he ſupports multitudes of wicked Men, not one or two, but the whole Shoal of them in the World: For he is *the Saviour of all Men, i. e.* is the Preſerver of all Men*. And as he Created them, when he foreſaw they would be wicked, ſo he provides for them, when he beholds them in their ungodlineſs. The ingratitude of Man ſtops not the Current of his Bounty, nor tires his liberal Hand; Howſoever unprofitable and injurious Men are to him, he is liberal to them; and his Goodneſs is the more admirable, by how much the more the unthankfulneſs of Men is provoking: He ſometimes affords to the worſt a greater portion of theſe Earthly Goods; they often ſwim in Wealth, when others pine away their Lives in Poverty. And the Silk-worm yields its Bowels to make Purple for Tyrants, while the Oppreſſed ſcarce have from the Sheep Wooll enough to cover their nakedneſs; and though he furniſh Men with thoſe good things, upon no other account than what Princes do, when they nouriſh Criminals in a Priſon till the time of their Execution, 'tis a Mark of his *Goodneſs*. Is it not the kindneſs of a Prince to treat his Rebels deliciouſly? To give them the liberty of the Priſon, and the enjoyment of the delights of the place, rather than to load their Legs with Fetters, and lodge them in a dark and loathſome Dungeon, till he orders them for their Crime to be conducted to the Scaffold or Gibbet? Since God is thus kind to the vileſt Men, whoſe meanneſs by reaſon of Sin is beyond that of any other Creature, as to ſhoot ſuch rayes of Goodneſs upon them; How unexpreſſible would be the Expreſſions of his Goodneſs, if the Divine Image were as pure and bright upon them, as it was upon Innocent *Adam*?

*Mat. 5. 45.

*Pſal. 24. 1.

*Hoſ. 2. 8.

*1 Tim. 4. 10.

2. His Goodneſs is evident *in the preſervation of Humane Society*. It belongs to his Power that he is able to do it, but to his *Goodneſs* that he is willing to do it.

1. This Goodneſs appears, *in preſcribing Rules for it*. The Moral Law conſiſts but of *Ten Precepts*, and there are more of them order'd for the *ſupport* of Humane Society, than for the adoration and *honour* of himſelf; *Four* for the Rights of *God*, and *Six* for the Rights of *Man*, and his ſecurity in his Authority, Relations, Life, Goods, and Reputation; Superiours not to be diſhonoured, Life not to be invaded, Chaſtity not to be ſtain'd, Goods not to be filcht, Good Name not to be crackt by Falſe-witneſſes, nor any thing belonging to our Neighbour to be coveted: And in the whole *Scripture*, not only that which was Calculated for the *Jews*, but compil'd for the whole World, he hath fixt Rules for the ordering all Relations; Magiſtrates, and Subjects, Parents

*Exod. 20. 1, 2.

Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Maſters and Servants, Rich and Poor find their diſtinct Qualifications and Duties. There would be a Paradiſical State, if Men had a goodneſs to obſerve, what God hath had a Goodneſs to order, for the ſtrengthning the Sinews of Humane Society: The World would not groan under oppreſſing Tyrants, nor Princes tremble under diſcontented Subjects, or mighty Rebels: Children would not be provok't to anger by the unreaſonableneſs of their Parents, nor Parents ſink under grief by the Rebellion of their Children: Maſters would not tyrannize over the meaneſt of their Servants, nor Servants invade the authority of their Maſters.

2. The Goodneſs of God in the preſerving Humane Society, is ſeen *in ſetting a Magiſtracy to preſerve it.* Magiſtracy is from God in its Original, the Charter was drawn up in Paradiſe; Civil ſubordination muſt have been, had Man remained in innocence; But the Charter was more explicitely renew'd and enlarg'd at the reſtoration of the World after the Deluge, and giv'n out to Man under the Broad Seal of Heaven, * *Whoſo ſheds Mans Blood, by Man ſhall his Blood be ſhed.* The Command of ſhedding the Blood of a Murderer, was a part of his Goodneſs, to ſecure the Lives of thoſe that bore his Image. Magiſtrates are *the Shields of the Earth*, but *they belong to God**. They are Fruits of his Goodneſs in their Original and Authority; Were there no Magiſtracy, there would be no Government, no ſecurity to any Man under his own Vine and Fig-tree; The World would be a Den of wild Beaſts preying upon one another, every one would do what ſeems good in his Eyes; The loſs of Government is a Judgment God brings upon a Nation, *when Men become *as the Fiſhes of the Sea*, to *devour* one another, becauſe they *have no Ruler over them.* Private Diſſentions will break out into Publick Diſorders and Combuſtions.

* Gen. 9. 6.

* Pſal. 47. 9.

* Hab. 1. 14.

3. The Goodneſs of God in the preſervation of Humane Society, is ſeen *in the reſtraints of the Paſſions of Men.* He ſets bounds to the Paſſions of Men, as well as to the Roulings of the Sea, * *He ſtilleth the noiſe of the Waves, and the tumults of the People.* Though God hath erected a Magiſtracy to ſtop the breaking out of thoſe Floods of Licentiouſneſs, which ſwell in the hearts of Men, yet if God ſhould not hold ſtiff Reins on the necks of thoſe tumultuous and foaming Paſſions, the World would be a place of unruly confuſion and Hell Triumph upon Earth: A Crazy State would be quickly broke in pieces by boiſterous Nature. The tumults of a People could no more be quell'd by the force of Man, than the rage of the Sea by a puff of breath; Without Divine Goodneſs, neither the Wiſdom nor Watchfulneſs of the Magiſtrates, nor the induſtry of Officers could preſerve a State. The Laws of Men would be too ſlight to curb the Luſts of Men, if the Goodneſs of God did not reſtrain them by a ſecret hand, and interweave their Temporal ſecurity with obſervance of thoſe Laws. The Sons of *Belial* did murmur when *Saul* was choſen King; and that they did no more was the Goodneſs of God, for the preſervation of Humane Society. If God did not reſtrain the impetuouſneſs of Mens Luſts, they would be the entire ruine of Humane Society; their Luſts would render them as bad as Beaſts, and change the World into a Savage Wilderneſs.

* Pſal. 65. 7.

4. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen in the preſervation of Humane Society, *in giving various inclinations to Men for publick advantage.* If all Men had an inclination to one Science or Art, they would all ſtand idle Spectators of one another; but God hath beſtow'd various diſpoſitions and gifts upon Men, for the promoting the common good, that they may not only be uſeful to themſelves, but to Society. He will have none idle, none unuſeful, but every one acting in a due place according to their meaſures for the good of others.

5. The

5. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen *in the witneſs he bears againſt thoſe Sins, that diſturb Humane Society.* In thoſe caſes he is pleaſed to intereſt himſelf in a more ſignal manner, to cool thoſe that make it their buſineſs to overturn the order he hath eſtabliſhed for the good of the Earth. He doth not ſo often in this World puniſh thoſe faults committed immediately againſt his own Honour, as thoſe that put the World into a hurry and confuſion: As a good Governour is more Merciful to Crimes againſt himſelf, than thoſe againſt his Community. 'Tis obſerved that the moſt turbulent ſeditious Perſons in a State, come to moſt violate ends; As *Corah*, *Adonijah*, *Zimri*; *Achitophel* draws *Abſalom*'s Sword againſt *David* and *Iſrael*, and the next is, he twiſts a Halter for himſelf. *Abſalom* heads a Party againſt his Father, and God by a goodneſs to *Iſrael* hangs him up, and prevents not its ſafety by *Davids* indulgence, and a future Rebellion, had Life been ſpared by the fondneſs of his Father. His Providence is more evident in diſcovering diſturbers, and the Cauſes that move them, in defeating their Enterprizes, and digging the Contrivers out of their Caverns and lurking holes. In ſuch caſes, God doth ſo act, and uſe ſuch Methods, that he ſilenceth any Creature from challenging any partnerſhip with him in the diſcovery. He doth more ſeverely in this World correct thoſe actions, that unlink the mutual aſſiſtance between Man and Man, and the charitable and kind Correſpondence, he would have kept up. The Sins for which the *Wrath of God comes upon the Children of diſobedience* in this World, are of this ſort: * And when Princes will be oppreſſing the People, God will be *pouring contempt on the Princes, and ſet the poor on high from affliction.* * An evidence of Gods care and kindneſs in the preſerving Humane Society, is thoſe ſtrange diſcoveries of Murders, though never ſo clandeſtine and ſubtilly committed, more than of any other Crime among Men. Divine care never appears more, than in bringing thoſe hidden and injurious works of darkneſs to light, and a due Puniſhment.

* Col. 3. 5, 6.

* Pſal. 107. 40, 41.

6. His Goodneſs is ſeen *in ordering mutual Offices to one another againſt the Current of Mens Paſſions.* Upon this account he ordered in his Laws for the government of the *Iſraelites*, that a Man ſhould reduce the wandring Beaſt of his Enemy, to the hand of his rightful Proprietor, though he were a provoking Enemy; and alſo *help the poor Beaſt, that belonged to one that hated him, when he ſaw him ſink under his burden* *. When mutual aſſiſtance was neceſſary, he would not have Men conſider'd as Enemies, or conſider'd as Wicked, but as of the ſame Blood with our ſelves, that we might be ſerviceable to one another for the preſervation of Life and Goods.

* Exod. 23. 4, 5.

7. His Goodneſs is ſeen *in remitting ſomething of his own Right, for the preſerving a due dependance and ſubjection.* He declines the Right he had to the *Vows* of a Minor or one under the power of another, waving what he might challenge by the voluntary obligation of his Creature, to keep up the due order between Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Superiors and Inferiors; thoſe that were under the power of another, as a Child under his Parents, or a Wife under her Husband, if they had *vowed a Vow unto the Lord*, which concern'd his Honour and Worſhip, it was void without the approbation of that perſon under whoſe charge they were *. Though God was the Lord of every Mans Goods, and Men but his Stewards; and though he might have taken to himſelf, what another had offer'd by a Vow, ſince whatſoever could be offer'd was Gods own, though it was not the Parties own, who offer'd it; yet God would not have himſelf ador'd by his Creature, to the prejudice of the neceſſary ties of Humane Society: He lays aſide what he might challenge by his Sovereign Dominion, that there might not be any breach of that Regular Order, which was neceſſary for the preſervation of the World. If Divine Goodneſs did not thus order things, he would not do the part of a Rector of the World: The beauty of the World would be much defac'd it would

* Numb. 30. 3, 4, &c.

would be a confus'd Maſs of Men and Women, or rather Beaſts and Bedlams. Order renders every City, every Nation, yea, the whole Earth beautiful: This is an effect of Divine Goodneſs.

3. His Goodneſs is evident *in encouraging any thing of Moral Goodneſs in the World.* Though *Moral Goodneſs cannot* claim an Eternal Reward, yet it hath been many times rewarded with a Temporal Happineſs; He hath often ſignally rewarded Acts of Honeſty, Juſtice and Fidelity, and puniſh'd the contrary by his Judgments, to deter man from ſuch an unworthy practice, and encourage others to what was Comely, and of a general good Report in the World. *Ahab*'s Humiliation put a demurrer to Gods Judgments intended againſt him; and ſome aſcribe the great Victories and Succeſs of the *Romans*, to that juſtice which was obſerved among themſelves. *Baruch* was but an Amanuenſis to the Prophet *Jeremy*, to write his Propheſie, and very deſpondent of his own welfare; *God upon that account provides for his Safety, and rewards the Induſtry of his Service with the Security of his Perſon; He was not a States-man, to declare againſt the corrupt Counſels of them that ſat at the Helm; nor a Prophet to declare againſt their prophane Practices, but the Prophets Scribe; and as he writes in Gods Service the Prophecies revealed to the Prophet, God writes his name in the Roll of thoſe that were deſign'd for preſervation in that Deluge of Judgments, which were to come upon that Nation. *Epicurus* complain'd of the Adminiſtration of God, that the *Vertuous Moraliſt* had not ſufficient ſmiles of Divine Favor, nor the Swiniſh Senſualiſt frowns of Divine Indignation. But what if they have not always that confluence of outward Wealth and Pleaſures, but remain in the Common Level? Yet they have the happineſs and ſatisfaction of a clear Reputation, the eſteem of Men, and the ſecret applauſes of their very Enemies; beſides the inward raviſhments upon an exerciſe of Vertue, and the commendatory ſubſcription of their own Hearts, a Dainty the vicious Man knows not of; they have an inward Applauſe from God, as a Reward of Divine Goodneſs, inſtead of thoſe Racks of Conſcience upon which the prophane are ſometimes ſtretched. He will not let the worſt Men do him any ſervice, (though they never intended in the act of ſervice, him, but themſelves) without giving them their Wages: He will not let them hit him in the Teeth, as if he were beholding to them. If *Nebuchadnezzar* be the Inſtrument of Gods Judgments againſt *Tyrus* and *Iſrael*, he will not only give him that rich City, but a richer Country, *Egypt*, the Granary of her Neighbors, a Wages above his Work. In this is Divine Goodneſs eminent, ſince in the moſt Moral Actions, as there is ſomething Beautiful, ſo there is ſomething mix'd, hateful to the infinitely exact Holineſs of the Divine Nature; yet he will not let that which is pleaſing to him, go unrewarded, and defeat the expectations of Men; as Men do with thoſe they employ, when for one flaw in an Action, they deny them the reward due for the other part. God encourag'd and kept up Morality in the Cities of the Gentiles, for the entertainment of a further goodneſs in the Doctrine of the Goſpel, when it ſhould be publiſh'd among them.* Jer. 45. 13.

4. Divine Goodneſs is eminent *in providing a Scripture as a Rule to guide us, and continuing it in the World.* If Man be a Rational Creature, governable by a Law, can it be imagin'd there ſhould be no Revelation of that Law to him? Man, by the Light of Reaſon, muſt needs confeſs himſelf to be in another condition than he was by Creation, when he came firſt out of the hands of God; and can it be thought, that God ſhould keep up the World under ſo many Sins againſt the Light of Nature, and beſtow ſo many Providential Influences, to invite Men to return to him, and acquaint no Men in the World with the means of that return? Would he exact an Obedience of Men, as their Conſciences witneſs he doth, and furniſh them with no Rules to guide them in the Darkneſs, they cannot but acknowledge, that they have

contracted? No, Divine Goodneſs hath otherwiſe provided; This *Bible* we have, is his Word and Rule. Had it been a Falſity and Impoſture, would that Goodneſs that watches over the World, have continued it ſo long? That Goodneſs that overthrew the burdenſom Rites of *Moſes*, and expell'd the fooliſh Idolatry of the *Pagans*, would have diſcover'd the Impoſture of this, had it not been a Tranſcript of his own Will. Whatever miſtakes he ſuffers to remain in the World, what Goodneſs had there been, to ſuffer this anciently among the *Jews*, and afterwards to open it to the whole World, to abuſe Men in Religion and Worſhip, which ſo nearly concern'd Himſelf and his own Honor, that the World ſhould be deceiv'd by the *Devil*, without a remedy in the Morning of its Appearance? It hath been honored and admired by ſome *Heathens*, when they have caſt their eyes upon it, and their natural Light made them behold ſome Foot-ſteps of a Divinity in it. If this therefore be not a Divine Preſcript, let any that deny it, bring as good Arguments for any Book elſe, as can be brought for this. Now the publiſhing this, is an Argument of Divine Goodneſs: 'Tis deſign'd to win the Affections of beggarly Man, to be eſpous'd to a God of Eternal Bleſſedneſs, and Immenſe Riches. It ſpeaks Words in Seaſon; No Doubts but it Reſolves; No Spiritual Diſtemper but it Cures; No Condition but it hath a Comfort to ſuit it. 'Tis a Garden which the Hand of Divine Bounty hath planted for us; In it he condeſcends to ſhadow himſelf in thoſe Expreſſions that render him in ſome manner Intelligible to us. Had God wrote in a loftineſs of Style, ſutable to the Greatneſs of his Majeſty, his Writing had been as little underſtood by us, as the Brightneſs of his Glory can be beheld by us. But he draws Phraſes from our Affairs, to expreſs his mind to us; He Incarnates himſelf in his Word to our Minds, before his Son was Incarnate in the Fleſh to the Eyes of Men: He aſcribes to himſelf Eyes, Ears, Hands, that we might have from the Conſideration of our ſelves, and the whole Humane Nature, a conception of his Perfections: He aſſumes to himſelf the Members of our Bodies, to direct our Underſtandings in the knowledge of his Deity: This is his Goodneſs.

Again, Though the *Scripture* was written upon ſeveral occaſions, yet in the dictating of it, the Goodneſs of God caſt his Eye upon the laſt Ages of the World, * *They are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the World are come.* It was given to the *Iſraelites*, but Divine Goodneſs intended it for the future Gentiles. The old Writings of the Prophets were thus deſign'd, much more the later Writings of the Apoſtles. Thus did Divine Goodneſs think of us, and prepare his Records for us, before we were in the World: Theſe he hath written plain for our Inſtruction, and wrapt up in them, what is neceſſary for our Salvation: 'Tis clear to inform our Underſtanding, and rich to comfort us in our Miſery: 'Tis a Light to guide us, and a Cordial to refreſh us; 'Tis a Lamp to our Feet, and a Medicine for our Diſeaſes; a Purifier of our Filth, and a Reſtorer of us in our Faintings. He hath by his Goodneſs ſeal'd the Truth of it, by his Efficacy on multitudes of Men: He hath made it the *Word of Regeneration* *. Men wilder, and more monſtrous than Beaſts, have been tam'd and chang'd by the power of it: It hath rais'd multitudes of dead Men, from a Grave fuller of horror than any Earthly one. Again, Goodneſs was in all Ages ſending his Letters of Advice and Counſel from Heaven, till the Canon of the Scripture was cloſ'd; Sometimes he wrote to chide a froward People; ſometimes to chear up an oppreſſed and diſconſolate People, according to the ſtate wherein they were; as we may obſerve by the ſeveral Seaſons wherein parts of Scripture were written. It was his Goodneſs that he firſt reveal'd any thing of his Will after the Fall; it was a further degree of Goodneſs, that he would add more Cubits to its Stature; before he would lay aſide his Penſil, it grew up to that bulk, wherein we have it. And his Goodneſs is further ſeen in the preſerving it; He hath triumphed over the Powers that oppoſed it, and ſhewed himſelf

* 1 Cor. 10. 11.

* Jam. 1. 18.

himſelf good in the Inſtruments that propagated it: He hath maintain'd it againſt the blaſts of Hell, and ſpread it in *all Languages* againſt the Obſtructions of Men and Devils. The Sun of his Word is by his kindneſs preſerv'd in our Horizon, as well as the Sun in the Heavens. How admirable is Divine Goodneſs! He hath ſent his Son to die for us, and his written Word to inſtruct us, and his Spirit to edge it for an entrance into our Souls: He hath opened the Womb of the Earth to nouriſh us; and ſent down the Records of Heaven, to direct us in our Pilgrimage: He hath provided the Earth for our Habitation, while we are Travellers; and ſent his Word to acquaint us with a Felicity at the end of our Journey, and the way to attain in another World, what we want in this, *viz.* a *happy Immortality.*

5. His Goodneſs in his Government is evident. *In Converſions of Men.* Though his Work be wrought by his Power, yet his Power was firſt ſollicited by his Goodneſs. It was his rich Goodneſs, that he would employ his Power to pierce the ſcales of a heart as hard as thoſe of the *Leviathan.* It was this that opened the Ears of Men to hear him, and draws them from the hurry of Worldly Cares, and the charms of Senſual Pleaſures; and, which is the top of all, the Impoſtors and Cheats of their own Hearts. It is this that ſends a ſpark of his Wrath into Mens Conſciences, to put them to a ſtand in ſin, that he might not ſend down a Shower of Brimſtone eternally to conſume their Perſons. This it was that firſt ſhewed you the Excellency of the Redeemer, and brought you to taſte the ſweetneſs of his Blood, and find your Security in the Agonies of his Death. 'Tis his Goodneſs to call one Man and not another, to turn *Paul* in his courſe, and lay hold of no other of his Companions. 'Tis his Goodneſs to call any, when he is not bound to call one.

1. 'Tis his Goodneſs, *To pitch upon mean and deſpicable Men in the Eye of the World.* To call this poor *Publican*, and over-look that proud *Phariſee*; this Man that ſits upon a Dung-hill, and neglect him that gliſters in his Purple. His Majeſty is not enticed by the lofty Titles of Men; nor, which is more worth, by the Learning and Knowledge of Men. *Not many wiſe, not many mighty*; * not many Doctors, not many Lords, though ſome of them; but his Goodneſs condeſcends to the *baſe things of the World*, and things which are *deſpiſed*. *The poor receive the Goſpel* *; when thoſe that are more acute, and furniſh'd with a more apprehenſive Reaſon, are not touch'd by it.

* Cor. 1. 26, 27, 28.

* Matt. 11. 5.

2. *The worſt Men.* He ſeizeth ſometimes upon Men moſt ſoil'd, and neglects others that ſeem more clean and leſs polluted. He turns Men in their courſe in ſin, that by their Infernal Practices, have ſeem'd to have gone to School to Hell, and to have ſuck'd in the ſole Inſtructions of the Devil. He lays hold upon ſome, when they are moſt under Actual Demerit, and ſnatcheth them as Fire-brands out of the Fire; as upon *Paul*, when fulleſt of Rage againſt him: And ſhoots a Beam of Grace, where nothing could be juſtly expected but a Thunder-bolt of Wrath. 'Tis his Goodneſs to viſit any, when they lie putrifying in their loathſome Luſts; To draw near to them who have been guilty of the greateſt Contempt of God, and the Light of Nature; The murdering *Manaſſehs*, perſecuting *Sauls*, Chriſt-crucifying *Jews*, Perſons in whom Luſts had had a peaceable Poſſeſſion and Empire for many Years.

3. His Goodneſs appears, *In converting Men poſſeſt with the greateſt Enmity againſt him, while he was dealing with them.* All were in ſuch a State, and framing Contrivances againſt him, when Divine Goodneſs knock'd at the door *. He look'd after us, when our backs were turned upon him, and ſought us when we ſlighted him; and were a *gain-ſaying People* *; when we had ſhaken off his Convictions, and contended with our Maker, and muſtered

* Col. 1. 21.

* Rom. 10. 21.

up the Powers of Nature againſt the Alarms of Conſcience; ſtrugled like wild Bulls in a Net, and blunted thoſe Darts which ſtuck in our Souls. Not a Man that is turn'd to him, but had lifted up the heel againſt his Goſpel-Grace, as well as made light of his Creating Goodneſs. Yet it hath employed it ſelf about ſuch ungrateful Wretches, to poliſh thoſe knotty and rugged pieces for Heaven; and ſo invincibly, that he would not have his Goodneſs defeated by the fierceneſs and rebellion of the Fleſh. Though the thing was more difficult in it ſelf, (if any thing may be ſaid to have a difficulty to Omnipotency) than to make a Stone live, or to turn a Straw into a Marble-Pillar. The Malice of the Fleſh makes a Man more unfit for the one, than the nature of the Straw unfits it for the other.

4. His Goodneſs appears in turning Men, *When they were pleaſed with their own miſery, and unable to deliver themſelves.* When they preferr'd a Hell before him, and were in love with their own Vileneſs; when his Call was our Torment, and his neglect of us had been accounted our felicity. Was it not a mighty Goodneſs to keep the Light cloſe to our Eyes, when we endeavored to blow it out, and the Corroſive near to our hearts, when we endeavored to tear it off, being more fond of our Diſeaſe, than the Remedy? We ſhould have been ſcalded to death with the *Sodomites*, had not God laid his good hand upon us, and drawn us from the approaching ruine we affected, and were loath to be freed from. And had we been diſpleaſed with our ſtate, yet we had been as unable Spiritually to raiſe our ſelves from Sin to Grace, as to raiſe our ſelves naturally from Nothing to Being: In this ſtate we were when his Goodneſs triumphed over us; when he put a Hook into our Noſtrils, to turn us in order to our Salvation; and drew us out of the Pit, which we had digged, when he might have left us to ſink under the rigors of his Juſtice, we had merited. Now this Goodneſs in Converſion is greater than that in Creation; as in Creation there was nothing to oppoſe him, ſo there was nothing to diſoblige him: Creation was terminated to the good of a mutable Nature, and Converſion tends to a ſupernatural Good. God pronounced all Creatures Good at firſt, and Man among the reſt, but did not pronounce any of them, or Man himſelf, his *Portion*, his *Inheritance*, his *Segullah*, his *Houſe*, his *Diadem*. He ſpeaks ſlightly of all thoſe things which he made, the nobleſt Heavens, as well as the loweſt Earth, in compariſon of a true Convert. * *All thoſe things hath my hand made, and all thoſe things have been, but to this Man will I look, to him that is of a contrite Spirit.* 'Tis more goodneſs to give the eſpouſing Grace of the Covenant, than the compleating Glory of Heaven. As it is more for a Prince to marry a Beggar, than only to bring her to live Deliciouſly in his Courts; all other benefits are of a meaner ſtrain, if compar'd with this; there is little leſs of Goodneſs in imparting the Holineſs of his Nature, than imputing the Righteouſneſs of his Son.

* Iſa. 66. 1, 2.

6. The Divine Goodneſs doth appear *in anſwering Prayers.* He delights to be familiarly acquainted with his People, and to hear them call upon him. He indulgeth them a free acceſs to him, and *delights* in every Addreſs of an *upright Man**. The wonderful efficacy of Prayer depends not upon the nature of our Petitions, or the temper of our Soul, but the Goodneſs of God to whom we Addreſs. Chriſt eſtabliſheth it upon this bottom; when he exhorts to ask in his Name, he tells them the Spring of all their Grants, is the Fathers love. * *I ſay not, I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himſelf loves you.* And ſince it is of it ſelf incredible, that a Majeſty exalted above the Cherubims, ſhould ſtoop ſo low, as to give a Miſerable and Rebellious Creature admittance to him, and afford him a gracious Hearing, and a quick Supply, Chriſt uſhers in the Promiſe of anſwering Prayer, with a Note of great Aſſurance. * *I ſay unto you, Ask and it ſhall be given you.* I that know the Mind of my Father, and his good Diſpoſition, aſſure you, your Prayer

* Prov. 15. 8.

* John 16. 26, 27.

* Luke 11. 9, 10.

ſhall

ſhall not be in vain. Perhaps you will not be ſo ready of your ſelves, to imagine ſo great a Liberality; but take it upon my word, 'tis true, and ſo you will find it. And his Bounty travels as it were in Birth, to give the greateſt Bleſſings, upon our asking, rather than the ſmalleſt. * *Your Heavenly Father ſhall give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him*: Which, in *Matth.* 7. 11. is called *good things*. Of all the good and rich things Divine Goodneſs hath in its Treaſury, he delights to give the beſt upon asking, becauſe God doth act ſo, as to manifeſt the greatneſs of his Bounty and Magnificence to Men; and therefore is delighted, when Men by their Petitioning him, own ſuch a liberal Diſpoſition in him, and put him upon the manifeſting it. He would rather you ſhould ask the greateſt things Heaven can afford, than the trifles of this World: Becauſe his Bounty is not diſcovered in meaner Gifts, he loves to have an opportunity to manifeſt his Affection, above the Liberality and Tenderneſs of Worldly Fathers. He'd th more wait to give in a way of Grace, than we to beg. * And therefore *will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you.* He ſtands expecting your Suits, and employs his Wiſdom in pitching upon the fitteſt ſeaſons, when the Manifeſtation of his Goodneſs may be moſt Gracious in it ſelf, and the Mercy you want moſt welcome to you; as it follows, for *the Lord is a God of Judgment.* He chooſeth the time, wherein his Doles may be moſt acceptable to his Suppliants; * *In an acceptable time have I heard thee.* He often opens his Hand, while we are opening our Lips, and his Bleſſings meet our Petitions, at the firſt ſetting out upon their Journey to Heaven. * *While they are yet ſpeaking, I will hear.* How often do we hear a ſecret Voice within us, while we are Praying, ſaying, Your *Prayer* is granted: As well as hear a voice behind us, while we are Erring, ſaying, *This is the way, walk in it?* And his liberality exceeds often our deſires, as well as our deſerts; and gives out more than we had the Wiſdom or Confidence to ask. The Apoſtle intimates it in that Doxology, * *Unto him who is able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think.* This Power would not have been ſo ſtrong an Argument of Comfort, if it were never put in practice; He is more liberal than his Creatures are craving. *Abraham* petition'd for the *life* of *Iſhmael*, and God promiſeth him the *birth of Iſaac**. *Iſaac* asks for a Child, and God gives him *two*, Gen. 25. 21, 22. *Jacob* deſires *Food* to eat, and *Raiment* to put on; God confines not his Bounty within the narrow Limits of his Petition, but inſtead of a *Staff* wherewith he paſſed *Jordan*, makes him repaſs it with *two Bands* *. *David* ask'd life of God, and he gave him *Life* and a *Crown* to boot †. The *Iſraelites* would have been contended with a free Life in *Egypt*, they only cryed to have their Chains ſtruck off; God gave them that, and adopts them to be his *peculiar People*, and raiſes them into a famous State. 'Tis a wonder that God ſhould condeſcend ſo much, that he ſhould hear Prayers ſo weak, ſo cold, ſo wandring, and gather up our ſincere Petitions from the Dung of our Diſtractions and Diffidence. *David* vents his Aſtoniſhment at it; * *Bleſſed be God, for he hath ſhewed me marvellous kindneſs. I ſaid in my haſte, I am cut off from before thy Eyes, nevertheleſs, thou hearde'ſt the voice of my Supplication.* How do we wonder at the goodneſs of a petty Man in granting our Deſires; how much more ſhould we at the Humility and Goodneſs of the moſt Soveraign Majeſty of Heaven and Earth?

* *Verſe* 13.

* Iſai. 30. 18.

* Iſai. 49. 8.

* Iſai. 65. 24.

* Eph. 3. 20.

* Gen. 17. 18, 19.

* Gen. 28. 20.

† Pſal. 21. 2, 3, 4, 5.

* Pſal. 31. 21, 22.

6. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen *in bearing with the Infirmities of his People, and accepting imperfect Obedience.* Though *Aſa* had many blots in his Scutcheon, yet they are over-look'd, and this Note ſet upon Record by Divine Goodneſs, That his Heart was perfect towards the Lord all his Days; * *But the High Places were not removed, nevertheleſs Aſa's heart was perfect with the Lord all his days.* He takes notice of a ſincere, though chequer'd Obedience, to reward it, which could claim nothing but a ſlight from him, if he were extream to mark what is done amiſs. When there is not an opportunity to Work, but only to Will, he accepts the Will, as if it had paſt into Work and Act.

* 1 Kings 15. 14.

act. He ſees *no iniquity in Jacob*, * *i. e.* He ſees it not ſo as to caſt off a reſpect to their Perſons, and the acceptance of their Services: His Omniſcience knows their Sins, but his Goodneſs doth not reject their Perſons. He is of ſo good a Diſpoſition, that he delights in a weak Obedience of his Servants, not in the Imperfection but in the Obedience; * *He delights* in *the way* of a *good Man*, though he ſometimes ſlips in it: He accepts a poor Mans *Pigeon*, as well as a rich Mans *Ox*; He hath a Bottle for the *Tears*, and a Book for the *ſervices of the Upright*, as well as for the moſt perfect Obedience of Angels: * He preſerves their Tears, as if they were a rich and generous Wine, as the Vine-dreſſer doth the Expreſſions of the Grape.

* Numb. 23. 21.

* Pſal. 37. 23.

* Pſal. 56. 8.

8. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen *in Afflictions and Perſecutions*. If it be *good for us to be afflicted*, for which we have the *Pſalmiſt*'s Vote, * then Goodneſs in God is the principal Cauſe and Orderer of the Afflictions. 'Tis his Goodneſs to ſnatch away that, whence we fetch ſupports for our Security, and encouragements for our Inſolence againſt him: He takes away the thing which we have ſome value for, but ſuch as his Infinite Wiſdom ſees inconſiſtent with our true Happineſs. 'Tis no ill will in the *Phyſician* to take away the hurtful Matter the Patient loves, and preſcribe bitter Potions, to advance that health which the other impair'd. Nor any mark of Unkindneſs in a Friend, to wreſt a Sword out of a mad Mans hand, wherewith he was about to ſtab himſelf, though it were beſet with the moſt Orient Pearls. To prevent what is evil, is to do us the greateſt good. 'Tis a kindneſs to prevent a Man from falling down a Precipice, though it be with a violent Blow, that lays him flat upon the Ground at ſome diſtance from the edge of it. By Afflictions he often ſnaps aſunder thoſe Chains which fetter'd us, and quells thoſe Paſſions which ravag'd us: He ſharpens our Faith, and quickens our Prayers; he brings us into the ſecret Chamber of our own heart, which we had little mind before to viſit by a Self-examination. 'Tis ſuch a Goodneſs that he will vouchſafe to correct Man in order to his Eternal Happineſs, that *Job* makes it one part of his Aſtoniſhment; * *What is man, that thou ſhouldeſt magnifie him? That thou ſhouldeſt ſet thy heart upon him? And that thou ſhouldeſt viſit him every morning? And try him every moment?* His ſtrokes are often the Magnifyings and Exaltings of Man. He ſets his heart upon Man, while he inflicts the ſmart of his Rod: He ſhews thereby, what a high account he makes of him, and what a ſpecial affection he bears to him. When he might treat us with more ſeverity after the breach of his Covenant, and make his Jealouſie flame out againſt us in furious Methods; he will not deſtroy his Relation to us, and leave us to our own Inclinations, but deal with us as a Father with his Children; and when he takes this courſe with us, 'tis when it cannot be avoided without ruine: His Goodneſs would not ſuffer him to do it, if our badneſs did not force him to it, * *I will melt them, and try them, for how ſhall I do for the daughter of my People?* What other Courſe can I take but this, according to the nature of Man? The Goldſmith hath no other way to ſeparate the Droſs from the Metal, but by melting it down. And when the Impurities of his People neceſſitate him to this proceeding, *he ſits as a Refiner* *: He watches for the purifying the Silver, not for his own profit as the Goldſmith, but out of a care of them, and good will to them; As himſelf ſpeaks, * *I have refin'd thee but not with ſilver*; Or as ſome read it, *not for ſilver*. As when he ſcatters his People abroad for their Sin, he will not leave them without his Preſence for their *Sanctuary* *: He would by his Preſence with them ſupply the place of Ordinances, or be an Ark to them in the midſt of the Deluge: His hand that ſtruck them, is never without a Goodneſs to comfort them, and pity them. When *Jacob* was to go into *Egypt*, which was to prove a Furnace of Affliction to his Off-ſpring, God promiſes to *go down* with him, and to *bring him up again* *. A Promiſe not only made to *Jacob* in his Perſon, but to *Jacob* in his Poſterity. He return'd not out of *Egypt* in his Perſon,

* Pſal. 119. 71.

* Job 7. 17.

* Jerem. 9. 7.

* Mal. 3. 3.

* Iſai. 48. 10.

* Ezek. 11. 16.

* Gen. 46. 4.

Perſon, but as the Father of a numerous Poſterity. He that would go down with their Root, and afterwards bring up the Branches, was certainly with them in all their Oppreſſions; *I will go down with thee. Down*, ſaith one, * What a Word is that for a Deity? *into Egypt*, Idolatrous *Egypt*, What a place is that for his Holineſs? Yet, Oh the Goodneſs of God! He never thinks himſelf low enough to do his People good, nor any place too bad for his Society with them. So when he had ſent away into Captivity the People of *Iſrael*, by the hand of the *Aſſyrian*, his Bowels yearn after them in their affliction; * *The Aſſyrian oppreſt them without cauſe, i. e.* without a juſt cauſe in the Conqueror to inflict ſo great an evil upon them, but not without cauſe from God, whom they had provoked. *Now therefore what have I here, ſaith the Lord?* What do I here? I will not ſtay behind them. What do I longer here? For I will redeem again thoſe Jewels the Enemy hath carried away. That Chapter is a Propheſie of Redemption: God ſhews himſelf ſo good to his People in their Perſecutions, that he gives them occaſion to glorifie him in the very Fires, as the Divine Order is, * *Wherefore glorifie the Lord in the Fires.*

* Harwood's Sermon at Oxford, p. 5.

* Iſai. 52. 4, 5.

* Iſai. 24. 15.

9. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen *in Temptations.* In thoſe he takes occaſion to ſhew his care and watchfulneſs, as a Father uſes the diſtreſs of a Child as an opportunity for manifeſting the tenderneſs of his Affection. God is at the beginning and end of every Temptation; He meaſures out both the Quality and Quantity: He expoſeth them not to Temptation beyond the ability he hath already granted them, or will at the time, or afterwards multiply in them. * He hath promiſed his People, that *the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt them*: That *in all things* they ſhall be *more then Conquerors through him that lov'd them*: That the moſt raging Malice of Hell, ſhall not wreſt them out of his hands. His Goodneſs is not leſs in performing, than it was in promiſing: And as the care of his Providence extends to the leaſt as well as the greateſt; ſo the watchfulneſs of his Goodneſs extends to us in the leaſt as well as in the greateſt Temptation.

* 1 Cor. 10. 13.

1. The Goodneſs of God appears *in ſhortening Temptations.* None of them can go beyond their *appointed times*: * The ſtrong blaſt Satan breaths, cannot blow; nor the Waves he raiſes, rage one minute beyond the time, God allows them; when they have done their Work, and come to the period of their Time, God ſpeaks the Word, and the Wind and Sea of Hell muſt obey him, and retire into their Dens. The more violent temptations are, the ſhorter time doth God allot them. The aſſaults Chriſt had at the time of his Death, were of the moſt preſſing and urging nature: The Powers of Darkneſs were all in Arms againſt him; the Reproaches and Scorns put upon him, queſtioning his Sonſhip, were very ſharp; yet a little before his Suffering, he calls it but an hour, * *This is your hour and the Power of Darkneſs.* A ſhort time that Men and Devils were combin'd againſt him; and the time of Temptation that is to come upon all the World for their trial, is call'd but an *hour* *. In all ſuch attempts, the *greatneſs* of the Rage is a certain Prognoſtick of the *ſhortneſs* of the Seaſon, *Revel.* 12. 12.

* Dan. 11. 35.

* Luke 22. 53.

* Rev. 3. 10.

2. The Goodneſs of God appears *in ſtrengthning his People under Temptations.* If he doth not reſtrain the Arm of Satan from ſtriking, he gives us a *Sword* to manage the Combat, and a *Shield* to bear off the blow. * If he obſcures his Goodneſs in one part, he clears and brightens it in another; He either binds the *ſtrong Man* that he ſhall not ſtir, or gives us Armour to render us Victorious. If we fall, it is not for want of proviſion from him, but for want of our *putting on the Armour of God* *. When we have not a ſtrength by Nature, he gives it us by Grace: He often quells thoſe Paſſions *within*, which would joyn hands with, and ſecond the Temptation *without*. He either

* Eph. 6. 16, 17.

* Eph. 6. 11, 13.

either qualifies the Temptation, ſutably to the force we have, or elſe ſupplies us with a new ſtrength to mate the Temptation, he intends to let looſe againſt us: He knows we are but Duſt, and his Goodneſs will not have us unequally match'd. The *Jews*, that in *Antiochus* his time were under great Temptation to Apoſtacy, by reaſon of the violence of their Perſecutions, were *out of weakneſs made ſtrong* for the Combat*. The Spirit came more ſtrongly upon *Sampſon*, when the *Philiſtines* moſt furiouſly and confidently aſſaulted him. His Spirit is ſent to ſtrengthen his People, before the Devil is permitted to tempt them; * *Then was Jeſus led up of the Spirit. Then:* When? When the Spirit had in an extraordinary manner deſcended upon him, *Matth.* 3. 16. *Then*, and not before. As the Angels appeared to Chriſt after his Temptation, to Miniſter to him, ſo they appear'd to him before his Paſſion, the time of the ſtrongeſt Powers of Darkneſs, to ſtrengthen him for it: He is ſo Good, that when he knows our Pot-ſheard ſtrength too weak, he furniſheth our Recruits from his own Omnipotence; * *Be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might.* He doth as it were breath in ſomthing of his own Almightineſs, to aſſiſt us in our wreſtling againſt Principalities and Powers, and make us capable to ſuſtain the violent Storms of the Enemies.

* Heb. 11. 34.

* Matth. 4. 2.

* Eph. 6. 10.

3. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen in Temptations, *in giving great Comforts in or after them.* The *Iſraelites* had a more immediate proviſion of *Manna* from Heaven, when they were in the Wilderneſs. We read not that the Father ſpake audibly to the Son, and gave him ſo loud a Teſtimony, that he was his *beloved Son, in whom* he was *well pleaſed*, till he was upon the brink of ſtrong Temptations*: Nor ſent *Angels to miniſter* immediately to his Perſon, till after his ſucceſs *. *Job* never had ſuch evidences of Divine Love, till after he had felt the ſharp ſtrokes of Satans malice; he had heard of God before by the *hearing of the Ear*, but afterwards is admitted into greater familiarity*: He had more choice Appearances, clearer Illuminations, and more lively Inſtructions. And though his People fall into Temptation, yet after their riſing, they have more ſignal Marks of his favour, than others have, or themſelves, before they fell. *Peter* had been the Butt of Satans rage, in tempting him to deny Chriſt, and he had ſhamefully comply'd with the Temptation; yet to him particularly muſt the firſt news of the Redeemers Reſurrection be carried by Gods order in the mouth of an Angel; * *Go your ways, tell his Diſciples and Peter.* We have the greateſt Communion with God after a Victory: The moſt refreſhing Truths after the Devil hath done his worſt. God is ready to furniſh us with ſtrength in a Combat, and Cordials after it.

* Mat. 3. 17.

* Mat. 4. 11.

* Job 42. 5.

* Mark 16. 7.

4. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen in Temptations, *in diſcovering and advancing inward Grace by this means.* The iſſue of a Temptation of a Chriſtian is often like that of Chriſts, the manifeſting a greater vigor of the Divine Nature in affections to God, and enmity to Sin. Spices perfume not the Air with their ſcent, till they are invaded by the Fire; the truth of Grace is evidenced by them. The aſſault of an Enemy revives, and actuates that Strength and Courage, which is in a Man perhaps unknown to himſelf as well as others, till he meets with an Adverſary. Many ſeem good, not that they are ſo in themſelves, but for want of a Temptation. This many times verifies a Vertue, which was own'd upon truſt before, and diſcovers that we had more Grace than we thought we had. The ſollicitations of *Joſephs* Miſtreſs clear'd up his Chaſtity. We are many times under Temptation, as a Candle under the Snuffer, it ſeems to be out, but preſently burns the clearer. Afflictions are like thoſe Clouds, which look black, and Eclips the Sun from the Earth, but yet when they drop, refreſh that Ground they ſeem to threaten, and multiply the Grain on the Earth, to ſerve for our Food;

and

and ſo our Troubles, while they wet us to the Skin, waſh much of that duſt from our Graces, which in a clearer day had been blown upon us. Too much reſt Corrupts; Exerciſe teacheth us to manage our Weapons: The Spiritual Armor would grow ruſty, without opportunity to furbiſh it up. Faith receives a new heart by every Combat, and by every Victory; like a Fire it ſpreads it ſelf further, and gathers ſtrength by the blowing of the Wind. While the Gardener commands his Servant to ſhake the Tree, he intends to faſten its Roots, and ſettle it firmer in its place; And is this an ill will to the Plant?

5. His Goodneſs is ſeen in Temptations, *in preventing Sin which we were likely to fall into. Paul's Thorn* in the Fleſh was to prevent the pride of his Spirit, and let out the windineſs of his Heart, * leſt it ſhould be exalted above meaſure. The Goodneſs of God makes the Devil a Poliſher, while he intends to be a Deſtroyer. The Devil never works, but ſutably to ſome Corruption lurking in us: Divine Goodneſs makes his fiery Darts a means to diſcover, and ſo to prevent the treachery of that perfidious Inmate in our own Hearts. Humility is a greater benefit than a putrifying Pride; If God brings us into a Wilderneſs to be tempted of the Devil, 'tis to bring down our Loftineſs, to ſtarve our Carnal Confidence, and expel our ruſting *Security* *; We many times fly under a Temptation to God, from whom we ſat too looſe before. Is it not Goodneſs to uſe thoſe means that may drive us into his own arms? 'Tis not a want of Goodneſs to ſoap the Garment, in order to take away the Spots: We have reaſon to bleſs God for the Aſſaults from Hell, as well as pure Mercies from Heaven; and it is a Sin to over-look the one, as well as the other, ſince Divine Goodneſs ſhines in both.

* 2 Cor. 12. 7.

* Deut. 8. 2.

6. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen in Temptations, *in fitting us more for his Service.* Thoſe whom God intends to make choice Inſtruments in his Service, are firſt ſeaſon'd with ſtrong Temptations, as Timber reſerved for the ſtrong Beams of a Building, is firſt expos'd to Sun and Wind, to make it more compact for its proper uſe. By this Men are brought to anſwer the end of their Creation, the Service of God, which is their proper Goodneſs. *Peter*, was after his foil by a Temptation, more Courageous in his Maſters Cauſe than before, and the more fitted to ſtrengthen his Brethren. Thus the Goodneſs of God appears in all parts of his Government.

I ſhall now come to *the* USE.

Firſt, Of *Inſtruction.*

1. If God be ſo Good, *How unworthy is the contempt and abuſe of his Goodneſs?*

1. *The contempt and abuſe of Divine Goodneſs is frequent and common*; it began in the firſt Ages of the World, and commenced a few moments after the Creation; it hath not to this day diminiſh'd its Affronts; *Adam* began the Dance, and his Poſterity have followed him; The Injury was directed againſt this, when he entertain'd the Seducers Notion of Gods being an Envious Deity, in not indulging ſuch a Knowledge, as he might have afforded him: * *God doth know, that you ſhall be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil.* The charge of Envy is utterly inconſiſtent with pure Goodneſs. What was the Language of this Notion ſo eaſily entertain'd by *Adam*, but that the Tempter was better than God, and the Nature of God as baſe and ſordid as the Nature of a *Devil?* Satan paints God with his own Colours, Repreſents him as Envious and Malicious as himſelf: *Adam* admires, and believes the Picture to be true, and hangs it up as a beloved one in the Cloſet of his Heart. The

* Gen. 3. 5.

Devil ſtill drives on the ſame Game, fills Mens hearts with the ſame Sentiments, and by the ſame means he Murder'd our firſt Parents, he redoubles the Stabs to his Poſterity. Every violation of the Divine Law is a contempt of Gods Goodneſs, as well as his Soveraignty, becauſe his Laws are the Products both of the one and the other. Goodneſs animates them, while Soveraignty enjoys them: God hath Commanded nothing but what doth conduce to our Happineſs. All Diſobedience implies, that his Law is a ſnare to entrap us, and make us miſerable, and not an act of Kindneſs, to render us happy, which is a diſparagement to this Perfection, as if he had Commanded what would promote our Miſery, and prohibited what would conduce to our Bleſſedneſs: To go far from him, and walk after Vanity, is to charge him with our Iniquity, and Unrighteouſneſs, Baſeneſs, and Cruelty in his Commands; God implies it by his Speech, * *What iniquity have your Fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and walked after vanity?* As if, like a Tyrant, he had conſulted Cruelty in the Compoſure of them, and deſign'd to Feaſt himſelf with the Blood and Miſery of his Creatures. Every Sin is in its own Nature a denial of God to be the chiefeſt Good and Happineſs, and implies, that it is no great matter to loſe him; 'tis a forſaking him as the Fountain of Life, and a preferring a crack'd and *empty Ciſtern*, as the chief Happineſs before him*. Though Sin is not ſo Evil as God is Good, yet it is the greateſt Evil, and ſtands in oppoſition to God as the greateſt Good. Sin diſorders the Frame of the World, it endeavor'd to fruſtrate all the Communications of Divine Goodneſs in Creation, and to ſtop up the way of any further Streams of it to his Creatures.

* Jer. 2. 5.

* Jer. 2. 13.

2. *The Abuſe and Contempt of the Divine Goodneſs, is baſe and diſ-ingenuous.* 'Tis the higheſt Wickedneſs, becauſe God is the higheſt Goodneſs, pure Goodneſs, that cannot have any thing in him worthy of our Contempt. Let Men injure God under what Notion they will, they injure his Goodneſs; becauſe all his Attributes are ſumm'd up in this one, and all as it were Deified by it. For whatſoever Power or Wiſdom he might have, if he were deſtitute of this, he were not God: The contempt of his Goodneſs implies him to be the greateſt Evil, and worſt of Beings. Badneſs, not Goodneſs, is the proper Object of Contempt: As Reſpect is a propenſion of Mind to ſomething that is Good, ſo Contempt is an alienation of the Mind from ſomething as Evil, either ſimply or ſuppoſedly Evil in its Nature, or baſe or unworthy in its action towards that Perſon that contemns it. As Men deſire nothing but what they apprehend to be Good, ſo they ſlight nothing but what they apprehend to be Evil: Since nothing therefore is more Contemned by us than God, nothing more ſpurn'd at by us than God, it will follow, that we regard him as the moſt loathſom and deſpicable Being, which is the greateſt Baſeneſs. And our Contempt of him, is worſe than that of the Devils; they injure him under the inevitable ſtrokes of his Juſtice, and we ſlight him when we are ſurrounded with the Expreſſions of his Bounty; They abuſe him under Vials of Wrath, and we under a Plenteous Liberality; They malice him, becauſe he inflicts on them what is hurtful; and we deſpiſe him, becauſe he Commands what is Profitable, Holy, and Honorable in its own Nature, though not in our Eſteem. They are not under thoſe high Obligations as we, they abuſe his Creating, and we his Redeeming Goodneſs: He never ſent his Son to ſhed a drop of Blood for their Recovery, they can expect nothing but the torment of their Perſons, and the deſtruction of their Works: But we abuſe that Goodneſs, that would reſcue us ſince we are Miſerable, as well as that Righteouſneſs which Created us Innocent. How baſe is it to uſe him ſo ill, that is not once or twice, but a daily, hourly Benefactor to us; whoſe Rain drops upon the Earth for our Food, and whoſe Sun ſhines upon the Earth for our Pleaſure as well as Profit; ſuch a Benefactor as is the true Proprietor of what we have, and thinks nothing too good for them, that thinks every thing too much for his

his Service? How unworthy is it to be guilty of ſuch baſe Carriage towards him, whoſe Benefits we cannot want nor live without? How diſ-ingenuous both to God and our ſelves, to * *deſpiſe the riches of his Goodneſs, that are deſign'd to lead us to Repentance*, and by that to Happineſs? And more hainous are the Sins of Renew'd Men upon this account, becauſe they are againſt his *Goodneſs*, not only offer'd to them, but taſted by them; not only againſt the Notion of Goodneſs, but the Experience of Goodneſs, and the reliſh'd ſweetneſs of choiceſt Bounty. * Rom 2. 4.

3. *God takes this Contempt of his Goodneſs hainouſly.* He never upbraids Men with any thing in Scripture, but with the abuſe of the good things he hath vouchſafed them, and the unmindfulneſs of the Obligations ariſing from them. This he bears with the greateſt regret and indignation. Thus he upbraids *Eli* with the preference of him to the Prieſthood, above other Families*: And *David*, with his Exaltation to the Crown of *Iſrael*, † when they abuſed thoſe Honors to Careleſneſs and Licentiouſneſs. All ſins offend God, but ſins againſt his Goodneſs do more diſparage him; and therefore his Fury is the greater, by how much the more liberally his Benefits have been diſpens'd. It was for abuſe of Divine Goodneſs, as ſoon as it was taſted, that ſome Angels were hurl'd from their Bleſſed Habitation and more happy Nature: It was for this *Adam* loſt his preſent Enjoyments and future Happineſs; for the abuſe of Gods Goodneſs in Creation. For the abuſe of Gods Goodneſs, the Old World fell under the fury of the Flood; and for the Contempt of the Divine Goodneſs in Redemption, *Jeruſalem*, once the darling City of the infinite Monarch of the World, was made an *Aceldama*, a Field of Blood. For this cauſe it is, that Candleſticks have been removed, great Lights put out, Nations overturn'd, and Ignorance hath triumph'd in places bright before with the Beams of Heaven. God would have little care of his own Goodneſs, if he always proſtituted the Fruits of it to our Contempt: Why ſhould we expect he ſhould always continue that to us, which he ſees we will never uſe to his Service? When the *Iſraelites* would Dedicate the Gifts of God to the ſervice of *Baal*, then he would return, and take away his Corn and his Wine, and make them know by the loſs, that thoſe things were his in Dominion which they abus'd, as if they had been Soveraign Lords of them*. Benefits are Entail'd upon us no longer than we obey; † *If you forſake the Lord, he will do you hurt, after he hath done you good.* While we obey, his Bounty ſhall ſhower upon us, and when we revolt, his Juſtice ſhall conſume us. Preſent Mercies abus'd, are no Bulwarks againſt impendent Judgments. God hath Curſes as well as Bleſſings, and they ſhall light more heavy, when his Bleſſings have been more weighty: Juſtice is never ſo ſevere, as when it comes to right Goodneſs, and revenge its quarrel for the injuries received.

* 1 Sam. 2. 28.
† 2 Sam. 12. 7, 8, 9.
* Hoſ. 2. 8; 9.
† Joſh. 24. 20.

A convenient Enquiry may be here, *How Gods Goodneſs is contemn'd or abus'd?*

1. *By a forgetfulneſs of his Benefits.* We enjoy the Mercies, and forget the Donor; we take what he gives, and pay not the Tribute he deſerves; The *Iſraelites forgot God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt* *. We ſend Gods Mercies, where we would have God ſend our Sins, into the Land of forgetfulneſs, and write his Benefits, where himſelf will write the Names of the Wicked, in the Duſt, which every Wind defaceth: The remembrance ſoon wears out of our Minds, and we are ſo far from remembring what we had before, that we ſcarce think of that Hand that gives, the very inſtant wherein his Benefits drop upon us. *Adam* baſely forgot his Benefactor, preſently after he had been made capable to remember him, and reflect upon him; the firſt Remark we hear of him, is of his Forgetfulneſs, not a ſyllable

* Pſal. 100. 21.

of his Thankfulneſs. We forget thoſe Souls he hath lodg'd in us, to acknowledge his favours to our Bodies; we forget that Image wherewith he Beautified us; and that Chriſt he expos'd as a Criminal to Death for our Reſcue, which is ſuch an Act of Goodneſs as cannot be expreſt by the Eloquence of the Tongue, or conceiv'd by the acuteneſs of the Mind. Thoſe things which are ſo common, that they cannot be inviſible to our Eyes, are unregarded by our Minds; our Senſe prompts our Underſtanding, and our Underſtanding is deaf to the plain dictates of our Senſe. We forget his Goodneſs in the Sun, while it warms us, and his Showers while they enrich us; in the Corn while it nouriſheth us, and the Wine while it refreſheth us; * *She did not know that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oyl*: She that might have read my hand in every bit of Bread, and every drop of Drink, did not conſider this. 'Tis an Injuſtice to forget the Benefits we receive from Man; 'tis a Crime of a higher Nature to forget thoſe diſpens'd to us by the hand of God, who gives us thoſe things that all the World cannot furniſh us with, without him. The Inhabitants of *Troas* will condemn us, who Worſhipped Mice, in a grateful remembrance of the Victory they had made eaſie for them, by gnawing their Enemies Bow-ſtrings. They were mindful of the Courteſie of Animals, though unintended by thoſe Creatures; and we are regardleſs of the fore-meditated Bounty of God. 'Tis in Gods Judgment a brutiſhneſs beyond that of a ſtupid Ox, or a duller Aſs; * *The Ox knows his Owner, and the Aſs his Maſters Crib, but Iſrael doth not know, my People do not conſider.* The Ox knows his Owner that Paſtures him, and the Aſs his Maſter that feeds him; but Man is not ſo good as to be like to them, but ſo bad as to be inferior to them: He forgets him that ſuſtains him, and ſpurns at him, inſtead of valuing him for the benefits conferr'd by him. How horrible is it, that God ſhould loſe more by his Bounty, than he would do by his Parcimony? If we had Bleſſings more ſparingly, we ſhould remember him more gratefully. If he had ſent us a bit of Bread in a diſtreſs by a Miracle, as he did to *Elijah* by the Ravens, it would have ſtuck longer in our Memories, but the ſenſe of daily Favors ſooneſt wears out of our minds, which are as great Miracles as any in their own Nature, and the products of the ſame Power; But the wonder they ſhould beget in us, is obſcur'd by their frequency.

* Hoſ. 2. 8.

* Iſaiah 1. 3.

2. The Goodneſs of God is contemn'd *by an impatient murmuring.* Our Repinings proceed from an inconſideration of Gods free Liberality, and an ungrateful temper of Spirit. Moſt Men are guilty of this. 'Tis implied in the commendation of *Job* under his Preſſures; * *In all this Job ſinned not, nor charged God fooliſhly*, as if it were a character peculiar to him, whereby he verified the Elogy God had given of him before, *verſe* 8. That there was *none like him in the Earth, a perfect and an upright Man.* What is imply'd by the Expreſſion? but that ſcarce a Man is to be found without unjuſt Complaints of God, and charging him under their Croſſes with Cruelty; when in the greateſt, they have much more reaſon to bleſs him for his Bounty in the remainder. Good Meen have not been innocent. *Baruch* complains of God, for adding grief to his ſorrow, not furniſhing him with thoſe *great things* he expected, whereas he had matter of thankfulneſs in Gods gift of his Life as a prey. * But his Maſter chargeth God in a higher ſtrain, † *Oh Lord, thou haſt deceiv'd me, and I was deceived, I am in deriſion daily.* When he met with Reproach inſtead of Succeſs in the execution of his Function, he quarrels with God, as if he had a mind to Cheat him into a Miſchief, when he had more reaſon to Bleſs him for the honor of being employ'd in his Service. Becauſe we have not what we expect, we ſlight his Goodneſs in what we enjoy. If he Croſs us in one thing, he might have made us Succeſsleſs in more: If he take away ſome things, he might as well have taken away all. The unmerited remainder, though never ſo little, deſerves our Acknowledgements more than the deſerved Loſs can juſtifie our Repining. And for that which is ſnatch'd from us,

* Job 1. 22.

* Jer. 45. 3, 4. † Jer. 20. 7.

us, there is more cauſe to be thankful, that we have enjoyed it ſo long, than to murmur that we poſſeſs it no longer. *Adams* Sin implies a repining: He imagin'd God had been ſhort in his Goodneſs, in not giving him a Knowledge he fooliſhly conceived himſelf capable of, and would venture a forfeiture of what already had been bountifully beſtow'd upon him. Man thought God had envied him, and ever ſince, Man ſtudies to be even with God, and envies him the free diſpoſal of his own Doles: All murmuring, either in our own Cauſe or others, charges God with a want of Goodneſs, becauſe there is a want of that, which he fooliſhly thinks would make himſelf or others happy. The Language of this Sin is, that Man thinks himſelf better than God, and if it were in his Power, would expreſs a more plentiful Goodneſs than his Maker. As Man is apt to think himſelf more *pure than God*, * ſo of a kinder Nature alſo than an Infinite Goodneſs. The *Iſraelites* are a wonderful Example of this Contempt of Divine Goodneſs; They had been Spectators of the greateſt Miracles, and partakers of the choiceſt Deliverance: He had ſollicited their Redemption from Captivity, and when Words would not do, he came to blows for them; Muſters up his Judgments againſt their Enemies, and at laſt, as the *Lord of Hoſts*, and God of Battles, totally defeats their Purſuers, and drowns them and their proud hopes of Victory in the Red Sea. Little account was made of all this by the Redeem'd ones. *They lightly eſteem'd the Rock of their Salvation*, and lanch into greater unworthineſs, inſtead of being thankful for the breaking their Yoak: They are angry with him, that he had done ſo much for them: They repented that ever they had complied with him for their own Deliverance, and had a regret that they had been brought out of *Egypt*: They were angry that they were Free-men, and that their Chains had been knock'd off: They were more deſirous to return to the Oppreſſion of their *Egyptian* Tyrants, than have God for their Governor and Caterer, and be fed with his *Manna*. *It was well with us in Egypt, Why came we forth out of Egypt?* which is call'd a *deſpiſing the Lord*: * They were ſo far from rejoycing in the expectation of the future benefits promis'd them, that they murmur'd that they had not enjoy'd leſs; They were ſo ſottiſh, as to be deſirous to put themſelves into the Irons whence God had delivered them: They would ſeek a Remedy in that *Egypt*, which had been the Priſon of their Nation, and under the Succeſſors of that *Pharaoh*, who had been the Invader of their Liberties; They would ſnatch *Moſes* from the place, where the Lord by an extraordinary Providence hath eſtabliſh'd him; * They would *ſtone* thoſe that minded them of the Goodneſs of God to them, and thereupon of their Crime and their Duty; They roſe againſt their Benefactors, and *murmur'd againſt God*, that had ſtrengthened the hands of their Deliverers; they *deſpiſed the Manna* he had ſent them, and *deſpiſed the pleaſant Land* he intended them: * All which was a high contempt of God and his unparallell'd Goodneſs and Care of them. All murmuring is an Accuſation of Divine Goodneſs.

* Job 4. 19.

* Num. 11. 18, 20.

* Numb. 16. 3, 9, 10, 11.

* Pſal. 106. 24.

3. *By Unbelief and Impenitency.* What is the reaſon we come not to him when he calls us, but ſome ſecret Imagination that he is of an ill Nature, means not as he ſpeaks, but intends to mock us, inſtead of welcoming us? When we neglect his Call, ſpurn at his Bowels, ſlight the Riches of his Grace; As it is a diſparagement to his Wiſdom, to deſpiſe his Counſel, ſo it is to his Goodneſs, to ſlight his Offers, as though you could make better proviſion for your ſelves, than he is able or willing to do. It diſgraceth that which is deſign'd to the praiſe of the glory of his Grace: And renders God cruel to his own Son, as being an unneceſſary ſhedder of his Blood. As the Devil by his Temptation of *Adam*, envied God the glory of his Creating Goodneſs; ſo unbelief envies God the glory of his Redeeming Grace: 'Tis a bidding Defiance to him, and Challenging him to muſter up the Legions of his Judgments, rather than have ſent his Son to ſuffer for us, or his Spirit to ſollicit

ſollicit us. Since the ſending his Son was the greateſt act of Goodneſs, that God could expreſs, the refuſal of him muſt be the higheſt Reproach of that Liberality God deſign'd to commend to the World in ſo rare a Gift: The ingratitude in this refuſal muſt be as high in the Rank of Sins, as the Perſon ſlighted is in the Rank of Beings, or Rank of Gifts. *Chriſt is a Gift*, * the Royalleſt Gift, an *unparallell'd Gift*, ſpringing from unconceivable Treaſures of Goodneſs: * What is our turning our backs upon this Gift, but a low Opinion of it? As though the Richeſt Jewel of Heaven, were not ſo valuable as a Swiniſh pleaſure on Earth; and deſerved to be Treated at no other rate, than if meer Offals had been preſented to us. The plain Language of it is, That there were no gracious Intentions for our welfare in this preſent; and that he is not as good in the Miſſion of his Son, as he would induce us to imagine. Impenitence is alſo an abuſe of this Goodneſs, either by preſumption, as if God would entertain Rebels, that bid defiance againſt him, with the ſame reſpect that he doth his proſtrate and weeping Suppliants; That he will have the ſame regard to the Swine as to the Children, and lodge them in the ſame Habitation: Or it ſpeaks a ſuſpicion of God as a deceitful Maſter, one of a pretended, not a real Goodneſs; That makes promiſes to mock Men, and invitations to delude them; That he is an implacable Tyrant, rather than a good Father; A rigid, not a kind Being, delightful only to mark our Faults, and overlook our Services.

* Rom. 5. 16.

* John 3. 16.

4. The Goodneſs of God is contemned *by a diſtruſt of his Providence.* As all truſt in him ſuppoſeth him Good, ſo all diſtruſt of him ſuppoſeth him Evil, either without Goodneſs to exert his Power, or without Power to diſplay his Goodneſs. *Job* ſeems to have a Spice of this in his Complaint. * *I cry unto thee, and thou doſt not hear me, I ſtand up, and thou regardeſt me not.* 'Tis a fume of the Serpents Venom, firſt breath'd into Man, to ſuſpect him of Cruelty, Severity, Regardleſneſs, even under the daily Evidences of his good Diſpoſition: And it is ordinary not to believe him when he ſpeaks, nor credit him when he acts: To queſtion the Goodneſs of his Precepts, and miſ-interpret the kindneſs of his Providence; As if they were deſign'd for the ſupports of a Tyranny, and the deceit of the Miſerable. Thus the *Iſraelites* thought their miraculous deliverance from *Egypt*, and the placing them in ſecurity in the Wilderneſs, was intended only to *pound* them up for a *ſlaughter* *. Thus they defil'd the luſtre of Divine Goodneſs, which they had ſo highly Experimented, and placed not that Confidence in him, which was due to ſo frequent a Benefactor; and thereby *Crucifi'd* the rich Kindneſs of God, as *Genebrard* tranſlates the Word, *limited* *. 'Tis alſo a jealouſie of Divine Goodneſs, when we ſeek to deliver our ſelves from our ſtraights by unlawful ways; as though God had not kindneſs enough to deliver us without committing Evil. What, did God make a World, and all Creatures in it, to think of them no more, not to concern himſelf in their Affairs? If he be Good, he is diffuſive, and delights to Communicate himſelf; and what Subjects ſhould there be for it, but thoſe that ſeek him and implore his aſſiſtance? 'Tis an indignity to Divine Bounty, to have ſuch mean thoughts of it, that it ſhould be of a Nature contrary to that of his Works, which the better they are, the more diffuſive they are. Doth a Man diſtruſt that the Sun will not ſhine any more, or the Earth not bring forth its Fruit? Doth he diſtruſt the goodneſs of an approved Medicine, for the expelling his Diſtemper? If we diſtruſt thoſe things, ſhould we not render our ſelves ridiculous and ſottiſh? And if we diſtruſt the Creator of thoſe things, do we not make our ſelves Contemners of his Goodneſs? If his Careing for us be a principal Argument, to move us to caſt our Care upon him, as it is, 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. *Caſting your care upon him, for he cares for you*; then if we caſt not our Care upon him, 'tis a denial of his Gracious Care of us; as if he regarded not what becomes of us.

* Job 30. 20.

* Numb. 14. 3.

* Pſal. 78. 41.

5. We

5. We do contemn or abuſe his Goodneſs *by omiſſions of Duty*. Theſe ſometimes ſpring from injurious Conceits of God, which end in deſperate Reſolutions. It was the Crime of a good Prophet in his Paſſion, * *This evil is of the Lord, Why ſhould I wait on the Lord any longer?* God deſigns nothing but miſchief to us, and we will ſeek him no longer. And the complaint of thoſe in *Malachy*, Mal. 3. 14. is of the ſame nature: *Ye have ſaid, 'tis vain to ſerve God, and what profit is it, that we have kept his Ordinances?* We have all this while ſerv'd a hard Maſter, not a Benefactor, and have not been anſwered with Advantages proportionable to our Services: We have met with a Hand too nigardly to diſpenſe that Reward which is due to the largeneſs of our Offerings. When Men will not lift up their Eyes to Heaven, and ſollicite nothing but the Contrivance of their own Brain, and the Induſtry of their own Heads, they diſown Divine Goodneſs, and approve themſelves as their own Gods, and the Spring of their own Proſperity. Thoſe that run not to God in their neceſſity, to crave his ſupport, deny either the Arm of his Power, or the Diſpoſition of his Will, to ſuſtain and deliver them: They muſt have very mean Sentiments, or none at all of this Perfection; or think him either too empty to fill them, or too churliſh to relieve them: That he is of a narrow and contracted Temper, and that they may ſooner expect to be made better and happier by any thing elſe than by him. And as we contemn his Goodneſs by a *total omiſſion* of thoſe Duties which reſpect our own Advantage and Supply, as Prayer; ſo we contemn him as the chiefeſt Good, by an *omiſſion* of the *due manner* of any act of worſhip, which is deſign'd purely for the acknowledgement of him. As every omiſſion of the material part of a Duty is a denial of his Soveraignty, as Commanding it; So every omiſſion of the manner of it, not performing it with a due eſteem and valuation of him, a ſurrender of all the Powers of our Souls to him, is a denial of him, as the moſt amiable Object. But certainly to omit thoſe Addreſſes to God, which his Precept enjoyns, and his Excellency deſerves, ſpeaks this Language, That they can be well enough, and do well enough without God, and ſtand in no need of his Goodneſs to maintain them. The neglect or refuſal in a Malefactor to ſupplicate for his Pardon, is a wrong to, and contempt of the Princes goodneſs: Either implying, that he hath not a goodneſs in his Nature worthy of an Addreſs, or that he ſcorns to be oblig'd to him for any Exerciſe of it.

* 2 Kings 6. 33.

6. The Goodneſs of God is contemned or abuſed, *in relying upon our Services, to procure Gods good Will to us.* * As when we ſtand in need either of ſome particular Mercy, or ſpecial Aſſiſtance: When Preſſures are heavy, and we have little hopes of eaſe in an ordinary way: When the Devotions in courſe have not prevail'd for what we want: We engage our ſelves by extraordinary Vows and Promiſes to God, hereby to open that Goodneſs, which ſeems to be lock'd up from us. Sometimes indeed Vows may proceed from a ſole Deſire to engage our ſelves to God, from a ſenſe of the Levity and Inconſtancy of our Spirits: Binding our ſelves to God by ſomething more ſacred and inviolable than a common Reſolution. But many times the Vowing the Building of a Temple, Endowing an Hoſpital, giving ſo much in Alms, if God will free them from a Fit of Sickneſs, and Spin out the Thread of their Lives a little longer, (as hath been frequent among the *Romaniſts*) ariſes from an Opinion of Lazineſs, and a Selfiſhneſs in the Divine Goodneſs; that it muſt be ſqueezed out by ſome ſolemn Promiſes of Returns to him, before it will exerciſe it ſelf to take their parts. Popular Vows are often the effects of an ignorance of the free and bubbling Nature of this Perfection of the Generouſneſs and Royalty of Divine Goodneſs: As if God were of a mean and mechanick Temper, not to part with any thing, unleſs he were in ſome meaſure paid for it: And of ſo bad a Nature, as not to give paſſage to any Kindneſs to his Creature without a Bribe. It implies alſo, that

* Amyral. *Moral. Tom.* 4. p. 191.

he

he is of an ignorant, as well as contracted Goodneſs; that he hath ſo little Underſtanding, and ſo much weakneſs of Judgment, as to be taken with ſuch Trifles and Ceremonial Courtſhips and little Promiſes; And meditated only low Deſigns, in imparting his Bounty: 'Tis juſt, as if a Malefactor ſhould ſpeak to a Prince, *Sir, If you will but beſtow a Pardon upon me, and prevent the Death I have merited for this Crime, I will give you this Rattle.* All Vows made with ſuch a temper of Spirit to God, are as injurious and abuſive to his Goodneſs, as any Man will judge ſuch an offer to be to a Majeſtick and Gracious Prince; as if it were a Trading, not a Free and Royal Goodneſs.

7. The Goodneſs of God is abus'd, *when we give up our ſouls and affections to thoſe Benefits we have from God.* When we make thoſe things Gods Rivals, which were ſent to Woe us for him, and offer thoſe Affections to the Preſents themſelves, which they were ſent to ſollicite for the Maſter. This is done, when either we place our truſt in them, or glue our choiceſt Affections to them. This Charge God brings againſt *Jeruſalem*, the truſting in her own Beauty, Glory and Strength, though it was a *Comelineſs* put upon her by God *. When a little Sun-ſhine of Proſperity breaks out upon us, we are apt to graſp it with ſo much eagerneſs and cloſeneſs, as if we had no other Foundation to ſettle our ſelves upon, no other Being that might challenge from us our ſole dependence. And the love of our ſelves, and of Creatures above God, is very natural to us: * *Lovers of themſelves, and lovers of Pleaſure more than of God.* Self-love is the Root, and the love of Pleaſures the top Branch, that mounts its head higheſt againſt Heaven. * 'Tis for the love of the World that the dangers of the Sea are paſt over, that Men deſcend into the Bowels of the Earth, paſs Nights without ſleep, undertake Suits without intermiſſion, wade through many Inconveniencies, venture their Souls, and contemn God; In thoſe things Men glory, and fooliſhly grow proud by them, and think themſelves ſafe and happy in them. Now to love our ſelves above God, is to own our ſelves better than God, and that we tranſcend him in an amiable Goodneſs; Or if we love our ſelves equal with God, it at leaſt manifeſts, that we think God no better than our ſelves, and think our ſelves our own Chief Good, and deny any thing above us to out-ſtrip us in goodneſs, whereby to deſerve to be the Center of our Affections and Actions: And to love any other Creature above him, is to conclude ſome defect in God, that he hath not ſo much Goodneſs in his own Nature, as that Creature hath, to compleat our Felicity; that God is a ſlighter thing than that Creature. 'Tis to account God, what all the things in the World are, an imaginary Happineſs, a goodneſs of Clay, and them what God is, a Supream Goodneſs. 'Tis to value the goodneſs of a Drop above that of the Spring, and the goodneſs of the Spark above that of the Sun. As if the Bounty of God were of a leſs alloy, than the advantages we immediately receive from the hands of a ſilly Worm. By how much the better we think a Creature to be, and place our Affections chiefly upon it; by ſo much the more deficient and indigent we conclude God: For God wants ſo much in our Conception, as the other thing hath goodneſs above him in our thoughts. Thus is God leſſen'd below the Creature, as if he had a mixture of evil in him, and were capable of an imperfect goodneſs. He that eſteems the Sun that ſhines upon him, the Clothes that warm him, the Food that nouriſheth him, or any other Benefit above the Donor, regards them as more Comely and Uſeful than God himſelf; and behaves himſelf, as if he were more oblig'd to them, than to God, who beſtowed thoſe advantageous Qualities upon them.

* Ezek. 16. 14, 15.

* 2 Tim. 3. 2, 4.

* Creſſol. *Antholog. Part.* 2. p. 29.

8. *The Divine Goodneſs is contemn'd, in ſinning more freely upon the account of that Goodneſs, and employing Gods Benefits in a drudgery for our Luſts.* This is a treachery to his Goodneſs, to make his Benefits ſerve for an end quite contrary

contrary to that for which he ſent them. As if God had been plentiful in his Bleſſings, to hire them to be more fierce in their Rebellions, and fed them to no other purpoſe, but that they might more ſtrongly kick againſt him; This is the Fruit which Corrupt Nature produceth. Thus the *Egyptians* who had ſo fertile a Countrey, prove unthankful to the Creator, by adoring the meaneſt Creatures, and putting the Scepter of the Monarch of the World, into the hands of the Sottiſheſt and Cruelleſt Beaſts. And the *Romans* multiply their Idols, as God multiplied their Victories. This is alſo the complaint of God concerning *Iſrael*, * *She did not know, that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, and multiplied her Silver and Gold, which they prepar'd for Baal.* They ungratefully employ'd the Bleſſings of God in the Worſhip of an Idol againſt the will of the Donor. So in *Hoſ.* 10. 1. *According to the multitude of his Fruit, he hath increas'd the Altars, according to the goodneſs of his Land they have made goodly Images.* They followed their own inventions with the ſtrength of my outward Bleſſings. As their Wealth increas'd, they increas'd the Ornaments of their Images; ſo that what were before of Wood and Stone, they advanc'd to Gold and Silver. And the like complaint you may ſee, *Exek.* 16. 17. Thus, * Hoſ. 2. 8.

1. *The Benefits of God are abuſed to pride*; when Men ſtanding upon a higher ground of outward Proſperity, vaunt it loftily above their Neighbours; the common fault of thoſe that enjoy a Worldly Sun-ſhine, which the *Apoſtle* obſerves in his Direction to *Timothy*; * *Charge them that are rich in this World, that they be not high-minded.* 'Tis an ill uſe of Divine Bleſſings, to be fill'd by them with Pride and Wind. Alſo, * 1 Tim. 6. 17.

2. *When Men abuſe Plenty to Eaſe*; becauſe they have abundance, ſpend their time in idleneſs, and make no other uſe of Divine Benefits, than to trifle away their time, and be utterly uſeleſs to the World.

3. *When they alſo abuſe Peace and other Bleſſings to ſecurity.* As they which would not believe the threatnings of Judgment and the Storm coming from a far Countrey, becauſe the Lord was in *Sion*, and her King in her; * *Is not the Lord in* Sion, *is not her King in her?* thinking they might continue their progreſs in their Sin, becauſe they had the Temple, the Seat of the Divine Glory, *Sion*, and the promiſe of an everlaſting Kingdom to *David*; abuſing the Promiſe of God to preſumption and ſecurity, and turning the Grace of God into wantonneſs. * Jer. 8. 19.

4. Again, *When they abuſe the Bounty of God to ſenſuality and luxury*, miſemploying the Proviſions God gives them, in reſolving to live like Beaſts, when by a good improvement of them, they might attain the Life of Angels. Thus is the light of the Sun abus'd to conduct them, and the Fruits of the Earth abus'd to enable them to their prodigious Debauchery: *As we do*, ſaith one, * *with the* Thames *which brings us in Proviſion, and we ſoil it with our Rubbiſh.* The more God ſowes his Gifts, the more we ſow our Cockle and Darnel. Thus we make our outward Happineſs the moſt unhappy part of our Lives, and by the ſtrength of Divine Bleſſings exceed all Laws of Reaſon and Religion too. * Young, *of Affliction*, p. 34.

How unworthy a Carriage is this, to uſe the Expreſſions of Divine Goodneſs as occaſions of a greater outrage and affront of him? When we ſtab his Honour by thoſe Inſtruments he puts into our hands to glorify him: as if a favorite ſhould turn that Sword into the Bowels of his Prince, wherewith he Knighted him. And a Servant enricht by a Lord, ſhould hire by that Wealth Murderers to take away his Life. How brutiſh is it, the more God Courts us with his Bleſſings, the more to ſpurn at him with our Feet? Like

the Mule that lifts up its Heel againſt the Dam, as ſoon as ever it hath ſuckt her. We never beat God out of our Hearts, but by his own Gifts: He receives no blows from Men, but by thoſe Inſtruments he gave them to promote their Happineſs. While Man is an Enjoyer, he makes God a Loſer by his own Bleſſings; inflames his Rebellion by thoſe Benefits, which ſhould kindle his Love; and runs from him by the ſtrength of thoſe favours, which ſhould endear the Donor to him. *Do you thus requite the Lord, Oh fooliſh People and unwiſe?* is the Expoſtulation, *Deut.* 32. 6. Divine Goodneſs appears in the complaint of the abuſe of it, in giving them Titles below their Crime, and complaining more of their being unfaithful to their own Intereſt, than Enemies to his Glory. *Fooliſh and unwiſe* in neglecting their own Happineſs, a Charge below the Crime, which deſerved to be abominable, ungrateful People to a Prodigy. All this carriage towards God, is as if a Man ſhould knock the *Chirurgeon* on the Head, as ſoon as he hath ſet and bound up his Diſlocated Members. So God compares the ungrateful behaviour of the *Iſraelites* againſt him, * *Though I have bound, and ſtrengthn'd their Arms, yet do they imagine miſchief againſt me.* A Metaphor taken from a *Chyrurgeon* that applies Corroborating Plaiſters to a broken Limb.

* Hoſ. 7. 15.

9. We contemn the Goodneſs of God, *in aſcribing our Benefits to other Cauſes than Divine Goodneſs.* Thus *Iſrael* aſcribed her Felicity, Plenty, and Succeſs to her Idols, as *Rewards which her lovers had given her* *. And this Charge *Daniel* brought home upon *Belſhazzer*; † *Thou haſt praiſed the Gods of Silver, and Gold, and Braſs, and Iron, and the God in whoſe hand is thy breath, and whoſe are all thy ways, haſt thou not glorify'd.* The God who hath given ſucceſs to the Arms of thy Anceſtors, and convey'd by their hands ſo large a Dominion to thee, thou haſt not honour'd in the ſame rank with the ſordideſt of thy Idols. 'Tis the ſame caſe, when we own him not as the Author of any ſucceſs in our Affairs, but by an over-weening conceit of our own Sagacity, applaud and admire our ſelves, and over-look the Hand, that conducted us, and brought our endeavours to a good iſſue. We eclipſe the Glory of Divine Goodneſs, by ſetting the Crown that is due to it upon the head of our own Induſtry. A Sacriledge worſe than *Belſhazzar*'s drinking of Wine with his Lords and Concubines in the Sacred Veſſels pilfer'd from the Temple; as in that place of *Daniel.* This was the proud vaunt of the *Aſſyrian* Conquerour, for which God threatens to puniſh the fruit of his ſtout heart; * *By the ſtrength of my hand, I have done it, and by my Wiſdom: for I am prudent, and I have removed the bounds of the People, and have robbed their Treaſures,* and *I have put down the Inhabitants like a valiant Man.* Not a word of Divine Goodneſs and Aſſiſtance in all this, but applauding his own Courage and Conduct. This is a robbing of God, to ſet up our ſelves, and making Divine Goodneſs a Footſtool, to aſcend into his Throne. And as it is unjuſt, ſo it is ridiculous, to aſcribe to our ſelves or Inſtruments, the chief honour of any work: As ridiculous as if a Soldier after a Victory ſhould Erect an Altar to the honour of his Sword, or an Artificer offer Sacrifices to the Tools, whereby he compleated ſome excellent and uſeful Invention. A practice that every Rational Man would diſdain, where he ſhould ſee it. 'Tis a diſcarding any thoughts of the Goodneſs of God, when we imagine, that we chiefly owe any thing in this World to our own Induſtry or Wit, to Friends or Means, as though Divine Goodneſs did not open its hand, to intereſt it ſelf in our Affairs, ſupport our Ability, direct our Counſels, and mingle it ſelf with any thing we do. God is the principal Author of any advantage that accrues to us, of any wiſe Reſolution we fix upon, or any proper way we take to compaſs it; No Man can be wiſe in oppoſition to God, act wiſely or well without him; His Goodneſs inſpires Men with generous and magnificent Counſels, and furniſheth them with fit and proportionable Means; When he withdraws his hand, Mens heads grow fooliſh, and their hands

* Hoſ. 2. 5. 12.
† Dan. 5. 23.

* Iſai. 10. 12, 13, 14.

hands feeble; folly and weakneſs drops upon them as darkneſs upon the World upon the removal of the Sun. 'Tis an abuſe of Divine Goodneſs, not to own it, but erect an Idol in its place. *Ezra* was of another mind, whe he aſcribed to the good hand of God, the *providing Miniſters for the Temple*, and not to his own care and diligence*: And *Nehemiah* the *ſucceſs he had with the King* in the behalf of his Nation, and not ſolely to his favour with the Prince, * or the Arts he uſed to pleaſe him. * Ezra 8. 18.

* Neh. 2. 8.

2. The Second Information is this, If God be ſo good, *'Tis a certain Argument that Man is fallen from his Original State.* 'Tis the complaint of Man ſometimes, that other Creatures have more of Earthly Happineſs than Men have, live freer from cares and trouble, and are not rackt with that ſolliciteuſneſs and anxiety as Man is: Have not ſuch diſtempers to embitter their lives. 'Tis a good ground for Man to look into himſelf, and conſider whether he hath not ſome ways or other, diſobliged God more than other Creatures can poſſibly do. We often find that the Creatures Men have need of in this State, do not anſwer the expectation of Man. *Curſed be the ground for thy ſake**. A fruitful Land is made barren, Thorns and Thiſtles triumph upon the face of the Earth inſtead of good Fruit. Is it like that Goodneſs which is as infinite as his Power, and knows no more limits than his Almightineſs ſhould imprint ſo many ſcars upon the World, if he had not been hainouſly provoked by ſome miſcarriage of his Creature? Infinite Goodneſs could never move Infinite Juſtice to inflict Puniſhment upon Creatures, if they had not highly Merited it: We cannot think, that any Creature was blemiſht with a Principle of Diſturbance, as it came firſt out of the hand of God. All things were certainly ſetled in a due order and dependance upon one another: nothing could be ungrateful, and unuſeful to Man by the Original Law of their Creatin: If there had, it had not been *Goodneſs*, but Evil and Baſeneſs, that had Created the World. When we ſee therefore the courſe of Nature overturn'd, the Order Divine Goodneſs had placed, diſturb'd; and the Creatures pronounced good and uſeful to Man, employ'd as Inſtruments of Vengeance againſt him; We muſt conclude ſome horrible blot upon Humane Nature, and very odious to a God of Infinite Goodneſs; And that this blot was daſht upon Man by himſelf, and his own fault; for it is repugnant to the Infinite Goodneſs of God, to put into the Creature, a Sinning Nature, to hurry him into Sin, and then puniſh him for that, which he had impreſt upon him. The Goodneſs of God inclines him to love Goodneſs, wherever he finds it, and not to puniſh any, that have not deſerved it by their own Crimes. The Curſe we therefore ſee the Creatures groan under, the diſorders in Nature, the fruſtrating the expectations of Man in the Fruits of the Earth and plentiful Harveſts, the trouble he is continually expos'd to in the World, which tedders down his Spirit from more generous Employments, ſhews, that Man is not what he was, when Divine Goodneſs firſt Erected him; but hath admitted into his Nature ſomething more uncomely in the Eye of God; and ſo hainous that it puts his Goodneſs ſometimes to a ſtand, and makes him lay aſide the Bleſſings, his hand was fill'd with, to take up the Arms of Vengeance, wherewith to fight againſt the World. Divine Goodneſs would have ſecur'd his Creatures from any ſuch invaſions, and never us'd thoſe things againſt Man, which he deſign'd in the firſt frame for Mans ſervice, were there not ſome deteſtable diſorder riſen in the Nature of Man, which makes God with-hold his Liberality, and change the diſpenſation of his numerous Benefits into Legions of Judgments. The Conſideration of the Divine Goodneſs, which is a Notion that Man naturally concludes to be inſeparable from the Deity, would to an unbyaſt Reaſon, verify the Hiſtory of thoſe Puniſhments, ſetled upon Man in the Third Chapter of *Geneſis*, and make the whole ſeem more probable to Reaſon at the firſt Relation. This inſtruction naturally flows from the * Gen. 3. 17.

Doctrine of Divine Goodneſs. If God be ſo good, it is a certain Argument, that Man is fallen from his Original State.

3. The Third Information is this, If God be infinitely good, *there can be no juſt complaint againſt God, if Men be puniſht for abuſing his Goodneſs.* Man had nothing, nay, it was impoſſible he could have any thing from infinite Goodneſs to diſoblige him, but to engage him. God never did, nay, never could draw his Sword againſt Man, till Man had ſlighted him, and affronted him by the ſtrength of his own Bounty. 'Tis by this, God doth juſtify his ſevereſt proceedings againſt Men, and very ſeldom charges them with any elſe as the matter of their provocations; * *Therefore will I return, and take away my Corn in the time thereof, and my Wine in the ſeaſon thereof, and will recover my Wool and my Flax.* And in *Ezek.* 16. after he had drawn out a Bill of Complaint againſt them, and inſerted only the abuſe of his Benefits, as a juſtification of what he intended to do; He concludes, *Verſe* 27. *Behold therefore, I have ſtretched out my hand over thee, and diminiſht thy ordinary food, and delivered thee unto the will of them that hate thee,* When Men ſuffer, they ſuffer juſtly; they were not conſtrained by any Violence, or forced by any neceſſity, nor provok't by any ill uſage, to turn head againſt God, but broke the bands of the ſtrongeſt Obligations, and moſt tender Allurements. What Man, what Devil can juſtly blame God for puniſhing them, after they had been ſo intolerably bold, as to fly in the face of that Goodneſs that had oblig'd them, by giving them Beings of a higher elevation than to inferior Creatures, and furniſhing them with ſufficient ſtrength to continue in their firſt Habitation? Man ſeems to have leſs reaſon to accuſe God of rigor than Devils, ſince after his unreaſonable Revolt, a more expreſs Goodneſs than that which Created him, hath ſollicited him to Repentance, Courted him by melting Promiſes and Expoſtulations, added undeniable Arguments of Bounty, and drawn out the choiceſt Treaſures of Heaven in the gift of his Son, to prevail over Mens perverſity. And yet *Man* after he might arrive to the height and happineſs of an *Angel*, will be fond of continuing in the meanneſs and miſery of a Devil; and more ſtrongly link himſelf to the Society of the damn'd Spirits, wherein by his firſt Rebellion he had incorporated himſelf. Who can blame God for vindicating his own Goodneſs from ſuch deſperate contempts, and the extream ingratitude of Man? * If God be good, 'tis our happineſs to adhere to him: If we depart from him, we depart from Goodneſs, and if Evil happen to us, we cannot blame God but our ſelves for our departure. Why are Men happy? Becauſe they cleave to God; Why are Men miſerable? Becauſe they recede from God; 'Tis then our own fault that we are miſerable; God cannot be charg'd with any injuſtice, if we be miſerable, ſince his Goodneſs gave means to prevent it, and afterwards added means to recover us from it, but all deſpis'd by us. The Doctrine of Divine Goodneſs juſtifies every Stone laid in the Foundation of Hell, and every Spark in that burning Furnace, ſince it is for the abuſe of Infinite Goodneſs, that it was kindled.

* Hoſea 2. 3.

* Petav. *Theolog. Dogmat. Vol.* 1. *p.* 407.

4. The Fourth Information, *Here is a certain Argument, both for Gods fitneſs to Govern the World, and his actual Government of it.*

1. *This renders him fit for the Government of the World, and gives him a full Title to it.* This Perfection doth the *Pſalmiſt* celebrate throughout the 107 *Pſalm*, where he declares Gods Works of Providence, *Verſe* 8, 15, 21, 32. Power without Goodneſs would deface, inſtead of preſerving; Ruine is the fruit of rigor without kindeſs; But God becauſe of his infinite and immutable goodneſs cannot do any thing unworthy of himſelf, and uncomely in it ſelf, or deſtructive to any Moral Goodneſs in the Creature. 'Tis impoſſible he ſhould do any thing that is baſe, or act any thing but for the beſt, becauſe he

he is eſſentially and naturally, and therefore neceſſarily good. As a good Tree cannot bring forth bad Fruit, ſo a good God cannot produce evil Acts; no more than a pure Beam of the Sun can engender ſo much as a mite of darkneſs; or infinite Heat produce any particle of Cold. As God is ſo much Light, that he can be no Darkneſs, ſo he is ſo much Good, that he can have no Evil; and becauſe there is no Evil in him, nothing ſimply Evil can be produced by him. Since he is good by Nature, all Evil is againſt his Nature, and God can do nothing againſt his Nature: It would be a part of impotence in him, to Will that which is Evil; and therefore the miſery Man feels, as well as the Sin whereby he deſerves that Miſery, are ſaid to be from himſelf; **Oh* Iſrael *thou haſt deſtroy'd thy ſelf.* And though God ſends Judgments upon the World, we have ſhewn theſe to be intended for the ſupport and vindication of his Goodneſs. And *Hezekiah* judg'd no otherwiſe, when after the threatning of the Devaſtation of his Houſe, the Plundering his Treaſures, and Captivity of his Poſterity, He replies, *Good is the Word of the Lord which thou haſt ſpoken**. God cannot act any thing that is baſe and Cruel, becauſe his Goodneſs is as infinite as his Power, and his Power acts nothing, but what his Wiſdom directs, and his Goodneſs moves him to. Wiſdom is the Head in Government, Omniſcience the Eye, Power the Arm, and Goodneſs the Heart and Spirit in them, that animates all.

* Hoſ. 13. 9.

* Iſai. 39. 8.

2. As Goodneſs renders him fit to govern the World, *ſo God doth actually Govern the World.* Can we underſtand this Perfection aright, and yet imagine, that he is of ſo Moroſe a Diſpoſition, as to neglect the care of his Creatures? That his Excellency which was diſplay'd in framing the World, ſhould withdraw and wrap up it ſelf in his own Boſom, without looking out, and darting it ſelf out in the diſpoſal of them? Can that which moved him firſt to Erect a World, ſuffer him to be unmindful of his own Work? Would he deſign firſt to diſplay it in Creation, and afterwards obſcure the Honour of it? That cannot be Entitled an Infinite permanent Goodneſs, which ſhould be ſo indifferent, as to let the Creatures tumble together, as they pleaſe, without any order, after he had Moulded them in his hand. If Goodneſs be diffuſive and communicative of it ſelf, can it conſiſt with the Nature of it, to extend it ſelf to the giving the Creatures Being, and then withdraw and contract it ſelf, not caring what becomes of them? 'Tis the Nature of Goodneſs after it hath communicated it ſelf, to enlarge its Chanels; That Fountain that ſprings up in a little hollow part of the Earth, doth in a ſhort progreſs increaſe its Streams, and widen the Paſſages through which it runs: It would be a blemiſh to Divine Goodneſs, if it did deſert what it made, and leave things to wild Confuſions, which would be, if a good hand did not manage them, and a good Mind preſide over them. This is the Leſſon intended to us by all his Judgments, * *That the living may know, that the Moſt High Rules in the Kingdoms of Men.* If he doth not actually govern the World, he muſt have devolv'd it ſomewhere, either to Men or Angels; Not to Men, who naturally want a Goodneſs and Wiſdom to Govern themſelves, much more to govern others exactly. And beſides the miſinterpretations of Actions, they are liable to the want of Patience, to bear with the provocations of the World. Since ſome of the beſt at one time in the World, and in the greateſt example of meekneſs and ſweetneſs, would have kindled a Fire in Heaven to have conſumed the *Samaritans*, for no other affront than a *non Entertainment of their Maſter and themſelves* *. Nor hath he committed the diſpoſal of things to Angels, either good or bad; though he uſeth them as Inſtruments in his Government, yet they are not the principal Pilots to Steer the World. *Bad* Angels certainly are not; they would make continual Ravages, meditate Ruine, never deſeat their own Counſels, which they manage by the Wicked as their Inſtruments in the World, nor fill their Spirits with diſquiet and reſtleſneſs when they are engaged in ſome Ruinous Deſign,

* Dan. 4. 17.

* Luke 9. 54.

Deſign, as often as is experienc'd: nor hath he committed it to the good Angels, who for ought we know, are not more numerous than the evil ones are: But beſides, we can ſcarcely think their Finite Nature capable of ſo much goodneſs, as to bear the innumerable Debaucheries, Villanies, Blaſphemies vented in one year, one week, one day, one hour throughout the World; Their Zeal for their Creator might well be ſuppos'd to move them to teſtify their affection to him in a conſtant and ſpeedy Righting of his injured Honour upon the heads of the Offendors. The evil Angels have too much Cruelty, and would have no care of Juſtice, but take pleaſure in the Blood of the moſt Innocent, as well as the moſt Criminal. And the good Angels have too little tenderneſs, to ſuffer ſo many Crimes; Since the World therefore continues without thoſe flouds of Judgments, which it daily merits, ſince notwithſtanding all the provocations, the order of it is preſerved; 'Tis a teſtimony, that an Infinite Goodneſs holds the Helm in his hands, and ſpreads its warm Wings over it.

5. The Fifth Information is this; Hence we may infer the *ground of all Religion, 'tis the Perfection of Goodneſs.* As the Goodneſs of God is the luſtre of all his Atributes, ſo it is the Foundation and Link of all true Religious Worſhip: The natural Religion of the Heathens was introduc'd by the conſideration of Divine Goodneſs, in the Being he had beſtow'd upon them, and the Proviſions that were made for them. Divine Bounty was the Motive to Erect Altars, and preſent Sacrifices; though they miſtook the Object of their Worſhip, and offer'd the dues of the Creator, to the Inſtruments wherby he conveyed his Benefits to them. And you find, that the Religion inſtituted by him among the *Jews*, was enforc'd upon them by the conſideration of their miraculous deliverance from *Egypt*, the preſervation of them in the Wilderneſs, and the infeoffing them in a Land flowing with Milk and Honey. Every act of bounty and ſucceſs the *Heathens* received, moved them to appoint new Feaſts, and repeat their adorations of thoſe Deities, they thought the Authors and Promoters of their Victories and Welfare. The Devil did not miſtake the common Sentiment of the World in Divine Service, when he alledg'd to God, that *Job did not fear him for nought. i. e.* worſhip him for nothing*. All acts of Devotion take their riſe from Gods liberality, either from what they have, or from what they hope: *Praiſe* ſpeaks the Poſſeſſion, and *Prayer* the expectation of ſome Benefit from his Hand. Though ſome of the *Heathens* made *fear*, to be the prime Cauſe of the acknowledgment and worſhip of a Deity, yet ſurely ſomething elſe beſides and beyond this Eſtabliſht ſo great a thing as *Religion* in the World; an ingenious Religion could never have been born into the World, without a Notion of *Goodneſs*; and would have gaſpt its laſt, as ſoon as this Notion ſhould have expir'd in the minds of Men. What encouragement can fear of Power give, without ſenſe of Goodneſs? juſt as much as Thunder hath, to invite a Man to the place where it is like to fall, and cruſh him. The nature of *fear* is to drive from, and the nature of *goodneſs* to allure to the Object. The Divine Thunders, Prodigies, and other Armies of his Juſtice in the World, which are the Marks of his Power, could conclude in nothing but a ſlaviſh Worſhip: Fear alone would have made Men blaſpheme the Deity; inſtead of ſerving him, they would have fretted againſt him; they might have offer'd him a trembling Worſhip, but they could never have in their minds, thought him worthy of an Adoration; they would rather have ſecretly complain'd of him, and curſed him in their heart, than inwardly have admir'd him: The iſſue would have been the ſame, which *Job*'s Wife advis'd him to, when God withdrew his Protection from his Goods and Body, *Curſe God and die* *. 'Tis certainly the common ſentiment of Men, that he that acts Cruelly and Tyrannically, is not worthy of an integrity to be retain'd towards him in the hearts of his Subjects: But *Job* fortifies himſelf againſt this Temptation from his Boſom Friend, by the conſideration of the good he

* Job 1. 9.

* Job 2. 9.

he had received from God, which did more deſerve a worſhip from him, than the preſent evil had reaſon to diſcourage it. Alas! what is only fear'd, is hated, not ador'd: Would any ſeek to an irreconcileable Enemy? Would any perſon affectionately liſt himſelf in the ſervice of a Man void of all good diſpoſition? Would any diſtreſſed perſon put up a petition to that Prince, who never gave any experiment of the ſweetneſs of his nature, but always ſatiated himſelf with the Blood of the meaneſt Criminals? All affection to ſervice is rooted up, when hopes of receiving good are extinguiſht. There could not be a ſpark of that in the World, which is properly call'd Religion without a Notion of Goodneſs: The Exiſtence of God is the firſt Pillar, and the Goodneſs of God in rewarding the next, upon which coming to him (which includes all acts of Devotion) is eſtabliſhed, * *He that comes unto God, muſt believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him*: If either of thoſe Pillars be not thought to ſtand firm, all Religion falls to the ground. 'Tis this as the moſt agreeable Motive, that the Apoſtle *James* uſes, to encourage Mens approach to God, becauſe *he gives liberally, and upbraideth not* *. A Man of a kind heart and bountiful hand, ſhall have his Gate throng'd with ſuppliants, who ſometimes would be willing to lay down their lives: *For a good Man one would even dare to die*; when one of a niggardly or tyrannical temper, ſhall be deſtitute of all free and affectionate applications. What Eyes would be lifted up to Heaven? What Hands ſtretched out, if there were not a knowledge of Goodneſs there to enliven their hopes of ſpeeding in their Petitions? Therefore Chriſt orders our Prayers to be directed to God as a *Father*, which is a Title of tenderneſs, as well as a *Father in Heaven*, a Mark of his greatneſs; The one to ſupport our confidence, as well as the other to preſerve our diſtance. God could not be ingenuouſly ador'd and acknowledged, if he were not liberal as well as powerful: The Goodneſs of God is the foundation of all ingenuous Religion, Devotion, and Worſhip,

* Heb. 11. 6.

* James 1. 5.

6. The ſixth Inſtruction: *The Goodneſs of God renders God amiable.* His Goodneſs renders him beautiful, and his Beauty renders him lovely, both are linkt together: * *How great is his Goodneſs, and how great is his Beauty?* This is the moſt powerful Attractive, and maſters the Affections of the Soul: 'Tis Goodneſs only ſuppoſed, or real, that is thought worthy to demerit our affections to any thing. If there be not a reality of this, or at leaſt an opinion and eſtimation of it in an Object, it would want a force and vigor to allure our Will. This Perfection of God is the Loadſtone to draw us, and the Center for our Spirits to reſt in.

* Zach. 9. 17.

1. *This renders God amiable to himſelf.* His Goodneſs is his *Godhead*, * By his Godhead is meant his Goodneſs: If he loves his Godhead for it ſelf, he loves his Goodneſs for it ſelf: He would not be good, if he did not love himſelf: And if there were any thing more Excellent, and had a greater Goodneſs than himſelf, he would not be good, if he did not love that greater Goodneſs above himſelf: For not only a hatred of Goodneſs is evil, but an indifferent or cold affection to Goodneſs, hath a tincture of evil in it. If God were not good, and yet ſhould love himſelf in the higheſt manner, he would be the greateſt Evil, and do the greateſt evil in that act; for he would ſet his love upon that which is not the proper Object of ſuch an affection, but the Object of averſion. His own infinite Excellency and Goodneſs of his Nature, renders him lovely and delightful to himſelf; without this he could not love himſelf in a commendable and worthy way, and becoming the purity of a Deity; and he cannot but love himſelf for this: For as Creatures by not loving him as the Supream Good, deny him to be the choiceſt good, ſo God would deny himſelf and his own goodneſs, if he did not love himſelf, and that for his goodneſs. But the Apoſtle tells us, That *God cannot deny himſelf* *: Self-love upon this account is the only Prerogative of God, becauſe there is not

* Rom. 1. 20.

* 2 Tim. 2. 13.

not any thing better than himſelf, that can lay any juſt claim to his affections: He only ought to love himſelf, and it would be an injuſtice in him to himſelf, if he did not. He only can love himſelf for this: An Infinite Goodneſs ought to be infinitely loved, but he only being Infinite, can only love himſelf according to the due Merit of his own Goodneſs. He cannot be ſo amiable to any Man, to any Angel, to the higheſt *Seraphim*, as he is to himſelf; becauſe he is only capable in regard of his Infinite Wiſdom, to know the Infiniteneſs of his own Goodneſs. And no Creature can love him, as he ought to be loved, unleſs it had the ſame infinite capacity of Underſtanding to know him, and of Affection to embrace him. This firſt renders God amiable to himſelf.

2. *It ought therefore to render him amiable to us.* What renders him lovely to his own Eye, ought to render him ſo to ours; and ſince by the ſhortneſs of our Underſtandings we cannot love him, as he Merits, yet we ſhould be induc'd by the meaſures of his Bounty, to love him, as we can. If this do not preſent him lovely to us, we own him rather a Devil than a God: If his Goodneſs moved him to frame Creatures, his Goodneſs moved him alſo to frame Creatures for himſelf, and his own Glory. 'Tis a mighty wrong to him, not to look with a delightful Eye upon the Marks of it, and return an Affection to God in ſome meaſure ſutable to his liberality to us; We are deſcended as low as Brutes, if we underſtand him not to be the Perfect Good; and we are deſcended as low as Devils, if our Affections are not attracted by it.

1. *If God were not Infinitely Good, he could not be the Object of Supream Love.* If he were Finitely Good, there might be other things as good as God, and then God in juſtice could not challenge our choiceſt Affections to him, above any thing elſe: It would be a defect of goodneſs in him, to demand it, becauſe he would deſpoil that, which were equally good with him, of its due and right to our affections, which it might claim from us upon the account of its goodneſs: God would be unjuſt to challenge more than was due to him; for he would claim that chiefly to himſelf, which another had a lawful ſhare in. Nothing can be ſupreamly loved, that hath not a Triumphant Excellency above all other things: Where there is an equality of goodneſs, neither can juſtly challenge a Supremacy, but only an equality of Affection.

2. *This Attribute of Goodneſs renders him more lovely than any other Attribute.* He never requires our Adoration of him ſo much, as the ſtrongeſt or wiſeſt, but as the beſt of Beings: He uſes this chiefly, to conſtrain and allure us. Why would he be fear'd or worſhipt, but becauſe *there is forgiveneſs with him**? 'Tis for his goodneſs ſake, that he is ſued to by his People in diſtreſs, † *For thy goodneſs ſake, O Lord.* Men may be admir'd becauſe of their knowledge, but they are affected becauſe of their Goodneſs: The Will in all the variety of Objects it purſues, centers in this one thing of good as the term of its appetite. All things are belov'd by Men, becauſe they have been better'd by them, or becauſe they expect to be the better for them. Severity can never conquer enmity, and kindle love: Were there nothing but wrath in the Deity, it would make him be fear'd, but render him odious, and that to an innocent Nature. As the *Spouſe* ſpeaks of Chriſt, * ſo we may of God: Though ſhe commends him for his *Head*, the excellency of his Wiſdom, his *Eyes*, the extent of his Omniſcence, his *Hands*, the greatneſs of his Power, and his *Legs*, the ſwiftneſs of his Motions, and ways to and for his People, yet the *ſweetneſs of his Mouth*, in his gracious Words and Promiſes cloſes all and is follow'd with nothing but an Exclamation, that *he is altogether lovely, Verſe* 16. His Mouth in pronouncing Pardon of Sin, and juſtification of the Perſon, preſents him moſt lovely. His Power to do good is admirable, but his Will to do good is amiable: This puts a gloſs upon all his other Attributes. Though he had knowledge to underſtand the depth of our neceſſities, and power to prevent them, or reſcue us from them, yet his knowledge would be fruitleſs, and his power uſeleſs, if he were of a rigid Nature, and not touched with any ſentiments of kindneſs.

* Pſal. 130. 4.
† Pſal. 25. 7.
* Cant. 5. 10. 11.

3. *This*

3. *This Goodneſs therefore lays a ſtrong Obligation upon us.* 'Tis true he is lovely in regard of his abſolute Goodneſs, or the goodneſs of his Nature, but we ſhould hardly be perſwaded to return him an affection, without his Relative Goodneſs, his Benefits to his Creatures; We are oblig'd by both to love him.

1. *By his Abſolute Goodneſs, or the Goodneſs of his Nature.* Suppoſe a Creature had drawn its original from ſomething elſe, wherein God had no influx; and had never received the leaſt mite of a benefit from him, but from ſome other hand, yet the infinite Excellency and Goodneſs of his Nature, would merit the love of that Creature, and it would act ſordidly and diſingenuouſly, if it did not diſcover a mighty Reſpect for God: For what ingenuity could there be in a Rational Creature, that were poſſeſſed with no eſteem for any Nature fill'd with unbounded Goodneſs and Excellency, though he had never been oblig'd to him for any favour? That Man is accounted odious, and juſtly deſpicable by Man, that reproaches and diſ-eſteems, nay, that doth not value a Perſon of a high Virtue in himſelf, and an univerſal Goodneſs and Charity to others, though himſelf never ſtood in need of his Charity, and never had any benefit conveyed from his hands, nor ever ſaw his Face, or had any commerce with him: A value of ſuch a Perſon is but a juſt due to the natural claim of Virtue. And indeed, the firſt Object of Love is God in the Excellency of his own Nature, as the firſt Object of Love in Marriage, is the *Perſon*; the Portion is a thing conſequent upon it. To love God only for his Benefits, is to love our ſelves firſt, and him ſecondarily: To love God for his own Goodneſs and Excellency, is a true love of God; a love of him for himſelf. That flaming Fire in his own Breaſt, though we have not a Spark of it, hath a right to kindle one in ours to him.

2. *By his Relative Goodneſs or that of his Benefits.* Though the Excellency of his own Nature, wherein there is a combination of Goodneſs, muſt needs raviſh an apprehenſive Mind; yet a reflection upon his imparted Kindneſs, both in the Beings we have from him, and the ſupport we have by him, muſt enhance this Eſtimation. When the Excellency of his Nature, and the Expreſſions of his Bounty are in conjunction, the Excellency of his own Nature, renders him eſtimable in a way of Juſtice, and the greatneſs of his Benefits renders him valuable in a way of Gratitude: The firſt raviſheth, and the other allures and melts: He hath enough in his Nature to attract, and ſufficient in his Bounty to engage our Affections. The Excellency of his Nature is ſtrong enough of it ſelf, to blow up our Affections to him, were there not a Malignity in our hearts, that repreſents him under the Notion of an Enemy; therefore in regard of our corrupt State, the conſideration of Divine Largeſſes, comes in for a ſhare in the Elevation of our Affections. For indeed 'tis a very hard thing, for a Man to love another, though never ſo well qualified, and of an eminent Vertue, while he believes him to be his Enemy, and one that will ſeverely handle him; though he hath before received many good turns from him: The Virtue, Valour, and Courteſie of a Prince, will hardly make him affected by thoſe, againſt whom he is in Arms, and that are daily pilfer'd by his Souldiers, unleſs they have hopes of a Reparation from him, and future ſecurity from injuries. Chriſt in the Repetition of the Command to *love God with all our mind, with all our heart, and with all our Soul*, i.e. with ſuch an ardency, above all things which glitter in our Eye, or can be Created by him, conſiders him as *our God**. And the *Pſalmiſt* conſiders him as one, that had kindly employ'd his power for him, in the eruption of his love, *Pſal.* 18. 1. *I will love thee Oh Lord my ſtrength*; And ſo in *Pſal.* 116. 1. *I love the Lord becauſe he hath heard the voice of my ſupplications.* An eſteem of the Benefactor, is inſeparable from Gratitude for the received Benefits: And ſhould not then the unparallell'd kindneſs of God, advance him in our thoughts, much more than ſlighter Courteſies do a Created Benefactor in ours? 'Tis an obligation on every Mans Nature, to anſwer Bounty with Gratitude, and Goodneſs with Love. Hence you never knew any Man, nor can the Records of Eternity produce any Man or Devil, that

* Matt. 22.37.

ever hated any Perſon, or any thing as good in it ſelf: 'Tis a thing abſolutely repugnant to the Nature of any Rational Creature. The Devils hate not God, becauſe he is good; but becauſe he is not ſo good to them as they would have him; becauſe he will not unlock their Chains, turn them into liberty, and reſtore them to Happineſs, *i. e.* becauſe he will not deſert the Rights of abus'd Goodneſs. But how ſhould we ſend up flames of love to that God, ſince we are under his direct Beams, and enjoy ſuch plentiful influences! If the Sun is comely in it ſelf, yet 'tis more amiable to us, by the light we ſee, and the warmth we feel.

1. *The greatneſs of his Benefits have reaſon to affect us with a love to him.* The Impreſs he made upon our Souls, when he extracted us from the darkneſs of nothing: The Comlineſs he hath put upon us, by his own Breath: The Care he took of our Recovery, when we had loſt our ſelves: The Expence he was at for our Regaining our defac'd Beauty: The gift he made of his Son: The Affectionate Calls we have heard to over-maſter our Corrupt Appetites, move us to Repentance, and make us diſaffect our beloved Miſery: The loud ſound of his Word in our Ears, and the more inward knockings of his Spirit in our Heart: The offering us the Gift of himſelf, and the Everlaſting happineſs he Courts us to; beſides thoſe common favours we enjoy in the World, which are all the Streams of his rich Bounty. The voice of all is loud enough to ſollicite our Love, and the Merit of all ought to be ſtrong enough to engage our love: *There is none like the God of* Jeſurun, *who rides upon the Heaven in thy help, and in his Excellency on the Sky* *.

* Deut. 33. 26.

2. *The unmeritedneſs of them doth inhance this.* 'Tis but reaſon to love him, who hath loved us firſt*: Hath he placed his delight upon any, when they were nothing, and after they were Sinful; and ſhall he ſet his delight upon ſuch vile Perſons, and ſhall not we ſet our love upon ſo excellent an Object as himſelf? How baſe are we, if his Goodneſs doth not conſtrain us to affect him, who hath been ſo free in his favour to us, who have merited the quite contrary at his hands? *If his tender Mercies are over all his Works* *, He ought for it to be eſteem'd by all his Works, that are capable of a Rational Eſtimation.

* 1 Joh. 4. 19.

* Pſal. 145. 9.

3. *Goodneſs in Creatures makes them eſtimable, much more ſhould the Goodneſs of God render him lovely to us.* If we love a little ſpark of goodneſs in this or that Creature, if a drop be ſo delicious to us, ſhall not the immenſe Sun of Goodneſs, the ever-flowing Fountain of all, be much more delightful? The Original Excellency always out ſtrips what is deriv'd from it: If ſo mean and contracted an Object as a little Creature deſerves Eſtimation for a little Mite communicated to it, ſo great and extended a goodneſs, as is in the Creator, much more merits it at our hands: He is good after the infinite methods of a Deity; A weak Reſemblance is lovely, much more amiable then muſt be the incomprehenſible Original of that Beauty. We love Creatures for what we think to be good in them, though it may be hurtful; And ſhall we not love God, who is a real and unblemiſht Goodneſs? And from whoſe hand are pour'd out, all thoſe Bleſſings, that are conveyed to us by ſecond Cauſes. The Object that delights us, the Capacity we have to delight in it, are both from him; Our love therefore to him ſhould tranſcend the Affection we bear to any Inſtruments he moves for our welfare. *Among the Gods, there is none like thee O Lord, neither are there any Works like unto thy Works* *. Among the pleaſanteſt Creatures there is none like the Creator, nor any Goodneſs like unto his Goodneſs. Shall we love the Food that nouriſheth us, and the Medicine that Cures us, and the Silver whereby we furniſh our ſelves with uſeful Commodities? Shall we love a Horſe or Dog, for the benefits we have by them? And ſhall not the Spring of all thoſe, draw our Souls after it, and make us aſpire to the honour of loving, and embracing him, who hath ſtor'd every Creature with that which may pleaſure us? But inſtead of endeavouring to parallel our Affection with his Kindneſs, we endeavour to make our Diſingenuity as extenſive and towring as his Divine Goodneſs.

* Pſal. 86. 1.

4. *This is the true end of the manifeſtation of his Goodneſs, that he might appear amiable, and have a Return of Affection.* Did God diſplay his Goodneſs only

only to be thought of, or to be loved? 'Tis the want of ſuch a return, that he hath uſually aggravated from the Benefits he hath beſtow'd upon Men. Every thought of him ſhould be attended with a Motion ſutable to the Excellency of his Nature and Works. Can we think thoſe nobler Spirits, the Angels look upon themſelves, or thoſe Frames of things in the Heavens and Earth without ſtarting ſome practical Affection to him for them? Their knowledge of his Excellency and Works, cannot be a lazy Contemplation: 'Tis impoſſible their Wills and Affections ſhould be a thouſand Miles diſtant from their Underſtandings in their Operations. 'Tis not the leaſt part of his condeſcending Goodneſs, to Court in ſuch Methods the Affections of us Worms, and manifeſt his deſire to be beloved by us. Let us give him then that Affection he deſerves, as well as demands, and which cannot be with-held from him without horrible Sacriledge. There is nothing worthy of Love beſides him; Let no Fire be kindled in our hearts, but what may aſcend directly to him.

7. The ſeventh Inſtruction is this, *This renders God a fit Object of Truſt and Confidence.* Since none is good but God, none can be a full and ſatisfactory Ground or Object of confidence but God; As all things derive their Beings, ſo they derive their helpfulneſs to us from God; they are not therefore the principal Objects of Truſt, but that Goodneſs alone that renders them fit Inſtruments of our ſupport; They can no more challenge from us a ſtable Confidence, than they can a Supream Affection. 'Tis by this the *Pſalmiſt* allures Men to a truſt in him; **Taſte, and ſee, how good the Lord is,* What is the conſequence? *Bleſſed is the Man, that truſts in thee.* The Voice of Divine Goodneſs ſounds nothing more intelligibly, and a taſte of it produceth nothing more effectually than this. As the Vials of his Juſtice are to make us fear him, ſo the Streams of his Goodneſs are to make us rely on him. As his Patience is deſign'd to broach our Repentance, ſo his Goodneſs is moſt proper to ſtrengthen our aſſurance in him: That Goodneſs which ſurmounted ſo many difficulties, and conquer'd ſo many motions, that might be made againſt any repeated Exerciſe of it, after it had been abus'd by the firſt Rebellion of Man: That Goodneſs that after ſo much contempt of it, appeared in ſuch a Majeſtick tenderneſs, and threw aſide thoſe impediments, which Men had caſt in the way of Divine Inclinations: This Goodneſs is the foundation of all reliance upon God. Who is better than God? And therefore, who more to be truſted than God? As his Power cannot act any thing weakly, ſo his Goodneſs cannot act any thing unbecomingly, and unworthy of his Infinite Majeſty. And here conſider,

* Pſal. 34. 8.

1. *Goodneſs is the firſt motive of Truſt.* Nothing but this could be the encouragement to Man, had he ſtood in a State of Innocence, to preſent himſelf before God; The Majeſty of God would have conſtrain'd him to keep his due diſtance, but the Goodneſs of God could only hearten his Confidence; 'Tis nothing elſe now, that can preſerve the ſame temper in us in our lapſed Condition. To regard him only as the Judge of our Crimes, will drive us from him; but only the regard of him as the Donor of our Bleſſings, will allure us to him. The principal Foundation of *Faith* is not the Word of God, but God himſelf, and God as conſider'd in this Perfection. As the Goodneſs of God in his Invitations, and Providential Bleſſings, *leads us to Repentance* *; ſo by the ſame reaſon the Goodneſs of God by his Promiſes, leads us to Reliance. If God be not firſt believed to be Good, he would not be believed at all, in any thing that he ſpeaks or ſwears: If you were not ſatisfied in the goodneſs of a Man, though he ſhould ſwear a thouſand times, you would value neither his Word nor Oath, as any ſecurity. Many times where we are certain of the goodneſs of a Man, we are willing to truſt him without his Promiſe. This Divine Perfection gives Credit to the Divine Promiſes; they of themſelves would not be a ſufficient ground of Truſt, without an apprehenſion of his Truth; nor would his Truth be very comfortable, without a belief of his good Will, whereby we are aſſured, that what he promiſes to give, he gives liberally, free, and without regret. The *truth* of the Promiſer, makes the

* Rom. 2. 4.

Promiſe Credible, but the *goodneſs* of the Promiſer makes it chearfully relied on. In *Pſal.* 73. *Aſaphs* Penitential Pſalm for his diſtruſt of God, he begins the *Firſt Verſe* with an aſſertion of this Attribute, *v.* 1. *Truly God is good to Iſrael*, and ends with this fruit of it, *Verſe* 28. *I will put my truſt in the Lord God.* 'Tis a mighty ill Nature, that receives not with aſſurance the Dictates of Infinite Goodneſs, (that cannot deceive or fruſtrate the hopes, we conceive of him) that is unconceivably more abundant in the breaſt and inclinations of the Promiſer, than expreſſible in the words of his Promiſe: *All true Faith works by Love* *, and therefore neceſſarily includes a particular eying of this Excellency in the Divine Nature, which renders him amiable, and is the Motive and Encouragement of a love to him. His *Power* indeed is a foundation of *Truſt*, but his *Goodneſs* is the principal *Motive* of it. His Power without good Will would be dangerous, and could not allure Affection; and his good Will without Power, would be uſeleſs; and though it might merit a love, yet could not create a Confidence; both in conjunction are ſtrong grounds of hope; Eſpecially ſince his Goodneſs is of the ſame infinity with his Wiſdom and Power; and that he can be no more wanting in the effuſions of this upon them that ſeek him, than in his Wiſdom to contrive, or his Power to effect his Deſigns and Works.

* Gal. 5. 6.

2. *This Goodneſs is more the foundation and motive of truſt under the Goſpel, than under the Law.* They under the Law had more evidences of Divine Power, and their truſt eyed that much; though there was an eminency of goodneſs in the frequent deliverances they had, yet the Power of God had a more glorious dreſs, than his Goodneſs, becauſe of the extraordinary and miraculous ways whereby he brought thoſe deliverances about. Therefore in the Catalogue of Believers in *Heb.* 11. you ſhall find the Power of God, to be the Center of their Reſt and Truſt; and their Faith was built upon the extraordinary Marks of Divine Power, which were frequently viſible to them. But *under the Goſpel*, goodneſs and love was intended by God, to be the chief Object of truſt; ſuitable to the Excellency of that Diſpenſation, he would have an Exerciſe of more ingenuity in the Creatures: Therefore 'tis ſaid, *Hoſea* 3. 5. A promiſe of Goſpel-times, *They ſhall fear God and his Goodneſs in the latter days*, when they ſhall return to *ſeek the Lord, and* David *their King.* 'Tis not ſaid, they ſhall fear God and his Power, but the Lord and his goodneſs, or the Lord for his goodneſs: Fear is often in the Old Teſtament taken for Faith, or Truſt. This Divine Goodneſs, the Object of Faith, is that goodneſs diſcover'd in *David their King*; the *Meſſiah*, our *Jeſus.* God in this Diſpenſation recommends his goodneſs and love, and reveals it more clearly than other Attributes, that the Soul might have more prevailing and ſweeter Attractives, to confide in him.

3. *A confidence in him gives him the Glory of his Goodneſs.* Moſt Nations that had nothing but the light of Nature, thought it a great part of the Honour that was due to God, to implore his Goodneſs; and caſt their Cares upon it. To do good, is the moſt honourable thing in the World, and to acknowledge a goodneſs in a way of confidence, is as high an honour as we can give to it, and a great part of gratitude for what it hath already expreſt: Therefore we find often, that an acknowledgment of one Benefit received, was attended with a Truſt in him, for what they ſhould in the future need; * *Thou haſt delivered my Soul from Death, wilt thou not deliver my Feet from falling?* So 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. And they who have been moſt eminent for their truſt in him, have had the greateſt Elogies and Commendations from him. As a diffidence doth diſparage this Perfection, thinking it meaner and ſhallower, than it is; ſo Confidence highly honours it. We never pleaſe him more, than when we truſt in him, * *The Lord takes pleaſure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his Mercy.* He takes it for an Honour, to have this Attribute exalted by ſuch a Carriage of his Creature. He is no leſs offended, when we think his Heart ſtraitned, as if he were a Parcimonious God, than when we think his Arm ſhortned, as if he were an impotent and feeble God.

* Pſal. 56. 13.

* Pſal. 147. 11.

Let us therefore make this *uſe of his Goodneſs*, to hearten our *Faith.* When we

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are ſcar'd by the terrors of his Juſtice, when we are dazled by the arts of his Wiſdom, and confounded by the ſplendor of his Majeſty, we may take refuge in the Sanctuary of his Goodneſs; this will encourage us, as well as aſtoniſh us; Whereas the conſideration of his other Attributes would only amaze us, but can never refreſh us, but when they are conſider'd, marching under the Conduct and Banners of this. When all the other Perfections of the Divine Nature are lookt upon in conjunction with this Excellency, each of them ſend forth raviſhing and benigne influences upon the applying Creature. 'Tis more advantageous to depend upon Divine Bounty, than our own Cares; We may have better aſſurance upon this account in his Cares for us, than in ours for our ſelves. Our goodneſs for our ſelves is Finite, and beſides, we are too ignorant: His Goodneſs is Infinite, and attended with an infinite Wiſdom; we have reaſon to diſtruſt our ſelves, not God. We have reaſon to be at reſt, under that kind influence we have ſo often experimented; He hath ſo much goodneſs, that he can have no deceit: His goodneſs in making the Promiſe, and his goodneſs in working the heart to a reliance on it, are grounds of truſt in him; * *Remember thy word to thy Servant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope.* If his Promiſe did not pleaſe him, why did he make it? If Reliance on the Promiſe, doth not pleaſe him, why did his Goodneſs work it? It would be inconſiſtent with his Goodneſs, to mock his Creature, and it would be the higheſt Mockery to publiſh his Word, and Create a temper in the heart of his ſupplicant, ſuited to his Promiſe, which he never intended to ſatisfy. He can as little wrong his Creature, as wrong himſelf; and therefore can never diſappoint that Faith, which in his own methods caſts it ſelf into the arms of his Kindneſs, and is his own Workmanſhip, and calls him Author. That Goodneſs that imparted it ſelf ſo freely in Creation, will not neglect thoſe nobler Creatures that put their truſt in him. This renders God a fit Object for Truſt and Confidence.

* Pſal. 119. 49.

8. The eighth Inſtruction; *This renders God worthy to be obeyed and honour'd.* There is an Excellency in God, to allure, as well as Sovereignty to enjoyn Obedience: The infinite Excellency of his Nature is ſo great, that if his Goodneſs had promiſed us nothing to encourage our Obedience, we ought to prefer him before our ſelves, devote our ſelves to ſerve him, and make his glory our greateſt content; but much more when he hath given ſuch admirable Expreſſions of his Liberality, and ſtor'd us with hopes of richer and fuller Streams of it. When *David* conſider'd the Abſolute Goodneſs of his Nature, and the Relative Goodneſs of his Benefits, he preſently expreſſeth an ardent deſire to be acquainted with the Divine Statutes, that he might make ingenious returns in a dutiful obſervance; * *Thou art good, and thou doſt good, teach me thy Statutes.* As his Goodneſs is the Original, ſo the acknowledgment of it is the end of all, which cannot be without an obſervance of his Will. His Goodneſs requires of us an ingenuous, not a ſervile Obedience

* Pſal. 119. 68.

And this is Eſtabliſht upon two Foundations.

1. Becauſe *the Bounty of God hath laid upon us the ſtrongeſt Obligations.* The ſtrength of an Obligation depends upon the greatneſs and numerouſneſs of the Benefits received. The more Excellent the favours are, which are conferr'd upon any Perſon, the more right hath the Benefactor, to claim an obſervance from the Perſon better'd by him. Much of the Rule and Empire, which hath been in ſeveral Ages conferr'd by Communities upon Princes, hath had its firſt ſpring from a ſenſe of the advantages they have receiv'd by them, either in protecting them from their Enemies, or reſcuing them from an ignoble Captivity; in enlarging their Territories, or increaſing their Wealth. Conqueſt hath been the Original of a conſtrain'd, but Beneficence always the Original of a voluntary and free Subjection *. Obedience to Parents is founded upon their right, becauſe they are inſtrumental in beſtowing upon us Being and Life; and becauſe this of Life is ſo great a benefit, the Law of Nature never diſſolves this Obligation of Obeying, and Honouring Parents; 'Tis as long-liv'd as the Law of Nature, and hath an univerſal practice, by the ſtrength of that Law in all parts of the World: And thoſe rightful Chains are not unlockt, but by that which unties the knot between Soul and Body. Much more hath God a Right

* Amyrald. *Diſcert. p. 65.*

a Right to be obey'd and reverenc'd, who is the principal Benefactor, and mov'd all thoſe ſecond Cauſes, to impart to us, what conduc'd to our advantage. The juſt Authority of God over us, reſults from the ſuperlativeneſs of his Bleſſings he hath pour'd down upon us, which cannot be equall'd, much leſs exceeded by any other. As therefore upon this account he hath a claim to our choiceſt Affections, ſo he hath alſo to our moſt exact Obedience; and neither one, nor other can be denied him, without a ſordid and diſingenuous ingratitude; God therefore aggravates the Rebellion of the *Jews*, from the cares he had in the *bringing them up**, and the *miraculous deliverance from* Egypt †, implying that thoſe Benefits were ſtrong Obligations to an ingenuous obſervance of him.

* Iſaiah 1. 2.
† Jer. 11. 7, 8.

2. It is Eſtabliſht upon this, *That God can enjoyn the obſervance of nothing but what is good.* He may by the Right of his Sovereign Dominion, command that which is indifferent in its own Nature; As in poſitive Laws, The not eating the Fruit of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which had not been evil in it ſelf, ſet aſide the Command of God to the contrary; and likewiſe in thoſe Ceremonial Laws he gave the *Jews*: But in regard of the tranſcendent Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs of his Nature, he will not, he cannot Command any thing that is evil in it ſelf, or repugnant to the true intereſt of his Creature; And God never oblig'd the Creature to any thing, but what was ſo free from damaging it, that it highly conduced to its good and welfare; and therefore it is ſaid, * That *his Commands are not grievous*: Not grievous in their own Nature, nor grievous to one poſſeſt with a true Reaſon. The Command given to *Adam* in *Paradiſe* was not grievous in it ſelf, nor could he ever have thought it ſo, but upon a falſe ſuppoſition inſtill'd into him by the *Tempter*, There is a pleaſure reſults from the Law of God to a holy Rational Nature, a ſweetneſs taſted both by the Underſtanding and by the Will, for they both *rejoyce the heart, and enlighten the Eyes* of the Mind *. God being Eſſentially Wiſdom and Goodneſs, cannot deviate from that Goodneſs in any Orders he gives the Creature; whatſoever he Enacts, muſt be agreeable to that Rule, and therefore he can Will nothing, but what is good and excellent, and what is good for the Creature; For ſince he hath put Originally into Man a Natural Inſtinct, to deſire that which is good, He would never Enact any thing for the Creatures obſervance, that might controul that deſire imprinted by himſelf, but what might countenance that impreſſion of his own hand; for if God did otherwiſe, he would contradict his own Natural Law, and be a Deluder of his Creatures, if he impreſt upon them deſires one way, and order'd directions another. The truth is, all his Moral Precepts are comely in themſelves, and they receive not their goodneſs from Gods poſitive Command, but that Command ſuppoſeth their Goodneſs: If every thing were good becauſe God loves it, or becauſe God wills it, *i. e.* That Gods loving it, or willing it, made that good, which was not good before, then as *Camero* well argues ſomewhere, Gods goodneſs would depend upon his loving himſelf; He was good becauſe he loved himſelf, and was not good, till he loved himſelf; whereas indeed Gods loving himſelf, doth not make him good, but ſuppoſeth him good: He was good in the Order of Nature, before he loved himſelf, and his being good, was the ground of his loving himſelf, becauſe as was ſaid before, if there were any thing better than God, God would love that: For it is inconſiſtent with the Nature of God, and Infinite Goodneſs, not to love that which is good, and not to love that ſupreamly, which is the Supream Good. Further to underſtand it, you may conſider, if the *Queſtion* be askt, Why God loves himſelf? You would think it a reaſonable Anſwer to ſay; Becauſe he is good. But if the *Queſtion* be askt, Why God is good? You would think that Anſwer, becauſe he loves himſelf, would be deſtitute of Reaſon; but the true Anſwer would be, Becauſe his Nature is ſo, and he could not be God, if he were not good: Therefore Gods goodneſs is in order of our conception before his ſelf-love, and not his ſelf-love before his goodneſs: So the Moral things God Commands, are good in themſelves, before God Commands them; and ſuch, that if God ſhould Command the contrary, it would openly ſpeak him evil, and unrighteous. Abſtract from *Scripture*, and weigh things in your own Reaſon; Could you conceive God good, if he ſhould Command a Creature not to love him?

* 1 Joh. 5. 3.

* Pſal. 19. 8.

As a Heathen Maximus Tyrius, *Diſſert.* 22. p. 220. ὁ γὰρ θεὸς Διὶ βάλεται ἀλλὸ τι ἢ τὸ ἀγαθὸν εἶναι.

him? Could you preſerve the Notion of a good Nature in him, if he did Command Murder, Adultery, Tyranny, and Cutting of Throats? You would wonder, to what purpoſe he made the World, and fram'd it for Society, if ſuch things were order'd, that ſhould deface all Comlineſs of Society: The Moral Commands given in the Word, appeared of themſelves very beautiful to meer Reaſon, that had no knowledge of the written Law; they are good, and becauſe they are ſo, his Goodneſs had moved his Sovereign Authority ſtrictly to enjoyn them. Now this Goodneſs whereby he cannot oblige a Creature to any thing that is evil, ſpeaks him highly worthy of our Obſervance, and our Diſobedience to his Law to be full of unconceivable malignity: That is the laſt thing.

2. Uſe is a Uſe of *Comfort*. He is a Good without mixture, Good without wearineſs, *none good but God*, none good purely, none good inexhauſtibly but God; becauſe he is good, we may upon our ſpeaking expect his inſtruction; * *Good is the Lord, therefore will he teach Sinners in his way.* His goodneſs makes him ſtoop to be the Tutor to thoſe Worms that lie proſtrate before him; and though they are Sinners full of filth, he drives them not from his School, nor denies them his Medicines, if they apply themſelves to him as a Phyſician. He is good in removing the Puniſhment due to our Crimes, and good in beſtowing Benefits, not due to our Merits; becauſe he is good, Penitent Believers may expect forgiveneſs, * *Thou Lord art good, and ready to forgive.* He acts not according to the rigor of the Law, but willingly grants his Pardon to thoſe that fly into the Arms of the Mediator: His Goodneſs makes him more ready to forgive, than our neceſſities make us deſirous to enjoy: He charged not upon *Job* his impatient Expreſſions in Curſing the day of his Birth, his Goodneſs paſſed that over in ſilence, and extolls him, for ſpeaking the thing that is right, right in the main, (* when he charges his Friends, *for not ſpeaking of him, the thing that is right, as his Servant* Job *had done.*) He is ſo good, that if we offer the leaſt thing ſincerely, he will graciouſly receive it; If we have not a *Lamb* to offer, a *Pigeon*, or *Turtle* ſhall be accepted upon his Altar: He ſtands not upon coſtly Preſents, but ſincerely tender'd Services. All Conditions are ſweeten'd by it; whatſoever any in the World enjoy, is from a redundancy of this goodneſs; but whatſoever a good Man enjoys, is from a propriety in this goodneſs.

1. Here is Comfort *in our Addreſſes to him.* If he be a Fountain and Sea of Goodneſs, he cannot be weary of doing good, no more than a Fountain or Sea are of flowing. All Goodneſs delights to communicate it ſelf: Infinite goodneſs hath then an infinite delight, in expreſſing it ſelf; 'tis a part of his goodneſs, not to be weary of ſhewing it; He can never then be weary of being ſollicited, for the effuſions of it; If he rejoyces over his People to do them good, he will rejoyce in any opportunities offer'd to him, to honour his Goodneſs, and gladly meet with a fit object for it: He therefore delights in Prayer; Never can we ſo delight in addreſſing, as he doth in imparting: He delights more in our Prayers, than we can our ſelves: Goodneſs is not pleaſed with ſhyneſs. To what purpoſe did his immenſe Bounty beſtow his Son upon us, but that we ſhould be *accepted* both in our Perſons and Petitions? † *His Eyes are upon the Righteous, and his Ears are open to their Cry*; He fixes the Eye of his Goodneſs upon them, and opens the Ears of his Goodneſs for them; He is pleaſed to behold them, and pleaſed to liſten to them, as if he had no pleaſure in any thing elſe: He loves to be ſought to, to give a vent to his Bounty; * *Acquaint thy ſelf with God, and thereby good ſhall come unto thee.* The word ſignifies, *to accuſtom* our ſelves to God; The more we accuſtom our ſelves in ſpeaking, the more he will accuſtom himſelf in giving: He loves not to keep his Goodneſs cloſe under lock and key, as Men do their Treaſures. If we *knock, he opens* his Exchequer; His Goodneſs is as flexible to our importunities, as his Power is invincible by the Arm of a ſilly Worm: He thinks his Liberality Honour'd, by being apply'd to, and your Addreſs to be a Recompenſe for his Expence. There is no reaſon to fear, ſince he hath ſo kindly invited us, but he will as heartily welcome us: The Nature of Goodneſs is to compaſſionate, and communicate, to pity and relieve, and that with a heartineſs and chearfulneſs: Man is weary of being often ſollicited, becauſe he hath

* Pſal. 25. 8.

* Pſal. 86. 5.

* Job. 42. 7.

* Eph. 1. 6.
† Pſal 34. 15.

* Job. 22. 21.

* Matth. 7. 7.

hath a finite, not a bottomleſs Goodneſs: He gives ſometimes to be rid of his Suppliant, not to encourage him to a ſecond approach. But every Experience God gives us of his Bounty, is a Motive to ſollicite him afreſh, and a kind of Obligation he hath laid upon himſelf, to *renew it* *: 'Tis one part of his Goodneſs, that it is boundleſs and bottomleſs; we need not fear the waſting of it, nor any wearineſs in him to beſtow it. The Stock cannot be ſpent, and infinite Kindneſs can never become niggardly; When we have enjoyed it, there is ſtill an infinite Ocean in him to refreſh us, and as full Streams as ever to ſupply us. What an encouragement have we to draw near to God? We run in our ſtraights, to thoſe that we think have moſt good Will, as well as power to relieve and protect us. The oftner we come to him, and the nearer we approach to him, the more of his influences we ſhall feel: As the nearer the Sun, the more of its heat inſinuates it ſelf into us. The Greatneſs of God joyned with his Goodneſs, hath more reaſon to encourage our approach to him, than our flight from him, becauſe his Greatneſs never goes unattended with his Goodneſs; and if he were not ſo Good, he would not be ſo great in the apprehenſions of any Creature. How may his Goodneſs in the great Gift of his Son encourage us to apply to him; ſince he hath ſet him as a days-Man between himſelf and us; and appointed him an Advocate, to preſent our Requeſts for us, and ſpeed them at the Throne of Grace, and he never leaves, till Divine Goodneſs ſubſcribes a *Fiat*, to our believing and juſt Petitions?

* 1 Sam. 17. 37.

2. Here is *Comfort in Afflictions*. What can we fear from the conduct of infinite Goodneſs? Can his Hand be heavy upon thoſe that are humble before him? They are the hands of infinite Power indeed, but there is not any motion of it upon his People, but is order'd by a Goodneſs, as infinite as his Power; which will not ſuffer any Affliction, to be too ſharp, or too long. By what ways ſoever he conveys Grace to us here, and prepares us for Glory hereafter, they are good, and thoſe are the good things, he hath chiefly obliged himſelf to give; * *Grace and Glory* will he *give, and no good thing will he with-hold from them, that walk uprightly*. This *David* comforted himſelf with, in that which his devout Soul accounted the greateſt Calamity, his *abſence from the Courts and Houſe, of God*. Not an ill Will, but a good Will directs his Scourges; He is not an idle Spectator of our Combats; His Thoughts are fuller of kindeſs, than ours in any caſe can be of trouble: And becauſe he is Good, he Wills the beſt Good in every thing he acts; in Exerciſing Virtue, or Correcting Vice: There is no Affliction without ſome apparent mixtures of Goodneſs; When he ſpeaks, how he had ſmitten *Iſrael* *; He preſently adds, † Have I been a *Wilderneſs* to *Iſrael*, a *Land of darkneſs*? Though he led them through a Deſart, yet he was not a Deſart to them; He was no Land of darkneſs to them; While they marched through a Land of barrenneſs, he was a Caterer to provide them *Manna*, and a place of *broad Rivers*, and Streams. How often hath Divine Goodneſs made our Afflictions our Conſolations? Our Diſeaſes our Medicines, and his gentle Strokes reviving Cordials? How doth he provide for us above our deſerts, even while he doth puniſh us beneath our Merits? Divine Goodneſs can no more mean ill, than Divine Wiſdom can be miſtaken in its End, or Divine Power over-rul'd in its Actions. *Charity thinks no evil* *, Charity in the Stream doth not, much leſs doth Charity in the Fountain. To be afflicted by a hand of Goodneſs, hath ſomething comfortable in it, when to be afflicted by an Evil hand, is very odious. *Elijah* who was loth to dye by the hand of a Whoriſh, Idolatrous *Jezabel*, was very *deſirous to dye by the hand of God* *. He accounted it a miſery, to have died by her hand, who hated him, and had nothing but Cruelty; and therefore fled from her, when he wiſhed for death, as a deſirable thing by the hand of that God, who had been good to him, and could not but be goood in whatſoever he acted.

Verſe 2.

* Pſal. 84. 11.

* Jer. 2. 30.
† Verſe 31.

* 1 Cor. 13. 5.

* 1 Kings 19. 2, 3, 4.

3. The third Comfort flowing from this Doctrine of the Goodneſs of God, is, 'Tis *a ground of aſſurance of Happineſs*. If God be ſo good, that nothing is better, and loves himſelf, as he is good, he cannot be wanting in love to thoſe, that reſemble his Nature, and imitate his Goodneſs: He cannot but love his own Image of Goodneſs; where ever he finds it, he cannot but be bountiful to it; for

for it is impoſſible there can be any love to any Object, without wiſhing well to it, and doing well for it. If the Soul loves God as its chiefeſt good, God will love the Soul as his pious Servant: As he hath offer'd to them the higheſt allurements, ſo he will not with-hold the choiceſt Communications. Goodneſs cannot be a deluding thing; It cannot conſiſt with the nobleneſs and largeneſs of this Perfection, to invite the Creature to him, and leave the Creature empty of him when it comes. 'Tis inconſiſtent with this Perfection, to give the Creature a knowledge of himſelf, and a deſire of enjoyment larger than that knowledge, a deſire to know and enjoy him perpetually, yet never intend to beſtow an Eternal Communication of himſelf upon it. The nature of Man was erected by the goodneſs of God, but with an enlarg'd deſire for the higheſt Good, and a capacity of enjoying it. Can Goodneſs be thought to be deceitful, to fruſtrate its own Work, be tired with its own Effuſions, to let a gracious Soul groan under its burthen, and never reſolve to eaſe him of it? To ſee delightfully the aſpirings of the Creature to another State, and reſolve never to admit him to a happy iſſue of thoſe deſires? 'Tis not agreeable to this unconceivable Perfection, to be unconcern'd in the longings of his Creature, ſince their firſt longings were placed in them, by that Goodneſs which is ſo free from mocking the Creature, or falling ſhort of its well grounded Expectations or Deſires, that it infinitely exceeds them. If Man had continued in Innocence, the Goodneſs of God without queſtion would have continued him in Happineſs: And ſince he hath had ſo much goodneſs to reſtore Man, would it not be diſhonorable to that goodneſs to break his own Conditions, and defeat the believing Creature of Happineſs, after it hath complied with his terms? He is a Believers God in Covenant, and is a God in the utmoſt extent of this Attribute, as well as of any other; and therefore will not communicate mean and ſhallow Benefits, but according to the grandeur of it, Soveraign and Divine, ſuch as the gift of a happy Immortality. Since he had no obligation upon him to make any Promiſe, but the ſweetneſs of his own Nature, the ſame is as ſtrong upon him to make all the words of his Grace good; They cannot be invalid in any one tittle of them, as long as his Nature remains the ſame; And his Goodneſs cannot be diminiſh'd, without the impairing of his Godhead, ſince it is inſeparable from it. Divine Goodneſs will not let any Man ſerve God for nought; He hath promiſed our weak Obedience, more than any Man in his right Wits can ſay it merits: * *A cup of cold water ſhall not loſe its reward.* He will manifeſt our good actions, as he gave ſo high a teſtimony to *Job* in the face of the Devil his Accuſer: It will not only be the happineſs of the Soul but of the Body, the whole Man, ſince Soul and Body were in conjunction in the acts of Righteouſneſs; it conſiſts not with the Goodneſs of God to reward the one, and to let the other lie in the ruines of its firſt Nothing: To beſtow Joy upon the one for its being Principal, and leave the other without any Sentiments of Joy that was inſtrumental in thoſe good Works, both commanded and approv'd by God: He that had the Goodneſs to pity our Original Duſt, will not want a Goodneſs to advance it: And if we put off our Bodies, 'tis but afterwards to put them on repair'd and freſher. From this Goodneſs, the Upright may expect all the Happineſs their Nature is capable of.

* Matth. 10. 42.

4. *It is a ground of Comfort in the midſt of publick dangers.* This hath more ſweetneſs in it to ſupport us, than the malice of Enemies hath to deject us; becauſe he is *good*, he is a *ſtrong Hold in the day of Trouble* *. If his Goodneſs extends to all his Creatures, it will much more extend to thoſe that honor him: If the Earth be full of his Goodneſs, that part of Heaven which he hath upon Earth ſhall not be empty of it. He hath a Goodneſs often to deliver the Righteous, and a Juſtice to put the Wicked in his ſtead *. When his People have been under the power of their Enemies, he hath chang'd the Scene, and put the Enemies under the power of his People: He hath clapt upon them the ſame Bolts which they did upon his Servants. How comfortable is this Goodneſs, that hath yet maintain'd us in the midſt of Dangers, preſerved us in the mouth of Lyons, quench'd kindled Fire; Hitherto reſcued us from deſign'd ruine ſubtilly hatch'd, and ſupported us in the midſt of Men, very

* Nah. 1. 7.

* Prov. 11. 8.

paſſionate for our deſtruction? How hath this watchful Goodneſs been a Sanctuary to us in the midſt of an upper Hell?

3. The third Uſe is of *Exhortation*.

1. *How ſhould we endeavor after the enjoyment of God as good?* How earneſtly ſhould we deſire him? As there is no other Goodneſs worthy of our ſupream love, ſo there is no other Goodneſs worthy our moſt ardent thirſt. Nothing deſerves the name of a deſirable Good, but as it tends to the attainment of this: Here we muſt pitch our deſires, which otherwiſe will terminate in nullities, or unconceivable diſturbances.

1. Conſider, *nothing but good can be the Object of a Rational Appetite.* The Will cannot direct its motion to any thing under the notion of evil, evil in it ſelf, or evil to it; whatſoever courts it, muſt preſent it ſelf in the quality of a good in its own Nature, or in its preſent Circumſtances to the preſent ſtate and condition of the deſire, it will not elſe touch or affect the Will. This is the Language of that faculty, *Who will ſhew me any good*?* And Good is as inſeparably the Object of the *Wills* motion, as Truth is of the *Underſtandings* inquiry. Whatſoever a Man would allure another to comply with, he muſt propoſe to the Perſon under the notion of ſome beneficialneſs to him in point of honor, profit or pleaſure; To act after this manner, is the proper Character of a Rational Creature. And though that which is evil is often embrac'd, inſtead of that which is good; and what we entertain as conducing to our Felicity, proves our Misfortune, yet that is from our Ignorance, and not from a formal choice of it as Evil, for what Evil is choſen, it is not poſsible to chooſe under the conception of Evil, but under the appearance of Good, though it be not ſo in reality. 'Tis inſeparable from the Wills of all Men, to propoſe to themſelves that which in the opinion and judgment of their Underſtandings or Imagination is good, though they often miſtake and cheat themſelves.

* Pſal. 4. 6.

2. Since that Good is the Object of a Rational Appetite, *the pureſt, beſt, and moſt univerſal Good, ſuch as God is, ought to be moſt ſought after.* Since Good only is the Object of a Rational Appetite, all the motions of our Souls ſhould be carried to the firſt and beſt Good. A real Good is moſt deſireable; The greateſt excellency of the Creatures cannot ſpeak them ſo, ſince by the corruption of Man they are *ſubjected to vanity**. God is the moſt excellent Good, without any ſhadow: A real ſomething, without that nothing which every Creature hath in its Nature*. A perfect good can only give us content; the beſt goodneſs in the Creature is but ſlender and imperfect; had not the venom of Corruption infus'd a vanity into it; the make of it ſpeaks it finite, and the beſt qualities in it are bounded, and cannot give ſatisfaction to a Rational Appetite, which bears in its nature an imitation of Divine Infiniteneſs, and therefore can never find an Eternal Reſt in mean trifles. God is above the imperfection of all Creatures; Creatures are but drops of goodneſs, at beſt but ſhallow ſtreams; God is like a teeming Ocean, that can fill the largeſt as well as the narroweſt Creek. He hath an accumulative goodneſs; ſeveral Creatures anſwer ſeveral neceſſities, but one God can anſwer all our wants: He hath an univerſal Fulneſs, to overtop our univerſal Emptineſs: He contains in himſelf the ſweetneſs of all other goods, and holds in his boſom plentifully what Creatures have in their natures ſparingly. Creatures are uncertain goods; As they begin to exiſt, ſo they may ceaſe to be; they may be gone with a breath, they will certainly languiſh if God blows upon them: * The ſame breath that rais'd them, can blaſt them; but who can rifle God of the leaſt part of his Excellency? Mutability is inherent in the Nature of every Creature as a Creature. All ſublunary things are as Gourds, that refreſh us one moment with their preſence, and the next fret us with their abſence; Like fading Flowers ſtrutting to day, and drooping to morrow*; While we poſſeſs them, we cannot clip their Wings that may carry them away from us, and may make us vainly ſeek what we thought we firmly held. But God is as permanent a good, as he is a real one: He hath Wings to fly to them that ſeek him, but no Wings to fly from them for ever, and leave them. God is an univerſal Good; that which is good to one, may be evil to another, what is deſirable by one, may be refus'd as inconvenient for another;

* Rom. 8. 20.
* Iſa. 40. 17.
* Iſa. 40. 24.
* Iſa. 40. 6.

But

But God being an univerſal, unſtain'd good, is uſeful for all, convenient to the Natures of all, but ſuch as will continue in enmity againſt him: There is nothing in God can diſpleaſe a Soul that deſires to pleaſe him; when we are darkneſs, he is a light to ſcatter it; when we are in want, he hath riches to relieve us; when we are in a Spiritual death, he is a Prince of Life to deliver us; when we are defil'd, he is Holineſs to purifie us: 'Tis in vain to fix our hearts any where but on him, in the deſire of whom there is a delight, and in the enjoyment of whom their is an unconceivable pleaſure.

3. He is to be moſt ſought after, *ſince all things elſe that are deſirable, had their goodneſs from him.* If any thing be deſirable becauſe of its goodneſs, God is much more deſirable becauſe of his, ſince all things are good by a participation, and nothing good but by his print upon it: As what Being Creatures have, was deriv'd to them by God; ſo what goodneſs they are poſſeſſed with, they were furniſh'd with it by God: All goodneſs flow'd from him, and all Created goodneſs is ſum'd up in him. The Streams ſhould not terminate our appetite, without aſpiring to the Fountain. If the Waters in the Chanel which receive mixture, communicate a pleaſure, the taſte of the Fountain muſt be much more delicious: That Original Perfection of all things, hath an unconceivable Beauty above thoſe things it hath fram'd. Since thoſe things live not by their own ſtrength, nor nouriſh us by their own liberality, but by the *Word of God**, that God that ſpeaks them into life, and ſpeaks them into uſefulneſs, ſhould be moſt ardently deſir'd as the beſt. If the ſparkling glory of the viſible Heavens delight us, and the beauty and bounty of the Earth pleaſe and refreſh us, what ſhould be the Language of our Souls upon thoſe views and taſtes, but that of the *Pſalmiſt? Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth; that I can deſire beſide thee**? No greater good can poſſibly be deſir'd, and no leſs good ſhould be ardently deſir'd: As he is the ſupream Good, ſo we ſhould bear that regard to him as ſupreamly, and above all to thirſt for him: As he is good, he is the Object of deſire; as the choiceſt and firſt Goodneſs, he is deſirable with the greateſt vehemency. *Give me children, or elſe I die*, was an uncomely Speech; * the one was granted, and the other inflicted; ſhe had Children, but the laſt coſt her her life: But give me God, or I will not be content, is a gracious Speech, wherein we cannot miſcarry: All that God demands of us, is, That we ſhould long for him, and look for our happineſs only in him. That is the *firſt* thing, endeavor after the enjoyment of God as good.

* Matth. 4. 4.

* Pſal. 73 25.

* Gen. 30. 1.

2. *Often meditate on the Goodneſs of God.* What was Man produc'd for, but to ſettle his thoughts upon this? What ſhould have been *Adam's* employment in Innocence, but to read over all the Lines of Nature, and fix his Contemplations on that good hand that drew them? What is Man endued with reaſon for, above all other Animals, but to take notice of this Goodneſs, ſpread over all the Creatures, which they themſelves, though they felt it, could not have ſuch a ſenſe of, as to make anſwerable returns to their Benefactor? Can we ſatisfie our ſelves in being Spectators of it, and Enjoyers of it, only in ſuch a manner as the Brutes are? The Beaſts behold things, as well as we; they feel the warm Beams of this Goodneſs as well as we, but without any reflection upon the Author of them. Shall Divine Bleſſings meet with no more from us, but a brutiſh view, and beholding of them? What is more juſt, than to ſpend a thought upon him, who hath inlarg'd his hand in ſo many Benefits to us? Are we indebted to any more than we are to him? Why ſhould we ſend our Souls to viſit any thing more than him in his Works? That we are able to meditate on him, is a part of his Goodneſs to us, who hath beſtowed that Capacity upon us; and if we will not, 'tis a great part of our Ingratitude. Can any thing more delightful enter into us, than that of the kind and gracious diſpoſition of that God, who firſt brought us out of the Abyſs of an unhappy nothing, and hath hitherto ſpread his Wings over us? Where can we meet with a nobler Object than Divine Goodneſs? And what nobler Work can be practiced by us, than to conſider it? What is more ſenſible in all the Operations of his Hands, than his skill as they are conſider'd in themſelves, and his Goodneſs as they are conſider'd in relation to us? 'Tis ſtrange that we ſhould miſs the thoughts of it; that we ſhould look upon

this Earth, and every thing in it, and yet overlook that which is moſt *full* of, *viz.*
* Pſal. 33. 5. Divine Goodneſs; * It runs through the whole web of the World, all is fram'd and diverſified by Goodneſs: 'Tis one intire ſingle Goodneſs, which appears in various garbs and dreſſes in every part of the Creation. Can we turn our eyes inward, and ſend our eyes outward, and ſee nothing of a Divinity in both, worthy of our deepeſt and ſerioufeſt thoughts? Is there any thing in the World we can behold, but we ſee his Bounty, ſince nothing was made but is one way or other beneficial to us? Can we think of our daily Food, but we muſt have ſome reflecting thoughts on our great Caterer? Can the ſweetneſs of the Creature to our Palate, obſcure the ſweetneſs of the Provider to our Minds? 'Tis ſtrange that we ſhould be regardleſs of that, wherein every Creature without us, and every Senſe within us, and about us, is a Tutor to inſtruct us! Is it not reaſon we ſhould think of the times wherein we were nothing, and from thence run back to a never begun Eternity, and view our ſelves in the thoughts of that Goodneſs, to be in time brought forth upon this Stage, as we are at preſent? Can we conſider but one act of our Underſtandings, but one Thought, one Bloſſom, one ſpark of our Souls mounting upwards, and not reflect upon the Goodneſs of God to us, who in that Faculty that ſparkles out Rational thoughts, has advanced us to a nobler State, and endued us with a nobler Principle, than all the Creatures we ſee on Earth, except thoſe of our own Rank and Kind? Can we conſider but one fooliſh thought, one ſinful act, and reflect upon the guilt and filth of it, and not behold Goodneſs in ſparing us, and Miracles of Goodneſs in ſending his Son to die for us, for the Expiation of it? This Perfection cannot well be out of our thoughts, or at leaſt it is horrible it ſhould, when it is writ in every line of the Creation, and in a legible Rubrick in Bloody Letters in the Croſs of his Son. Let us think with our ſelves, how often he hath multiplied his Bleſſings, when we did deſerve his Wrath; how he hath ſent one unexpected Benefit upon the heel of another, to bring us with a ſwift pace the tidings of good will to us? How often hath he deliver'd us from a Diſeaſe, that had the Arrows of Death in its hand, ready to pierce us? How often hath he turn'd our Fears into Joys, and our Diſtempers into promoters of our Felicity? How often hath he mated a Temptation, ſent ſeaſonable Supplies in the midſt of a ſore Diſtreſs, and prevented many Dangers which we could not be ſo ſenſible of, becauſe we were in a great meaſure ignorant of them? How ſhould we meditate upon his goodneſs to our Souls, in preventing ſome Sins, in pardoning others, in darting upon us the knowledge of his Goſpel, and of himſelf in the face of his Son Chriſt? This ſeems to ſtick much upon the Spirit of *Paul*, ſince he doth ſo often ſprinkle his *Epiſtles* with the Titles of the *Grace of God*, *Riches of Grace*, *Unſearchable Riches* of God, *Riches of Glory*, and cannot ſatisfie himſelf with the Extolling of it. Certainly we ſhould bear upon our heart, a deep and quick ſenſe of this Perfection; as it was the deſign of God to manifeſt it, ſo it would be acceptable to God for us to have a ſenſe of it: A dull Receiver of his Bleſſings is no leſs nauſeous to him, than a dull Diſpenſer of
* 2 Cor. 9. 7. his Alms: He loves a *chearful giver**: He doth himſelf what he loves in others; is chearful in giving, and he loves we ſhould be ſerious in thinking of him, and have a right apprehenſion and ſenſe of his Goodneſs.

1. A right ſenſe of his Goodneſs would *diſpoſe us to an ingenuous Worſhip of God*. It would damp our averſneſs to any act of Religion; What made *David* ſo reſolute, and ready to *Worſhip towards his holy Temple*, but the ſenſe of his *lo-*
* Pſal. 138. 2. *ving kindneſs**? This would render him always in our mind a worthy Object of our Devotion, a Stable Prop of our Confidence. We ſhould then adore him, when we conſider him as *our God*, and our ſelves as *the People of his Paſture, and*
* Pſal. 95. 7. *the Sheep of his hand**: We ſhould ſend up Prayers with ſtrong Faith and Feeling, and Praiſes with great Joy and Pleaſure. The ſenſe of his Goodneſs would make us love him, and our love to him would quicken our Adoration of him; but if we regard not this, we ſhall have no mind to think of him, no mind to act any thing towards him: We may tremble at his Preſence, but not heartily Worſhip him; We ſhall rather look upon him as a Tyrant, and think no other Affection due to him than what we deſerve for an Oppreſſor, *viz.* hatred and ill will.

2. A ſenſe of it will *keep us humble.* A ſenſe of it would effect that for which it ſelf was intended, *viz.* bring us to a Repentance for our Crimes, and not ſuffer us to harden our ſelves againſt him. When we ſhould deeply conſider, how he hath made the *Sun* to ſhine upon us, and his *Rain* to fall upon the Earth for our ſupport; the one to ſupple the Earth, and the other to aſſiſt the Juice of it to bring forth Fruits: How would it reflect upon us our ill requitals, and make us hang down our heads before him in a low poſture, pleaſing to him, and advantageous to our ſelves? What would the firſt charge be upon our ſelves, but what *Moſes* brings in his Expoſtulation againſt the *Iſraelites*; * *Do I thus requite the Lord?* What is this goodneſs for me, who am ſo much below him; for me, who have ſo much incenſed him; for me, who have ſo much abus'd what he hath allow'd? It would bring to remembrance the horror of our Crimes, and ſet us a bluſhing before him, when we ſhould conſider the multitude of his Benefits, and our unworthy behavior that hath not conſtrain'd him, even againſt the inclination of his Goodneſs to puniſh us. How little ſhould we plead for a further liberty in Sin, or palliate our former faults? When we ſet Divine Goodneſs in one Column, and our Tranſgreſſions in another, and compare together their ſeveral *Items*, it would fill us with a deep conſciouſneſs of our own guilt, and deveſt us of any worth of our own in our approaches to him: It would humble us, that we cannot love ſo obliging a God, as much as he deſerves to be loved by us: It would make us humble before Men. Who would be proud of a meer Gift, which he knows he hath not merited? How ridiculous would that Servant be, that ſhould be proud of a rich Livery, which is a Badge of his Service, not a Token of his Merit, but of his Maſters Magnificence and Bounty, which though he wear this day, he may be ſtrip'd of to morrow, and be turn'd out of his Maſters Family?

* Deut. 32. 6.

3. A ſenſe of the Divine Goodneſs would make us *faithful to him.* The Goodneſs of God obligeth us to ſerve him, not to offend him: The freeneſs of his Goodneſs ſhould make us more ready to contribute to the advancement of his Glory. When we conſider the benefits of a Friend proceed out of kindneſs to us, and not out of ſelf-ends and vain applauſe, it works more upon us, and makes us more careful of the honor of ſuch a Perſon. 'Tis a pure Bounty God hath manifeſted in *Creation* and *Providence*, which could not be for himſelf, who being Bleſſed for ever, wanted nothing from us: It was not to draw a profit from us, but to impart an advantage to us, *Our Goodneſs extends not to him**. The ſervice of the Benefactor is but a Rational return for Benefits, whence *Nehemiah* aggravates the Sins of the *Jews*, † *They have not ſerved thee in thy great goodneſs, that thou gaveſt them*, i.e. which thou didſt freely beſtow upon them. How ſhould we dare to ſpend upon our Luſts that which we poſſeſs, if we conſider'd by whoſe liberality we came by it? How ſhould we dare to be unfaithful in the Goods he hath made us Truſtees of? A deep ſenſe of Divine Goodneſs will enoble the Creature, and make it act for the moſt glorious and noble end: It would ſtrike Satans Temptation dead at a blow: It would pull off the falſe Mask and Vizor from what he preſents to us, to draw us from the ſervice of our Benefactor. We could not with a ſenſe of this, think him kinder to us than God hath and will be, which is the great motive of Men, to joyn hands with him and turn their backs upon God.

* Pſal. 16. 2.

† Neh. 9. 35.

4. A ſenſe of the Divine Goodneſs would make us *patient under our Miſeries.* A deep ſenſe of this, would make us give God the honor of his Goodneſs in whatſoever he doth, though the reaſon of his Actions be not apparent to us, nor the event and iſſue of his Proceedings foreſeen by us. 'Tis a ſtated caſe, that *goodneſs* can never intend ill, but deſigns good in all its Acts, *to them that love God**; Nay, he always deſigns the beſt; when he beſtows any thing upon his People, he ſees it beſt they ſhould have it; and when he removes any thing from them, he ſees it beſt they ſhould loſe it. When we have loſt a thing we loved, and refuſe to be comforted, a ſenſe of this Perfection, which acts God in all, would keep us from misjudging our Sufferings, and meaſuring the Intention of the Hand that ſent them, by the ſharpneſs of what we feel. What *Patient* fully perſwaded of the affection of the *Phyſician*, would not value him, though that which

* Rom. 8. 28.

which is given to purge out the Humors, racks his Bowels? When we loſe what we love, perhaps it was ſome outward luſtre tickled our apprehenſions, and we did not ſee the Viper we would have harm'd our ſelves by; but God ſeeing it, ſnach'd it from us, and we mutter as if he had been Cruel, and depriv'd us of the good we imagin'd when he was kind to us, and freed us from the hurt we ſhould certainly have felt. We ſhould regard that, which in goodneſs he takes from us, at no other rate than ſome guilded Poyſon and lurking Venom; The ſufferings of Men, though upon high provocations, are often followed with rich Mercies, and many times are intended as preparations for greater goodneſs. When God utters that *Rhetorick* of his Bowels, * *How ſhall I give thee up, Oh* Ephraim, *I will not execute the fierceneſs of my anger!* He intended them Mercy in their Captivity, and would prepare them by it, to walk after the Lord. And it is likely the Poſterity of thoſe *Ten Tribes* were the firſt that ran to God, upon the publiſhing the Goſpel in the places where they lived: He doth not take away himſelf, when he takes away outward Comforts: While he ſnatcheth away the Rattles we play with, he hath a Breaſt in himſelf for us to ſuck. The conſideration of his Goodneſs, would diſpoſe us to a compos'd frame of Spirit. If we are ſick, 'tis Goodneſs it is a Diſeaſe, and not a Hell. 'Tis Goodneſs that it is a Cloud, and not a total Darkneſs. What if he transfers from us what we have? He takes no more than what his Goodneſs firſt imparted to us; And never takes ſo much from his People, as his Goodneſs leaves them: If he ſtrips them of their lives, he leaves them their Souls, with thoſe faculties he furniſh'd them with at firſt, and removes them from thoſe Houſes of Clay, to a richer Manſion. The time of our Sufferings here, were it the whole courſe of our Life, bears not the proportion of a moment, to that endleſs Eternity wherein he hath deſign'd to manifeſt his Goodneſs to us. The Conſideration of Divine Goodneſs would teach us to draw a Calm, even from Storms, and diſtil Balſom from Rods. If the Reproofs of the Righteous be an excellent Oyl, * we ſhould not think the Corrections of a good God to have a leſs Vertue.

* Hoſ. 11. 8.

* Pſal. 145. 5.

5. A ſenſe of the Divine Goodneſs, would *mount us above the World.* It would damp our appetites after meaner things; we ſhould look upon the World not as a God, but a gift from God, and never think the Preſent better than the Donor. We ſhould never lie ſoaking in muddy Puddles, were we always fill'd with a ſenſe of the richneſs and clearneſs of this Fountain wherein we might bath our ſelves: Little petty Particles of good will give us no content, when we were ſenſible of ſuch an unbounded Ocean. Infinite Goodneſs rightly apprehended, would dull our deſires after other things, and ſharpen them with a keener edge after that which is beſt of all. How earneſtly do we long for the preſence of a Friend, of whoſe good will towards us we have full experience?

6. It would *check any Motions of Envy.* It would make us joy in the proſperity of good Men, and hinder us from envying the outward Felicity of the Wicked. We ſhould not dare with an *evil Eye* to cenſure his good Hand *, but approve of what he thinks fit, to do both in the matter of his Liberality, and the Subjects he chooſeth for it. Though if the diſpoſal were in our hands, we ſhould not imitate him, as not thinking them Subjects fit for Bounty; Yet ſince it is in his Hands, we be to approve of his Actions, and not to have an ill will towards him for his Goodneſs, or towards thoſe he is pleaſed to make the Subjects of it. Since all his Doles are given, to *invite Man to Repentance* *, to envy them thoſe Goods God hath beſtowed upon them, is to envy God the Glory of his own Goodneſs, and them the Felicity thoſe things might move them to aſpire to. 'Tis to wiſh God more contracted, and thy Neighbor more miſerable; But a deep ſenſe of his Soveraign Goodneſs, would make us rejoyce in any Marks of it upon others, and move us to Bleſs him inſtead of Cenſuring him.

* Matth. 20. 15.

* Rom. 2. 4.

7. *It would make us Thankful.* What can be the moſt proper, the moſt natural Reflection, when we behold the moſt Magnificent Characters he hath Imprinted upon our Souls; the Conveniency of the Members he hath Compacted in our Bodies, but a Praiſe of him? Such Motion had *David* upon the firſt Conſideration, * *I will praiſe thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.*

* Pſal. 139. 14.

What

What could be the moſt natural Reflection, when we behold the rich Prerogatives of our Natures above other Creatures, the proviſion he hath made for us for our delight in the beauties of Heaven, for our ſupport in the Creatures on Earth? What can reaſonably be expected from uncorrupted Man, to be the firſt motion of his Soul, but an extolling the bountiful hand of the inviſible Donor, who ever he be? This would make us venture at ſome endeavors of a grateful acknowledgement, though we ſhould deſpair of rendring any thing proportionable to the greatneſs of the benefit; and ſuch an acknowledgement of our own weakneſs, would be an acceptable part of our gratitude; without a due and deep ſenſe of Divine Goodneſs, our praiſe of it, and thankfulneſs for it, will be but cold, formal, and cuſtomary, our Tongues may bleſs him, and our Heart ſlight him. And this will lead us to the third Exhortation.

3. Which is that of *thankfulneſs for Divine Goodneſs.* The abſolute Goodneſs of God, as it is the Excellency of his Nature, is the Object of Praiſe: The Relative Goodneſs of God, as he is our Benefactor, is the Object of Thankfulneſs; This was always a Debt due from Man to God; he had Obligations in the time of his Integrity, and was then to render it; he is not leſs, but more oblig'd to it in the State of Corruption; the Benefits being the greater, by how much the more unworthy he is of them by reaſon of his Revolt. The Bounty beſtow'd upon an Enemy that merits the contrary, ought to be received with a greater Reſentment, than that beſtow'd on a Friend, who is not unworthy of Teſtimonies of Reſpect. Gratitude to God, is the duty of every Creature that hath a ſenſe of it ſelf. The more excellent Being any enjoy, the more devout ought to be the acknowledgment. How often doth *David* ſtir up, not only himſelf, but ſummon all Creatures, even the *inſenſible ones* to joyn in the Conſort? * He calls to the *Deeps*, *Fire*, *Hail*, *Snow*, *Mountains* and *Hills*, to bear a part in this Work of Praiſe; Not that they are able to do it actively, but to ſhew that Man is to call in the whole Creation to aſſiſt him paſſively, and ſhould have ſo much charity to all Creatures, as to receive what they offer, and ſo much affection to God as to preſent to him what he receives from him. Snow and Hail cannot bleſs and praiſe God, but Man ought to praiſe God for thoſe things, wherein there is a mixture of Trouble and Inconvenience, ſomething to moleſt our Senſe, as well as ſomething that improves the Earth for Fruit. This God requires of us, for this he inſtituted ſeveral Offerings, and requir'd a little portion of Fruits to be preſented to him, as an acknowledgement they held the whole from his Bounty. And the end of the Feſtival days among the *Jews*, was to revive the memory of thoſe ſignal acts, wherein his Power for them, and his Goodneſs to them, had been extraordinarily evident. 'Tis no more but our Mouths to Praiſe him, and our hand to Obey him, that he exacts at our Hands. He commands us not to expend what he allows us, in the erecting ſtately Temples to his Honor; all the Coyn he requires to be paid with for his Expence, is, the *offering of Thanksgiving* *: And this we ought to do as much as we can, ſince we cannot do it as much as he merits, for *who can ſhew forth all his praiſe* †? If we have the Fruit of his Goodneſs, 'tis fit he ſhould have the *Fruit of our lips* *. The leaſt Kindneſs ſhould inflame our Souls with a kindly Reſentment: Though ſome of his Benefits have a brighter, ſome a darker Aſpect towards us, yet they all come from this common Spring; His Goodneſs ſhines in all; there are the Footſteps of Goodneſs in the leaſt, as well as the ſmiles of Goodneſs in the greateſt; the meaneſt therefore is not to paſs without a regard of the Author. As the Glory of God is more Illuſtrious in ſome Creatures than in others, yet it glitters in all, and the loweſt as well as the higheſt adminiſters matter of Praiſe. But they are not only little things, but the choicer favors he hath beſtow'd upon us. How much doth it deſerve our acknowledgement, that he ſhould contrive our Recovery, when we had plotted our Ruine? That when he did from Eternity behold the Crimes wherewith we would incenſe him, he ſhould not according to the Rights of Juſtice, caſt us into Hell, but prize us at the rate of the Blood and Life of his only Son, in value above the Blood of Men and Lives of Angels. How ſhould we bleſs that God, that we have yet a Goſpel among us, that we

* Pſal. 148.

* Pſal. 50. 14.
† Pſal. 106. 2.
* Heb. 13. 15.

are

are not driven into the utmoſt Regions, that we can attend upon him in the face of the Sun, and not forced to the ſecret obſcurities of the Night? Whatſoever we enjoy, whatſoever we receive, we muſt own him as the Donor, and read his hand in it. Rob him not of any Praiſe, to give to an Inſtrument. No Man hath wherewithal to do us good, nor a heart to do us good, nor opportunities of benefiting us, without him. When the *Cripple* received the ſoundneſs of his Limbs from *Peter*, he praiſed the Hand that ſent it, not the Hand that brought it; * He *praiſed God*. When we want any thing that is good, let the goodneſs of Divine Nature move us to *David*'s practice, to *thirſt after God* *: And when we feel the motions of his Goodneſs to us, let us imitate the temper of the ſame Holy Man; * *Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul*: *and forget not all his benefits*. 'Tis an unworthy carriage, to deal with him as a Traveller doth with a Fountain, kneel down to drink of it when he is thirſty, and turn his back upon it, and perhaps never think of it more after he is ſatisfied.

* Acts 3. 6. *Verſe* 8.
* Pſal. 42. 1.
* Pſal. 103. 2.

4. And laſtly, *Imitate this Goodneſs of God*. If his Goodneſs hath ſuch an influence upon us as to make us love him, it will alſo move us with an ardent Zeal to imitate him in it. Chriſt makes this uſe from the Doctrine of Divine Goodneſs, * *Do good to them that hate you, that you may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven, for he makes his Sun to riſe on the evil and on the good*. As Holineſs is a reſemblance of Gods Purity, ſo Charity is a reſemblance of Gods Goodneſs: And this our Saviour calls Perfection: *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect*. As God would not be a perfect God without Goodneſs, ſo neither can any be a perfect Chriſtian without Kindneſs; Charity and Love being the ſplendor and lovelineſs of all Chriſtian Graces, as Goodneſs is the ſplendor and lovelineſs of all Divine Attributes. This, and Holineſs, are order'd in the Scripture to be the grand Patterns of our imitation: Imitate the Goodneſs of God in two things.

* Matth. 5. 44, 45.
Verſe 48.

1. *In relieving and aſſiſting others in diſtreſs*. Let our heart be as large in the capacity of Creatures, as Gods is in the capacity of a Creator. A large heart from him to us, and a ſtrait heart from us to others, will not ſuit: Let us not think any ſo far below us, as to be unworthy of our care, ſince God thinks none, that are infinitely diſtant from him, too mean for his. His infinite Glory mounts him above the Creature, but his infinite Goodneſs ſtoops him to the meaneſt Works of his hands. As he lets not the Tranſgreſſions of Proſperity paſs without puniſhment, ſo he lets not the diſtreſs of his Afflicted People paſs him without ſupport. Shall God provide for the eaſe of Beaſts, and ſhall not we have ſome tenderneſs towards thoſe that are of the ſame Blood with our ſelves, and have as good blood to boaſt of, as runs in the Veins of the mightieſt Monarch on Earth; and as mean and as little as they are, can lay claim to as ancient a Pedigree as the ſtateſieſt Prince in the World, who cannot aſcend to Anceſtors beyond *Adam*? Shall we glut our ſelves with Divine Beneficence to us, and wear his Livery only on our own backs, forgetting the Afflictions of ſome dear *Joſeph*; when God, who hath an unblemiſh'd felicity in his own Nature, looks out himſelf to view and relieve the miſeries of poor Creatures? Why hath God increaſed the Doles of his Treaſures to ſome more than others? Was it meerly for themſelves, or rather that they might have a bottom, to attain the honor of imitating him? Shall we embezzel his Goods to our own uſe, as if we were abſolute Proprietors, and not Stewards entruſted for others? Shall we make a difficulty to part with ſomething to others, out of that abundance he hath beſtowed upon any of us? Did not his Goodneſs ſtrip his Son of the Glory of Heaven for a time to enrich us? and ſhall we ſhrug when we are to part with a little to pleaſure him? 'Tis not very becoming for any to be backward in ſupplying the Neceſſities of others with a few Morſels, who have had the happineſs to have had their greateſt Neceſſities ſupplied with his Sons Blood. He demands not that we ſhould ſtrip our ſelves of all for others, but of a pittance, ſomething of Superfluity, which will turn more to our account, that what is vainly and unpro-

unprofitably conſumed on our Backs and Bellies. If he hath given much to any of us, 'tis rather to lay aſide part for the Income of his Service; Elſe we would Monopolize Divine Goodneſs to our ſelves, and ſeem to diſtruſt under our preſent Experiments, his future Kindneſs, as though the laſt thing he gave us was attended with this Language, *Hoard up this, and expect no more from me*; Uſe it only to the glutting your Avarice and feeding your Ambition; which would be againſt the whole ſcope of Divine Goodneſs. If we do not endeavor to write after the Comely Copy he hath ſet us, we may provoke him to harden himſelf againſt us, and in Wrath beſtow that on the Fire, or on our Enemies, which his Goodneſs hath imparted to us for his Glory, and the ſupplying the neceſſities of poor Creatures. And on the contrary, he is ſo delighted with this kind of imitation of him, that a Cup of cold Water, when there is no more to be done, ſhall not be unrewarded.

2. Imitate God in his Goodneſs, *in a kindneſs to our worſt Enemies.* The beſt Man is more unworthy to receive any thing from God, than the worſt can be to receive from us. How kind is God to thoſe that Blaſpheme him, and gives them the ſame Sun, and the ſame Showers, that he doth to the beſt Men in the World! Is it not more our Glory to imitate God, in *doing good to thoſe that hate us*, than to imitate the Men of the World in requiting evil, by a return of a ſevenfold miſchief? This would be a goodneſs which would vanquiſh the hearts of Men, and render us greater than *Alexanders* and *Caſars*, who did only triumph over miſerable Carcaſes; Yea, it is to triumph over our ſelves, in being good againſt the ſentiments of Corrupt Nature. Revenge makes us Slaves to our Paſſions as much as the Offenders, and good Returns render us Victorious over our Adverſaries; * *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.* When we took up Arms againſt God, his Goodneſs contrived not our Ruine, but our Recovery. This is ſuch a Goodneſs of God, as could not be diſcover'd in an Innocent State; While Man had continued in his Duty, he could not have been guilty of an Enmity; And God could not but affect him, unleſs he had denied himſelf: So this of being good to our Enemies, could never have been practiſed in a State of Rectitude; ſince where was a perfect Innocence, there could be no ſpark of Enmity to one another. It can be no diſparagement to any Mans Dignity, to caſt his influences on his greateſt Oppoſers, ſince God, who acts for his own Glory, thinks not himſelf diſparag'd by ſending forth the Streams of his Bounty on the wickedeſt Perſons, who are far meaner to him than thoſe of the ſame Blood can be to us. Who hath the worſe thoughts of the Sun for ſhining upon the Earth, that ſends up Vapors to cloud it? It can be no diſgrace to reſemble God; if his Hand and Bowels be open to us, let not ours be ſhut to any. * Rom. 12. 21.

A DISCOURSE UPON Gods Dominion.

PSALM CIII. Verse XIX.

The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens: And his Kingdom Ruleth over all.

THE *Psalm* begins with the praise of God, wherein the *Penman* excites his Soul to a right and elevated management of so great a Duty, *ver.* 1. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his Holy Name*: And because himself, and all Men were insufficient to offer up a Praise to God, answerable to the Greatness of his Benefits, he summons, in the end of the *Psalm*, the *Angels* and all *Creatures* to joyn in Consort with him.

Observe.

1. *As Man is too shallow a Creature to comprehend the Excellency of God, so he is too dull and scanty a Creature to offer up a true Praise to God*, both in regard of the Excellency of his Nature, and the multitude and greatness of his Benefits.

2. *We are apt to forget Divine Benefits, our Souls must therefore be often jogg'd and rous'd up. All that is within me*, every Power of my Rational, and every Affection of my Sensitive part. All his Faculties, all his Thoughts. Our Souls will hang back from God in every Duty, much more in this, if we lay not a strict charge upon them. We are so void of a pure and entire love to God, that we have no mind to those Duties. Wants will spur us on to Prayer, but a pure love to God can only spirit us to Praise. We are more ready to reach out a hand to receive his Mercies, than to lift up our heart to recognize them after the receipt.

After the *Psalmist* had summoned his own Soul to this task, he enumerates the Divine Blessings received by him, to awaken his Soul by a sence of them to so noble a Work. He begins at the first and foundation Mercy to himself, the pardon of his Sin, and justification of his Person, the renewing of his sickly and languishing Nature, Verse 3. *Who forgives all thy Iniquities, and heals all thy Diseases.* His Redemption from death or Eternal destruction; his expected Glorification thereupon, which he speaks of with that certainty as if it were present, ver. 4. *Who redeems thy life from destruction, who crowns thee with loving kindness and tender Mercies.* He makes his progress to the mercy manifested to the Church in protection of it against, or delivery of it from Oppressions, Verse 6. *The Lord executeth Righteousness and Judgment, for all that are oppressed.* In the discovery of his

his Will and Law, and the glory of his merciful Name to it. Verſe 7, 8. *He made known his ways unto* Moſes, *and his acts unto the children of* Iſrael. *The Lord is Merciful and Gracious, ſlow to Anger, and plenteous in Mercy.* Which latter words may refer alſo to the free and unmerited ſpring of the benefits he had reckoned up. *Viz.* The Mercy of God, which he mentions alſo verſe 10. *He hath not dealt with us after our ſins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities*; And then extols the perfection of Divine Mercy, in the pardoning of ſin, Ver. 11, 12. The Paternal tenderneſs of God. Verſe 13. The Eternity of his Mercy. Verſe 17. But reſtrains it to the proper object. Verſe 11. 17. *To them that fear him*, i. e. To them that believe in him: *Fear* being the word commonly uſed for *Faith* in the Old Teſtament, under the legal diſpenſation wherein the Spirit of bondage was more eminent than the Spirit of Adoption, and their fear more than their confidence.

Obſerve.

1. *All the true Bleſſings grow up from the pardon of ſin.* ver. 3. *Who forgives all thine iniquities.* That is the firſt Bleſſing, the top and crown of all other Favors, which draws all other Bleſſings after it; and ſweetens all other Bleſſings with it. The principal intent of Chriſt was Expiation of ſin, Redemption from iniquity; the purchaſe of other Bleſsings was conſequent upon it. Pardon of ſin is every Bleſſing vertually, and in the root and ſpring it flows from the favor of God, and is ſuch a gift as cannot be tainted with a Curſe, as outward things may.

2. *Where ſin is pardoned, the ſoul is renewed*, verſe 3. *Who heals all thy diſeaſes.* Where guilt is remitted, the deformity and ſickneſs of the ſoul is cur'd. Forgiveneſs is a teeming Mercy, it never goes ſingle; when we have an intereſt in Chriſt, as bearing the chaſtiſement of our peace, we receive alſo a balſom from his Blood, to heal the wounds we feel in our Nature. Iſaiah 53. 5. *The chaſtiſement of our Peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes we are healed.* As there is a guilt in ſin, which binds us over to puniſhment, ſo there is a contagion in ſin, which fills us with peſtilent Diſeaſes, when the one is removed the other is cur'd. We ſhould not know how to love the one without the other. The renewing the Soul is neceſſary for a delightful reliſh of the other Bleſsings of God. A condemn'd Malefactor infected with a Leproſie, or any other loathſom Diſtemper, if pardon'd, could take little Comfort in his freedom from the Gibbet, without a Cure of his Plague.

3. *God is the ſole and ſoveraign Author of all ſpiritual Bleſſings. Who forgives all thy Iniquities, and heals all thy Diſeaſes.* He refers all to God, nothing to himſelf in his own merit and ſtrength. *All*, not the pardon of one ſin merited by me, not the cure of one Diſeaſe can I owe to my own power, and the ſtrength of my free Will, and the operations of Nature. He, and he alone is the Prince of pardon, the Phyſitian that reſtores me, the Redeemer that delivers me; 'tis a Sacriledge, to divide the praiſe between God and our ſelves. God only can knock off our Fetters, expel our Diſtempers, and reſtore a deformed Soul to its decayed beauty.

4. *Gracious Souls will bleſs God as much for Sanctification as for Juſtification.* The initials of Sanctification (and there are no more in this Life) are worthy of ſolemn acknowledgement. 'Tis a ſign of Growth in Grace, when our Hymns are made up of acknowledgements of Gods ſanctifying, as well pardoning Grace. In bleſsing God for the one, we rather ſhew a love to our ſelves; in bleſsing God for the other, we caſt out a pure beam of love to God: becauſe by purifying Grace we are fitted to the ſervice of our Maker, prepared to every good Work which is delightful to him; by the other, we are eas'd in our ſelves. Pardon fills us with inward Peace, but Sanctification fills us with an activity for God. Nothing is ſo capable of ſetting the ſoul in a Heavenly tune, as the conſideration of God as a Pardoner and as a Healer.

5. *Where ſin is pardon'd, the puniſhment is remitted.* Verſe 3, 4. *Who forgives all thy iniquities, and redeems thy life from deſtruction.* A Malefactors pardon puts an end to his Chains, frees him from the ſtench of the Dungeon, and fear of

the Gibbet. Pardon is nothing elſe but the remitting of guilt, and guilt is nothing elſe but an Obligation to puniſhment, as a penal debt for ſin. A Creditors tearing a Bond, frees the Debtor from payment and rigor.

6. *Growth in Grace is always annex'd to true Sanctification.* Verſe 3. So that *thy youth is renew'd like the Eagles.* Interpreters trouble themſelves much about the manner of the Eagles renewing its youth, and regaining its vigor: * He ſpeaks beſt, that ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, ſpeaks only according to the Opinion of the vulgar, and his deſign was not to write a Natural Hiſtory. Growth always accompanies Grace, as well as it doth Nature in the Body; not that it is without its qualms and languiſhing fits, as Children are not, but ſtill their Diſtempers make them grow; Grace is not an idle, but an active Principle. 'Tis not like the *Pſalmiſt* means it, of the ſtrength of the Body, or the proſperity and ſtability of his Government, but the vigor of his Grace and Comfort, ſince they are Spiritual Bleſſings here that are the matter of his Song. The healing the Diſeaſe, conduceth to the ſprouting up and flouriſhing of the Body. 'Tis the Nature of Grace to go *from ſtrength to ſtrength.*

* *Amyrald.* in loc.

7. *When ſin is pardoned, 'tis perfectly pardon'd.* Verſe 11, 12. *as far as the Eaſt is from the Weſt, ſo far hath he removed our tranſgreſſions from us.* The Eaſt and Weſt are the greateſt diſtance in the World, the terms can never meet together. When ſin is pardoned, it is never charged again; the guilt of it can no more return, than Eaſt can become Weſt, or Weſt become Eaſt.

8. *Obedience is neceſſary to an intereſt in the mercy of God.* Verſe 17. *The mercy of the Lord is to them that fear him, to them that remember his Commandments to do them.* Commands are to be remembred in order to Practice, a vain Speculation is not the intent of the Publication of them.

After the *Pſalmiſt* had enumerated the benefits of God, he reflects upon the greatneſs of God, and conſiders him on his Throne encompaſs'd with the Angels, the Miniſters of his Providence. Verſe 19. *The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.* He brings in this of his Dominion, juſt after he had largely treated of his Mercy. Either,

1. To ſignifie, That *God is not only to be praiſed for his mercy, but for his Majeſty*, both for the height and extent of his Authority.

2. *To extol the greatneſs of his Mercy and Pity.* What I have ſaid now, Oh my Soul, of the Mercy of God, and his Paternal Pity, is commended by his Majeſty; his Grandeur hinders not his Clemency: Though his Throne be high, his Bowels are tender. He looks down upon his meaneſt Servants from the height of his Glory. Since his Majeſty is Infinite, his Mercy muſt be as great as his Majeſty. It muſt be a greater pity lodging in his Breaſt, than what is in any Creature, ſince it is not damp'd by the greatneſs of his Soveraignty.

3. *To render his Mercy more comfortable.* The Mercy I have ſpoken of, Oh my Soul, is not the Mercy of a Subject, but of a Soveraign. An Executioner may torture a Criminal, and ſtrip him of his Life, and a vulgar pity cannot relieve him, but the Clemency of the Prince can perfectly pardon him. 'Tis that God who hath none above him to controul him, none below him to reſiſt him, that hath performed all the acts of Grace to thee. If God by his Supream Authority pardons us, who can reverſe it? If all the Subjects of God in the World ſhould pardon us, and God withhold his grant, what will it profit us? Take comfort, Oh my Soul, ſince God from his Throne in the higheſt, and that God who rules over every particular of the Creation, hath granted and ſealed thy Pardon to thee. What would his Grace ſignifie, if he were not a Monarch, extending his Royal Empire over every thing, and ſwaying all by his Scepter?

4ly. *To render the Pſalmiſts confidence more firm in any preſſures.* Verſe 15, 16. He had conſidered the miſery of Man in the ſhortneſs of his Life; his *place ſhould know him no more*, he ſhould never return to his Authority, Employments, Opportunities, that death would take from him; but howſoever the Mercy and Majeſty of God were the ground of his confidence. He draws himſelf from poring upon

upon any Calamities which may aſſault him, to Heaven, the place where God orders all things that are done on the Earth. He is able to protect us from our dangers, and to deliver us from our diſtreſſes; whatſoever Miſeries thou mayeſt lie under, Oh my Soul, caſt thy eye up to Heaven, and ſee a pitying God in a Majeſtick Authority. A God who can perform what he hath promiſed to them that fear him; ſince he hath a Throne above the Heavens, and bears ſway over all that envy thy Happineſs, and would ſtain thy Felicity. A God whoſe Authority cannot be curtailed and diſmembred by any. When the *Prophet* ſollicites the *ſounding* of the Divine Bowels, he urgeth him by his *dwelling in Heaven*, the habitation of his Holineſs. *Iſaiah* 63.15. *His Kingdom ruleth over all*: There is none therefore hath any Authority to make him break his Covenant or violate his Promiſe.

5. *As an incentive to Obedience*, The Lord is merciful, ſaith he to them, that *remember his Commandments to do them*, Verſe 17, 18. And then brings in the *Text* as an Encouragement to obſerve his *Precepts*; he hath a Majeſty that deſerves it from us, and an Authority to protect us in it; if a King in a ſmall ſpot of Earth is to be obeyed by his Subjects, how much more is God, who is more Majeſtick than all the Angels in Heaven, and Monarchs on Earth? who hath a Majeſty to exact our Obedience, and a Mercy to allure it! We ſhould not ſet upon the performance of any Duty, without an Eye lifted up to God as a great King. It would make us willing to ſerve him; the more Noble the Perſon, the more Honorable and Powerful the Prince, the more glorious is his Service. A view of God upon his Throne, will make us think his Service our Priviledge, his Precepts our Ornaments, and Obedience to him the greateſt Honor and Nobility. It will make us weighty and ſerious in our Performances. It would ſtake us down to any duty. The reaſon we are ſo looſe, and unmannerly in the carriage of our Souls before God, is becauſe we conſider him not as a *great King*. *Malachy* 1.14. *Our Father which art in Heaven*, in regard of his Majeſty, is the Preface to Prayer.

Let us now conſider the Words in themſelves. *The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom rules over all.*

The Lord hath prepared.] The word ſignifies Eſtabliſh'd as well as prepared, and might ſo be rendered. Due preparation is a natural way to the Eſtabliſhment of a thing. Haſty reſolves break and moulder. This notes,

1. *The Peculiarity of his Authority.* He prepares it, none elſe for him. 'Tis a Dominion that originally reſides in his Nature, not deriv'd from any by birth or commiſſion, he alone prepar'd it. He is the ſole cauſe of his own Kingdom; his Authority therefore is unbounded, as infinite as his Nature: None can ſet Laws to him, becauſe none but himſelf prepared his Throne for him. As he will not impair his own Happineſs, ſo he will not abridge himſelf of his own Authority.

2. *Readineſs to exerciſe it upon due occaſions.* He hath prepared his Throne, he is not at a loſs, he needs not ſtay for a Commiſſion or Inſtructions from any, how to act. He hath all things ready for the aſſiſtance of his People, he hath Rewards, and Puniſhments; his Treaſures, and Axes the great marks of Authority lying by him, the one for the good, the other for the wicked. His *Mercy he keeps by him for thouſands*, Exod. 34. 7. His *Arrows* he hath prepared by him for Rebels, *Pſal.* 7. 13.

3. *Wiſe management of it*; 'Tis prepared; preparations imply prudence; the Government of God is not a raſh and heady Authority. A Prince upon his Throne, a Judge upon the Bench, manages things with the greateſt diſcretion, or ſhould be ſuppoſed ſo to do.

4. *Succeſsfulneſs and duration of it.* He hath prepared or eſtabliſhed. 'Tis fixed, not tottering; 'tis an immoveable Dominion, all the ſtruglings of men and devils cannot overturn it, nor ſo much as ſhake it. 'Tis eſtabliſhed above the reach of obſtinate Rebels; he cannot be depoſed from it, he cannot be mated in it. His Dominion,

nion, as himſelf, abides for ever. And as his Counſel ſo his Authority ſhall ſtand, and *he will do all his pleaſure*, Iſaiah 46. 10.

His Throne in the Heavens] This is an expreſſion to ſignifie the Authority of God, for as God hath no member properly, though he be ſo repreſented to us, ſo he hath properly no Throne. It ſignifies his power of Reigning, and Judging. A Throne is proper to Royalty, the Seat of Majeſty in its Excellency, and the place where the deepeſt reſpect and homage of Subjects is paid, and their Petitions preſented. That the Throne of God is in the Heavens, that there he ſits as a Soveraign, is the Opinion of all that acknowledge a God; when they ſtand in need of his Authority to aſſiſt them, their eyes are lifted up, and their heads ſtretched out to Heaven; ſo his Son Chriſt prayed, he *lifted up his eyes to Heaven*, as the place where his Father ſat in Majeſty, as the moſt adorable object. *John* 17. 1. Heaven hath the Title of his *Throne*, as the Earth hath that of his *Footſtool*, Iſaiah. 66. 1. And therefore Heaven is ſometimes put for the Authority of God. *Dan.* 4. 26. *After that thou ſhalt have known, that the Heavens do rule, i. e.* That God who hath his Throne in the Heavens, orders earthly Princes and Scepters as he pleaſes, and Rules over the Kingdoms of the World.

His Throne in the Heavens, Notes,

1. *The Glory of his Dominion*, The Heavens are the moſt ſtately and comely pieces of the Creation. His Majeſty is there moſt viſible, his Glory moſt ſplendid. *Pſal.* 19. 1. The Heavens ſpeak out with a full mouth his Glory. 'Tis therefore called, *The habitation* of his *Holineſs and of his Glory*, Iſa. 63. 15. There is the greater gliſter and brightneſs of his Glory. The whole Earth indeed is full of his Glory, full of the beams of it, the Heaven is full of the body of it; as the rays of the Sun reach the Earth, but the full Glory of it is in the Firmament. In Heaven his Dominion is more acknowledged by the Angels, ſtanding at his beck, and by their readineſs and ſwiftneſs obeying his Commands, going and returning as a flaſh of Lightning. *Ezek.* 1. 14. His Throne may well be ſaid to be in the Heavens, ſince his Dominion is not diſputed there by the Angels that attend him, as it is on Earth by the Rebels that arm themſelves againſt him.

2. *The Supremacy of his Empire.* The Heavens are the loftieſt part of the Creation, and the only fit Palace for him; 'tis in the Heavens his Majeſty and Dignity are ſo ſublime, that they are elevated above all Earthly Empires.

3. *Peculiarity of this Dominion.* He rules in the Heavens alone. There is ſome ſhadow of Empire in the World. Royalty is communicated to men as his Subſtitutes. He hath diſpoſed a vicarious Dominion to men in his footſtool the Earth, he gives them ſome ſhare in his Authority; and therefore the Title of his Name, Pſal. 82. 6. *I have ſaid ye are gods*; but in Heaven he reigns alone, without any Subſtitutes; his Throne is there: He gives out his Orders to the Angels himſelf, the marks of his immediate Soveraignty are there moſt viſible. He hath no Vicars General of that Empire. His Authority is not delegated to any Creature, he rules the bleſſed Spirits by himſelf; but he rules Men that are on his Footſtool by others of the ſame kind, Men of their own nature.

4. *The vaſtneſs of his Empire.* The Earth is but a ſpot to the Heavens; What is *England* in a Mapp to the whole Earth, but a ſpot, you may cover with your Finger? Much leſs muſt the whole Earth be to the extended Heavens; 'Tis but a little Point or Atome to what is viſible; the Sun is vaſtly bigger than it, and ſeveral Stars are ſuppoſed to be of a greater bulk than the Earth; and how many and what Heavens are beyond, the ignoraace of man cannot underſtand. If the *Throne* of God be there, 'tis a larger circuit he rules in, than can well be conceived. You cannot conceive the many millions of little Particles there are in the Earth, and if all put together be but as one point to that place where the Throne of God is ſeated, how vaſt muſt his Empire be? He rules there over the Angels, which *excell in ſtrength*, thoſe *Hoſts* of his *which do his pleaſure*, in compariſon of whom all the Men in the World, and the power of the greateſt Potentates is no more

more than the ſtrength of an *Ant* or *Fly*; multitudes of them encircle his Throne, and liſten to his Orders without roving, and Execute them without Diſputing. And ſince his Throne is in the Heavens, it will follow, that all things under the Heaven are parts of his Dominion; his Throne being in the higheſt Place, the inferior things of Earth cannot but be ſubject to him; and it neceſſarily includes his influence on all things below: becauſe the Heavens are the cauſe of all the motion in the World, the immediate thing the Earth doth naturally addreſs to for Corn, Wine and Oyl, above which there is no ſuperior but the Lord. *Hoſ.* 2. 21, 22. *The Earth hears the Corn, Wine and Oyl; the Heavens hear the Earth, and the Lord hears the Heavens.*

5. *The eaſineſs of managing this Government.* His Throne being placed on high, he cannot but behold all things that are done below; the height of a place gives advantage to a pure and clear Eye to behold things below it. Had the Sun an Eye, nothing could be done in the open Air out of its ken. The *Throne* of God being in Heaven, he eaſily looks from thence upon all the Children of Men. Pſal. 14. 2. *The Lord looked down from Heaven upon the Children of Men, to ſee if there were any that did underſtand.* He looks not down from Heaven as if he were in regard of his Preſence confined there, but he looks down Majeſtically, and by way of Authority; not as the look of a bare Spectator, but the look of a Governor, to paſs a Sentence upon them as a Judge. His being in the Heavens, renders him capable of doing whatſoever *he pleaſes*, Pſal. 115. 3. His Throne being there, he can by a Word, in ſtopping the Motions of the Heavens turn the whole Earth into confuſion. In this reſpect it is ſaid, *He rides upon the Heaven in thy help*, Deut. 33. 26. Diſcharges his Thunders upon Men, and makes the influences of it ſerve his Peoples Intereſt. By one turn of a cock, as you ſee in Grotto's, he can cauſe Streams from ſeveral parts of the Heavens to refreſh, or ruine the World.

6. *Duration of it.* The Heavens are incorruptible, his Throne is placed there in an incorruptible ſtate, Earthly Empires have their Decays and Diſſolutions. The Throne of God outlives the diſſolution of the World.

His Kingdom rules over all.] He hath an abſolute Right over all things within the Circuit of Heaven and Earth; though his Throne be in Heaven, as the place where his Glory is moſt eminent and viſible, his Authority moſt exactly obey'd, yet his Kingdom extends it ſelf to the lower parts of the Earth. He doth not muffle and cloud up himſelf in Heaven, or confine his Soveraignty to that place; his Royal Power extends to all viſible, as well as inviſible things: He is Proprietor and Poſſeſſor of all, Deut. 10. 14. *The Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens is the Lords thy God: the Earth alſo, with all that is there.* He hath right to diſpoſe of all as he pleaſes. He doth not ſay, his Kingdom rules all that fear him, but *over all*; ſo that it is not the Kingdom of *Grace* he here ſpeaks of, but his *natural* and univerſal Kingdom. Over Angels and Men, Jews and Gentiles, Animate and Inamite things.

The *Pſalmiſt* conſiders God here as a great Monarch and General, and all Creatures as his Hoſts and Regiments under him; and takes notice principally of two things.

1. *The Eſtabliſhment of his Throne, together with the Seat of it.* [*He hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens.*]

2. *The extent of his Empire.* [*His Kingdom rules over all.*]

This Text, in all the Parts of it, is a fit *Baſis* for a Diſcourſe upon the *Dominion of God*, and the Obſervation will be this.

Doctrine. *God is Soveraign Lord and King, and exerciſeth a Dominion over the whole World, both Heaven and Earth.*

This is ſo clear, that nothing is more ſpoken of in *Scripture*. The very name, *Lord*, imports it; a name Originally belonging to Gods, and from them tranſlated to others.

others. And he is frequently called, *The Lord of Hoſts*, becauſe all the Troops and Armies of Spiritual and Corporeal Creatures are in his hands, and at his ſervice. This is one of his principal Titles. And the Angels are called, *His Hoſts*, *v.* 21. following the Text; his Camp and Militia. But more plainly, 1 *Kings* 22. 19. God is preſented upon his *Throne*, encompaſt with all the *Hoſt of Heaven* ſtanding on his *Right* hand, and on his *Left*, which can be underſtood of no other than of the *Angels* that wait for the Commands of their Soveraign, and ſtand about, not to Counſel him, but to receive his Orders. The *Sun*, *Moon* and *Stars*, are called his *Hoſts*, *Deut.* 4. 19. Appointed by him for the Government of inferior things. He hath an abſolute Authority over the greateſt and the leaſt Creatures; over thoſe that are moſt dreadful, and thoſe that are moſt beneficial; over the *good* Angels that willingly obey him, over the *evil* Angels that ſeem moſt uncapable of Government. And as he is thus Lord of Hoſts, he is the *King of Glory*, or a glorious King, *Pſal.* 24. 10. You find him called a *great King*; the *moſt High*, *Pſal.* 92. 1. The ſupream Monarch, there being no dignity in Heaven or Earth, but what is dim before him, and Infinitely inferior to him; yea, he hath the Title of *Only* King, 1 *Tim.* 6. 15. The Title of Royalty truly and properly only belongs to him. You may ſee it deſcribed very magnificently by *David*, at the Free-will-offering for the building of the Temple, 1 *Chron.* 29. 11, 12. *Thine, O Lord, is the Greatneſs, and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majeſty: thine is the Kingdom, O God, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both Riches and Honor come of thee, and thou Reigneſt over all, and in thy hand is Power and Might, and in thy hand it is to make Great, and to give ſtrength to all.* He hath an eminency of Power or Authority above all. All Earthly Princes received their Diadems from him, yea even thoſe that will not acknowledge him, and he hath a more abſolute Power over them, than they can challenge over their meaneſt Vaſſals. As God hath a Knowledge Infinitely above our knowledge; ſo he hath a Dominion incomprehenſibly above any Dominion of Man, and by all the ſhadows drawn from the Authority of one Man over another; we can have but weak glimmerings of the Authority and Dominion of God.

There is a Threefold Dominion of God.

1. *Natural*: Which is abſolute over all Creatures, and is founded in the *Nature* of God as Creator.

2. *Spiritual* or *Gracious*: Which is a Dominion over his Church as Redeemed, and founded in the *Covenant* of Grace.

3. *A Glorious Kingdom* at the winding up of all, wherein he ſhall Reign over all, either in the *Glory* of his Mercy, as over the glorified Saints; or in the *Glory* of his Juſtice in the condemned Devils and Men. The firſt Dominion is founded in *Nature*. The ſecond, in *Grace*. The third, in regard of the bleſſed in *Grace*; in regard of the damn'd, in demerit in them, and *Juſtice* in him.

He is Lord of all things, and always in regard of Propriety. *Pſal.* 24. 1. *The earth is the Lords, and the fulneſs thereof: the world, and all that dwell therein.* The Earth, with the Riches and Treaſures in the Bowels of it; the habitable World, with every thing that moves upon it, are his; he hath the ſole right, and what right ſoever any others have, is deriv'd from him. In regard alſo of poſſeſſion, *Gen.* 14. 22. *The moſt High God, poſſeſſor of Heaven and Earth.* In reſpect of whom, Man is not the Proprietary nor Poſſeſſor, but Uſufructuary at the Will of this Grand Lord.

In the proſecution of this,

I. *I ſhall lay down ſome General Propoſitions for the clearing and confirming it.*
II. *I ſhall ſhew wherein this right of Dominion is founded.*
III. *What the Nature of it is.*
IV. *Wherein it conſiſts; and how 'tis manifeſted.*

I. Some

I. Some *general Propoſitions* for the clearing and confirming of it.

1. *We muſt know the difference between the Might or Power of God, and his Authority.* We commonly mean by the *Power* of God, the ſtrength of God, whereby he is able to effect all his purpoſes. By the *Authority* of God, we mean the Right he hath to act what he pleaſes. Omnipotence is his *Phyſical Power*, whereby he is *able* to do what he will. Dominion is his *moral Power*, whereby it is *lawful* for him to do what he will. Among Men, Strength and Authority are two diſtinct things. A Subject may be a *Giant*, and be ſtronger than his Prince, but he hath not the ſame Authority as his Princ. Worldly Dominion may be ſeated not in a brawny Arm, but a ſickly and infirm Body. As Knowledge and Wiſdom are diſtinguiſht; Knowledge reſpects the Matter, Being, and nature of a thing. Wiſdom reſpects the Harmony, Order, and actual Uſefulneſs of a thing. Knowledge ſearcheth the Nature of a thing, and Wiſdom employs that thing to its proper uſe. A man may have much Knowledge, and little Wiſdom, ſo a Man may have much Strength, and little or no Authority. A greater ſtrength may be ſetled in the Servant, but a greater Authority reſides in the Maſter; ſtrength is the natural vigor of a Man. God hath an Infinite ſtrength, he hath a ſtrength to bring to paſs whatſoever he decrees; he acts without *fainting* and weakneſs, *Iſaiah* 40. 28. and impairs not his ſtrength by the exerciſe of it. As God is *Lord* he hath a Right to *Enact*; as he is Almighty, he hath a power to *Execute*. His ſtrength is the executive power belonging to his Dominion: In regard of his Sovereignty he hath a right to Command all Creatures. In regard of his Almightineſs he hath power to make his Commands be obey'd; or to puniſh Men for the violation of them. His power is that whereby he ſubdues all Creatures under him; his Dominion is that, whereby he hath a Right to ſubdue all Creatures under him.

This Dominion is a right of making what he pleaſes, of poſſeſſing what he made, of diſpoſing of what he doth poſſeſs; whereas his power is an ability, to make, what he hath a right to Create, to hold what he doth poſſeſs, and to execute the manner, wherein he reſolves to diſpoſe of his Creatures.

2. *All the other Attributes of God refer to this perfection of Dominion.* They all beſpeak him fit for it, and are diſcovered in the exerciſe of it, (which hath been manifeſted in the diſcourſes of thoſe Attributes, we have paſſed through hitherto.) His goodneſs fits him for it, becauſe he can never uſe his authority but for the good of the Creatures, and conducting them to their true end. His Wiſdom can never be miſtaken in the exerciſe of it, his Power can accompliſh the Decrees, that flow from his abſolute Authority. What can be more rightful, than the placing Authority in ſuch an infinite Goodneſs, that hath Bowels to pity, as well as a Scepter to ſway his Subjects? That hath a Mind to contrive, and a Will to regulate his contrivances for his own Glory, and his Creatures good; and an Arm of Power to bring to paſs, what he Orders. Without this Dominion ſome perfections, as Juſtice, and Mercy, would lye in obſcurity, and much of his Wiſdom would be ſhrouded from our ſight and knowledge.

3. *This of Dominion, as well as that of Power, hath been acknowledged by all.* The *High Prieſt* was to *wave the Offering*, or ſhake it to and fro. *Exod.* 29. 24. which the *Jews* ſay, was cuſtomarily from *Eaſt* to *Weſt*, and from *North* to *South*, the four quarters of the World, to ſignify Gods Soveraignty over all the parts of the World. And ſome of the *Heathens* in their Adorations turned their Bodies to all quarters, to ſignify the extenſive Dominion of God throughout the whole Earth. That Dominion did of right pertain to the Deity, was confeſt by the *Heathen* in the name of *Baal*, given to their *Idols*, which ſignifies *Lord*; and was not a name of one Idol, adored for a God, but common to all the Eaſtern Idols. God hath interwoven the notion of his Soveraignty in the Nature and Conſtitution of Man, in the nobleſt and moſt inward acts of his Soul, in that faculty or act which is moſt neceſſary for him, in his converſe in this World either with God or Man. 'Tis ſtampt upon the Conſcience of Man, and flaſhes in his Face in every act of Self-Judgment Conſcience paſſes upon a Man. Every reflection

of Conſcience implies an obligation of Man to ſome Law *written in his Heart*, *Rom.* 2. 15. This Law cannot be without a Legiſlator, nor this Legiſlator without a Soveraign Dominion; theſe are but natural, and eaſie conſequences in the mind of Man from every act of Conſcience. The indelible Authority of Conſcience in Man, in the whole exerciſe of it, bears a reſpect to the Soveraignty of God, clearly proclaims not only a Supream Being, but a Supream Governor, and points Man directly to it, that a man may as ſoon deny his having ſuch a reflecting principle within him, as deny Gods Dominion over him, and conſequently over the whole World of rational Creatures.

4. *This notion of Soveraignty is inſeparble from the notion of a God.* To acknowledge the *Exiſtence* of a God, and to acknowledge him a *Rewarder*, are linkt together. *Heb.* 11. 6. To acknowledge him a Rewarder, is to acknowledge him a Governor: Rewards being the marks of Dominion. The very name of a God includes in it a Supremacy, and an actual Rule. He cannot be conceived as God, but he muſt be conceived as the higheſt Authority in the World. 'Tis as poſſible for him not to be God, as not to be Supream. Wherein can the exerciſe of his excellencies be apparent, but in his Soveraign Rule? To fancy an infinite power without a Supream Dominion, is to fancy a mighty ſenſleſs Statue fit to be beheld, but not fit to be obey'd; as not being able or having no right to give out Orders, or not caring for the exerciſe of it. God cannot be ſuppoſed to be the chief Being, but he muſt be ſuppoſed to give Laws to all, and receive Laws from none. And if we ſuppoſe him with a perfection of Juſtice and Righteouſneſs (which we muſt do, unleſs we would make a lame and imperfect God) we muſt ſuppoſe him to have an intire Dominion, without which he could never be able to manifeſt his Juſtice. And without a Supream Dominion, he could not manifeſt the Supremacy, and Infiniteneſs of his Righteouſneſs.

1. *We cannot ſuppoſe God a Creator, without ſuppoſing a Sovereign Dominion in him.* No Creature can be made without ſome Law in its Nature; if it had not Law, it would be Created to no purpoſe, to no regular end; it would be utterly unbecoming an Infinite Wiſdom, to create a lawleſs Creature, a Creature wholly vain; much leſs can a rational Creature be made without a Law; if it had no Law, it were not rational: For the very notion of a rational Creature implies Reaſon to be a Law to it, and implies an acting by Rule. * If you could ſuppoſe rational Creatures without a Law, you might ſuppoſe, that they might Blaſpheme their Creator, and Murder their fellow Creatures, and commit the moſt abominable villanies deſtructive to humane Society without Sin; for *where there is no Law, there is no tranſgreſſion.* But thoſe things are accounted Sins by all Mankind, and Sins againſt the Supream Being: So that a Dominion and the exerciſe of it is ſo faſt linkt to God, ſo intirely in him, ſo intrinſick in his Nature, that it cannot be imagined that a Rational Creature, can be made by him without a ſtamp and mark of that Dominion in his very Nature, and Frame; 'tis ſo inſeparable from God in his very act of Creation.

* *Maccov.* Colleg. Theolog. 10. Diſput. 18. p. 6, 7. or thereabout.

2. *'Tis ſuch a Dominion as cannot be renounced by God himſelf.* 'Tis ſo intrinſick and connatural to him, ſo inlaid in the Nature of God, that he cannot ſtrip himſelf of it, nor of the exerciſe of it, while any Creature remains. 'Tis preſerv'd by him; for it could not ſubſiſt of its ſelf; 'tis govern'd by him, it could not elſe anſwer its end. 'Tis impoſſible there can be a Creature, which hath not God for its Lord. Chriſt himſelf though in regard of his Deity equal with God, yet in regard of his created ſtate, and aſſuming our Nature, was God's Servant, was govern'd by him in the whole of his Office, acted according to his Command and Directions; God calls him his Servant, *Iſaiah* 42. 1. And Chriſt in that Prophetick *Pſalm* of him, calls God his *Lord*. *Pſal.* 16. 2, *Oh my Soul, Thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, thou art my Lord.* It was impoſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe Juſtice had been ſo far from being ſatisfy'd, that it had been higly incenſed, if the order of things in the due ſubjection to God had been broke, and his terms had not been complied with. It would be a Judgment upon the World, if God ſhould

ſhould give up the Government to any elſe, as it is when he gives *Children to be Princes*, *Iſaiah* 3. 4. i. e. Children in underſtanding.

3. *'Tis ſo inſeparable that it cannot be communicated to any Creature.* No Creature is able to exerciſe it, every Creature is unable to perform all the Offices that belong to this Dominion. No Creature can impoſe Laws upon the *Conſciences* of Men: Man knows not the inlets into the Soul, his Pen cannot reach the inwards of Man. What Laws he hath power to propoſe to Conſcience, he cannot ſee executed: becauſe every Creature wants Omniſcience, he is not able to perceive all thoſe breaches of the Law, which may be committed at the ſame time in ſo many Cities, ſo many Chambers. Or ſuppoſe an *Angel*, in regard of the height of his ſtanding, and the inſufficiency of Walls, and Darkneſs, and diſtance to obſtruct his view, can behold Mens actions, yet he cannot know the internal acts of Mens Minds, and Wills without ſome outward eruption and appearance of them. And if he be ignorant of them, how can he execute his Laws? If he only underſtand the outward Fact without the inwatd Thought, how can he diſpenſe a Juſtice proportionable to the crime? He muſt needs be ignorant of that, which adds the greateſt aggravation ſometimes to a ſin, and inflict a lighter puniſhment upon that which receives a deeper tincture from the inward poſture of the Mind, than another Fact may do, which in the outward act may appear more baſe and unjuſt; and ſo while he intends Righteouſneſs, may act a degree of injuſtice. *Beſides, no Creature can inflict a due puniſhment for ſin; that which is due to ſin, is a loſs of the Viſion, and ſight of God; but none can deprive any of that but God himſelf; nor can a Creature reward another with Eternal Life, which conſiſts in Communion with God, which none but God can beſtow.

* *Maccovii* Colleg. Theolog. Diſp. 18. p. 12, 13.

II. Thing, *Wherein the Dominion of God is founded.*

1. *On the Excellency of his Nature.* Indeed a bare excellency of Nature beſpeaks a fitneſs for Government, but doth not properly convey a right of Government. Excellency ſpeaks aptitude, not Title: A Subject may have more Wiſdom than the Prince, and be fitter to hold the Reins of Government, but he hath not a Title to Royalty. A man of large capacity, and ſtrong virtue, is fit to ſerve his Countrey in Parliament, but the Election of the People conveys a Title to him. Yet a ſtrain of Intellectual and Moral abilities beyond others, is a foundation for Dominion. And it is commonly ſeen that ſuch eminences in Men, though they do not inveſt them with a Civil Authority, or an Authority of Juriſdiction, yet they create a veneration in the minds of Men; their Virtue attracts Reverence, and their Advice is regarded as an Oracle. Old Men by their age, when ſtored with more Wiſdom and Knowledge by reaſon of their long experience, acquire a kind of power over the younger in their Dictates and Counſels, ſo that they gain by the ſtrength of that excellency a real Authority in the minds of thoſe Men they converſe with, and poſſeſs themſelves of a deep reſpect from them. God therefore being an incomprehenſible Ocean of all Perfection, and poſſeſſing infinitely all thoſe Virtues, that may lay a claim to Dominion, hath the firſt foundation of it in his own Nature. His incomparable and unparalell'd excellency, as well as the greatneſs of his Work, attracts the voluntary Worſhip of him as a Sovereign Lord. *Pſal.* 86. 8. *Among the Gods there is none like unto thee, neither are there any Works like unto thy Work. All Nations ſhall come and Worſhip before thee.* Though his benefits are great Engagements to our Obedience, and Affection, yet his infinite Majeſty and Perfection requires the firſt place in our acknowledgments and Adorations. Upon this account God claims it, *Iſaiah* 46. 9. *I am God, and there is none like me, I will do all my pleaſure*: And the Prophet *Jeremy* upon the ſame account acknowledgeth it. *Jer.* 10. 6, 7. *Foraſmuch as there is none like unto thee, oh Lord, thou art great, and thy name is great in might: who would not fear thee O King of Nations? For to thee doth it appertain: Foraſmuch as there is none like unto thee.* And this is a more noble Title of Dominion, It being an uncreated Title, and more eminent than that of Creation or Preſervation,

vation.* This is the natural order, God hath plac'd in his Creatures, that the more excellent ſhould rule the inferior. He committed not the Government of lower Creatures to *Lions*, and *Tygers*, that have a delight in Blood, but no knowledge of Virtue; but to *man*, who had an eminence in his Nature above other Creatures, and was formed with a perfect rectitude, and a height of reaſon to guide the reins over them. In Man the Soul being of a more ſublime nature, is ſet of right to rule over the Body; the Mind, the moſt excellent Faculty of the Soul, to rule over the other Powers of it; and Wiſdom the moſt excellent habit of the Mind, to guide and regulate that in its determinations; and when the Body and ſenſitive Appetite controul the Soul and Mind, 'tis an Uſurpation againſt Nature, not a rule according to Nature; the excellency therefore of the Divine Nature is the natural foundation for his Dominion. He hath Wiſdom to know what is fit for him to do, and an immutable Righteouſneſs whereby he cannot do any thing baſe and unworthy. He hath a fore-knowledge whereby he is able to order all things to anſwer his own glorious deſigns, and the end of his Government; that nothing can go awry, nothing put him to a ſtand, and conſtrain him to meditate new Counſels. *So that if it could be ſuppoſed, that the World had not been created by him, that the parts of it had met together by chance, and been compacted into ſuch a Body; none but God the ſupream and moſt excellent being in the World, could have merited, and deſervedly challenged the Government of it: Becauſe nothing had an excellency of Nature, to capacitate it for it, as he hath, or to enter into a conteſt with him for a ſufficiency to Govern.

* *Raynaud.* Theolog. Nat. pag. 757.

* *Camero. p.* 271. *Amyrald* Diſſert. *p.* 72. 73.

2. *'Tis founded in his act of Creation.* He is the Sovereign Lord, as he is the Almighty Creator. The relation of an intire Creator, induceth the relation of an abſolute Lord; he that gives Being, Life, Motion, that is the ſole cauſe of the Being of a thing, which was before nothing, that hath nothing to concur with him, nothing to aſſiſt him, but by his ſole power Commands it to ſtand up into Being, is the unqueſtionable Lord and Proprietor of that thing, that hath no dependance but upon him. And by this act of Creation which extended to all things, he became univerſal Sovereign over all things. And thoſe that wave the excellency of his Nature as the foundation of his Government, eaſily acknowledge the ſufficiency of it upon his actual Creation. His Dominion of Juriſdiction reſults from Creation. When God himſelf makes an Oration in defence of his Sovereignty, *Job* 38. His chief arguments are drawn from Creation, and *Pſal.* 95. 3, 5. *The Lord is a great King above all Gods, the Sea is his, and he made it.* And ſo the *Apoſtle* in his Sermon to the *Athenians*. As he *made the World and all things therein*, he is ſtiled *Lord of Heaven and Earth. Acts* 17. 24. His Dominion alſo of property ſtands upon this *Baſis. Pſal.* 89. 7. *The Heavens are thine, the Earth alſo is thine, as for the World and the fulneſs thereof thou haſt founded them.* Upon this Title of forming *Iſrael* as a Creature, or rather as a Church, he demands their Service to him as their Sovereign. *Oh Jacob and Iſrael, thou art my Servant, I have formed thee, thou art my ſervant Oh Iſrael, Iſaiah* 44. 21. The Sovereignty of God naturally ariſeth from the relation of all things to himſelf as their intire Creator, and their natural and inſeparable dependance upon him in regard of their Being and well Beings. It depends not upon the election of Men; God hath a natural Dominion over us as Creatures, before he hath a Dominion by conſent over us as Converts. As ſoon as ever any thing began to be a Creature, it was a vaſſal to God, as a Lord. Every man is acknowledged to have a right of poſſeſſing what he hath made, and a power of Dominion over what he hath fram'd. He may either cheriſh his own work, or daſh it in pieces; he may either add a greater comelineſs to it, or deface what he hath already imparted. He hath a right of property in it; no other man can without injury pilfer his own work from him. The work hath no propriety in its ſelf: the right muſt lie in the immediate framer, or in the perſon that employed him. The *Firſt Cauſe* of every thing hath an unqueſtionable Dominion of propriety in it upon the ſcore of Juſtice. By the Law of Nations, the firſt finder of a Countrey, is

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eſteemed the rightful poſſeſſor, and Lord of that Countrey, and the firſt inventor of an Art hath a right of exerciſing it. If a man hath a juſt claim of Dominion over that thing, whoſe materials were not of his framing, but from only the addition of a new Figure from his skill; as a Limner over his Picture, the Cloth whereof he never made, nor the Colours wherewith he draws it, were ever endued by him with their diſtinct qualities, but only he applies them by his Art, to compoſe ſuch a Figure; much more hath God a rightful claim of Dominion over his Creatures, whoſe intire Being both in Matter and Form, and every particle of their excellency was breathed out by the word of his Mouth. He did not only give the Matter a Form, but beſtowed upon the Matter it ſelf a Being; It was formed by none to his hand, as the matter is on which an *Artiſt* works. He had the Being of all things in his own power, and it was at his choice whither he would impart it or no; there can be no juſter, and ſtronger ground of a claim than this. A man hath a right to a piece of Braſs, or Gold by his purchaſe, but when by his engraving he hath form'd it into an excellent Statue, there reſults an increaſe of his Right upon the account of his Artifice. Gods Creation of the Matter of Man gave him a Right over Man; but his Creation of him in ſo eminent an excellency, with reaſon to guide him, a clear eye of Underſtanding to diſcern Light from Darkneſs, and Truth from Falſhood, a freedom of Will to act accordingly, and an original Righteouſneſs as the varniſh and beauty of all: Here is the *ſtrongeſt foundation* for a claim of Authority over Man; and the ſtrongeſt obligation on man for ſubjection to God. If all thoſe things had been paſt over to God by another hand, he could not be the ſupream Lord, nor could have an abſolute Right to diſpoſe of them at his pleaſure: That would have been the invaſion of anothers Right. Beſides, *Creation* is the only firſt diſcovery of his Dominion. * Before the World was framed there was nothing but God himſelf, and properly nothing is ſaid to have Dominion over its ſelf; this is a Relative Attribute, reflecting on the works of God. He had a right of Dominion in his Nature from Eternity, but before Creation he was actually Lord only of a nullity: Where there is nothing, it can have no relation, nothing is not the ſubject of poſſeſſion nor of Dominion. There could be no exerciſe of this Dominion without Creation; What exerciſe can a Sovereign have without Subjects? *Sovereignty* ſpeaks a relation to Subjects; and none is properly a Sovereign without Subjects. To conclude from hence doth reſult *Gods univerſal Dominion*: For being maker of all, he is the Ruler of all. *And his perpetual Dominion*: For as long as God continues in the relation of Creator, the right of his Sovereignty as Creator cannot be aboliſht.

* *Stoughton* Righteous Mans Plea, Serm. 6. p. 28.

3. *As God is the final Cauſe, or End of all, he is Lord of all.* * The *End* hath a greater Sovereignty in actions, than the *Actor it ſelf*: The Actor hath a Sovereignty over others in action, but the end for which any one works hath a Soveraignty over the Agent himſelf. A Limner hath a Soveraignty over the Picture he is framing, or hath fram'd, but the end for which he fram'd it, either his profit he deſign'd from it, or the honour and credit of skill he aimed at in it, hath a Dominion over the Limner himſelf. The end moves, and excites the Artiſt to work, it ſpirits him in it, conducts him in his whole buſineſs, poſſeſſes his Mind, and ſits triumphant in him in all the progreſs of his work; 'Tis the firſt cauſe for which the whole work is wrought. Now God in his actual Creation of all, is the Sovereign end of all; *For thy pleaſure they are, and were created*, Rev. 4. 11. *The Lord hath made all things for himſelf*, Prov. 16. 4. Man indeed is the ſubordinate and immediate end of the lower Creation: And therefore had the Dominion over other Creatures granted to him. But God being the ultimate and principal end, hath the Sovereign and principal Dominion; all things as much refer to him as the laſt end, as they flow from him as the firſt Cauſe. So that as I ſaid before, if the World had been compacted together by a jumbling chance without a wiſe hand, as ſome have fooliſhly imagined, none could have been an Antagoniſt with God for the Government of the World, but God in regard of the excellency of his nature would have been the Rector of it, unleſs thoſe Atomes

* Vid. *Leſſium de perfect. Divin. p. 77, 78.*

Atomes that had compoſed the World, had had an ability to Govern it. Since there could be no univerſal end of all things but God, God only can claim an intire right to the Government of it: For though man be the end of the lower Creation, yet man is not the end of himſelf, and his own Being, he is not the end of the Creation of the ſupream Heavens, he is not able to govern them, they are out of his ken, and out of his reach. None fit in regard of the excellency of Nature, to be the chief end of the whole World but God: And therefore none can have a right to the Dominion of it but God. In this regard Gods Dominion differs from the Dominion of all Earthly Potentates. All the Subjects in Creation were made for God as their end, ſo are not People for Rulers, but Rulers made for People for their protection, and the preſervation of order in Societies.

4. *The Dominion of God is founded upon his preſervation of things.* Pſal. 95. 3,4. *The Lord is a great King above all Gods,* Why? *In his hand are all the deep places of the Earth.* While his hand holds things, his hand hath a Dominion over them. He that holds a ſtone in the Air, exerciſeth a Dominion over its natural inclination in hindring it from falling. The Creature depends wholly upon God in its preſervation; as ſoon as that Divine hand which ſuſtains every thing, were withdrawn, a languiſhment and ſwooning would be the next turn in the Creature. He is call'd *Lord, Adonai* in regard of his ſuſtentation of all things by his continual influx. The Word coming of אדן which ſignifies a baſis or pillar, that ſupports a Building. God is the Lord of all, as he is the ſuſtainer of all by his Power, as well as the Creator of all by his Word. The Sun hath a Soveraign dominion over its own beams, which depend upon it, ſo that if he withdraws himſelf, they all attend him, and the World is left in darkneſs. God maintains the vigor of all things, conducts them in their operations; ſo that nothing that they are, nothing that they have, but is owing to this preſerving power. The Maſter of this great Family may as well be called the Lord of it, ſince every member of it depends upon him for the ſupport of that being, he firſt gave them, and holds of his Empire. As the right to govern reſulted from Creation, ſo it is perpetuated by the preſervation of things.

5. *The Dominion of God is ſtrengthened by the innumerable benefits, he beſtows upon his Creatures.* The benefits he confers upon us after Creation, are not the original ground of his Dominion. A Man hath not Authority over his Servant from the kindneſs he ſhews to him, but his Authority commenceth before any act of kindneſs, and is founded upon a right of purchaſe, conqueſt, or compact. Dominion doth not depend upon meer benefits: Then Inferiors might have dominion over Superiors. A Peaſant may ſave the life of a Prince, to whom he was not ſubject; he hath not therefore a right to ſtep up into his Throne, and give Laws to him. And Children that maintain their Parents in their poverty, might then acquire an Authority over them, which they can never climb to: Becauſe the benefits they conferr, cannot parallel the benefits they have received from the Authors of their Lives. The bounties of God to us add nothing to the intrinſick right of his natural Dominion, they being the effects of that Soveraignty, as he is a Rewarder and Governour. As the benefits a Prince beſtows upon his Favorite increaſes not that right of Authority, which is inherent in the Crown: but ſtrengthens that Dominion, as it ſtands in relation to the Receiver, by increaſing the obligation of the favorite to an obſervance of him, not only as his natural Prince, but his gracious Benefactor. The Beneficence of God adds, though not an original right of power, yet a foundation of a ſtronger upbraiding the Creature, if he walks in a violation and forgetfulneſs of thoſe benefits, and pull in pieces the links of that ingenuous Duty they call for; and an occaſion of exerciſing of Juſtice in puniſhing the delinquent; which is a part of his Empire. *Iſaiah* 1. 2. *Hear O Heavens, and give Ear O Earth, the Lord hath ſpoken, I have nouriſhed Children, and they have rebelled againſt me.* Thus the fundamental Right as Creator, is made more indiſputable by his relation as a Benefactor, and more as being ſo after a forfeiture of what

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was enjoyed by Creation. The benefits of God are innumerable, and ſo magnificent, that they cannot meet with any compenſation from the Creature: And therefore do neceſſarily require a ſubmiſſion from the Creature, and an acknowledgment of Divine Authority. But that benefit of Redemption doth add a ſtronger right of Dominion to God: Since he hath not only as a Creator given them Being, and Life as his Creatures, but paid a price, the price of his Sons Blood for their reſcue from Captivity, ſo that he hath a Soveraingnty of Grace as well as Nature, and the ranſom'd ones belong to him as Redeemer, as well as Creator. 1 *Cor.* 6. 19, 20. *Te are not your own: For ye are bought with a price*, therefore your Body and your Spirit are Gods. By this he acquir'd a right of another kind and bought us from that uncontroulable Lordſhip, we affected over our ſelves by the ſin of *Adam*, that he might uſe us as his own peculiar for his own glory and ſervice. By this Redemption there reſults to God a right over our Bodies, over our Spirits, over our Services, as well as by Creation, and to ſhew the ſtrength of this Right, the Apoſtle repeats it; *you are bought*, a purchaſe cannot be without a price paid; but he adds price alſo [*bought with a price.*] To ſtrengthen the Title, Purchaſe gave him a new Right; and the greatneſs of the price eſtabliſhed that Right. The more a man pays for a thing, the more uſually we ſay, he deſerves to have it, he hath paid enough for it. It was indeed price enough, and too much for ſuch vile Creatures as we are.

III. The Third thing is, *The Nature of this Dominion.*

1. This Dominion is *Independent*. His Throne is in the Heavens; the Heavens depend not upon the Earth, nor God upon his Creatures. Since he is *Independent* in regard of his Eſſence, he is ſo in his Dominion, which flows from the excellency and fulneſs of his Eſſence. As he receives his Eſſence from none, ſo he derives his Dominion from none. All other Dominion except paternal Authority is rooted originally in the Wills of Men. * The firſt Title was the conſent of the People, or the conqueſt of others by the help of thoſe People that firſt conſented. And in the exerciſe of it, Earthly Dominion depends upon aſſiſtance of the Subjects, and the Members being joyn'd with the Head carry on the work of Government, and prevent Civil diſſentions; in the ſupport of it, it depends upon the Subjects Contributions, and Taxes. The Subjects in their ſtrength are the Arms, and in their Purſes the Sinews of Government. But God depends upon none in the foundation of his Government; he is not a Lord by the Votes of his Vaſſals. Nor is it ſucceſſively handed to him by any Predeceſſor, nor conſtituted by the power of a Superior. Nor forced he his way by War, and Conqueſt, nor precariouſly attained it by ſuit or flattery, or bribing promiſes. He holds not the right of his Empire from any other; he hath no Superior to hand him to his Throne, and ſettle him by Commiſſion. He is therefore called *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, having none above him. *A great King above all Gods*, Pſal. 95. 3. Needing no Licence from any when to act, nor direction how to act, or aſſiſtance in his action: He owes not any of thoſe to any perſon; he was not ordered by any other to Create, and therefore receives not Orders from any other to rule over what he hath Created. He received not his Power and Wiſdom from another, and therefore is not ſubject to any for the Rule of his Government. He only made his own Subjects, and from himſelf hath the ſole Authority; his own Will was the cauſe of their Beings, and his own Will is the director of their actions. He is not determined by his Creatures, in any of his motions, but determines the Creatures in all. His actions are not regulated by any Law without him, but by a Law within him, the Law of his own Nature. 'Tis impoſſible he can have any rule without himſelf: becauſe there is nothing Superior to himſelf. Nor doth he depend upon any in the exerciſe of his Government, he needs no Servants in it, when he uſes Creatures it is not out of want of their help, but for the manifeſtation of his Wiſdom and Power. What he doth by his Subjects, he can do by himſelf: *The Government is upon his Shoulder*, Iſaiah 9. 6. To ſhew that he needs not any ſupporters. All other Governments flow from him,

* *Raynaud.* Theolog. Natural. p 760, 761, 762.

him, all other Authorities depend upon him; *Dei Gratiâ*, or *Dei Providentiâ* is in the ſtyle of Princes. As their Being is deriv'd from his Power, ſo their Authority is but a branch of his Dominion. They are Governors by Divine Providence; God is Governor by his ſole nature. All motions depend upon the firſt Heaven, which moves all; but that depends upon nothing. The Government of Chriſt depends upon God's increated Dominion, and is by Commiſſion from him; Chriſt aſſum'd not this Honour to himſelf, *But he that ſaid unto him thou art my Son*, beſtow'd it upon him. *He put all things under his Feet*, but not himſelf, 1 *Cor.* 15. 27. *When he ſaith all things are put under him, he is excepted, which did put all things under him.* He ſits ſtill as an independent Governour upon his Throne.

2. This Dominion is *Abſolute.* If his Throne be in the Heavens, there is nothing to controul him. If he be Independent, he muſt needs be Abſolute; ſince he hath no cauſe in conjunction with him as Creator, that can ſhare with him in his Right, or reſtrain him in the diſpoſal of his Creature. His Authority is unlimited; in this regard the Title of Lord becomes not any but God *properly. Tiberius* thought none of the beſt, though one of the ſubtileſt Princes, accounted the Title of *Lord* a reproach to him: Since he was not abſolute. *

* *Sueton de.* Tiberio cap. 27.

1. *Abſolute in regard of Freedom and Liberty.*

1. Thus *Creation* is a work of his *meer Soveraignty*; he *Created*, becauſe it was his pleaſure to Create. *Rev.* 4. 11. He is not neceſſitated to do this or that. He might have choſen, whether he would have fram'd an Earth, and Heavens, and laid the foundations of his Chambers in the Waters. He was under no obligation, to reduce things from nullity to exiſtence.

2. *Preſervation* is the fruit of his *Soveraignty*; When he had called the World to ſtand out, he might have ordered it to return into its dark Den of nothingneſs, ript up every part of its foundation, or have given Being to many more Creatures, than he did. If you conſider his abſolute Soveraignty, why might he not have deveſted *Adam* preſently of thoſe rational perfections, wherewith he had endow'd him? And might he not have metamorphos'd him into ſome Beaſt, and elevated ſome Beaſt into a rational Nature? Why might he not have degraded an *Angel* to a Worm, and advanc'd a Worm to the nature and condition of an *Angel*? Why might he not have revok'd that grant of Dominion, which he had paſſed to Man over all Creatures? It was free to him to permit Sin to enter into the Earth, or to have excluded it out of the Earth, as he doth out of Heaven.

3. *Redemption* is a fruit of his Soveraignty. By his abſolute Sovereignty he migh have confirmed all the Angels in their ſtanding by Grace, and prevented the revolt of any of their Members from him; and when there was a revolt both in Heaven and Earth, it was free to him, to have call'd out his Son to aſſume the Angelical, as well as the Humane Nature, or have exerciſed his Dominion in the deſtruction of Men and Devils, rather than in the Redemption of any; he was under no obligation to reſtore either the one or the other.

4. *May he not impoſe what terms he pleaſes?* May he not impoſe what Laws he pleaſe, and exact what he will of his Creature without promiſing any Rewards? May he not uſe his own for his own Honour, as well as Men uſe for their Credit what they do poſſeſs by his indulgence?

5. *Affliction* is an act of his Soveraignty. By this right of Soveraignty may not God take away any man's Goods, ſince they were his Doles? As he was not indebted to us, when he beſtow'd them, ſo he cannot wrong us, when he removes them. He takes from us what is more his own, than it is ours, and was never ours but by his Gift, and that for a time only, not for ever. By this right, he may determine our times, put a period to our days, when he pleaſes, ſtrip us of one Member, and lop off another. Man's being was from him, and why ſhould he not have a Soveraignty to take, what he had a Soveraignty to give? Why ſhould this ſeem ſtrange to any of us, ſince we our ſelves exerciſe an abſolute Dominion over

over thoſe things in our poſſeſſion, which have ſenſe, and feeling; as well as over thoſe that want it? Doth not every man think he hath an Abſolute Authority over the Utenſils of his Houſe, over his Horſe, his Dog, to preſerve, or kill him, to do what he pleaſe with him, without rendring any other reaſon, than *'tis my own*? May not God do much more? Doth not his Dominion over the work of his hands tranſcend that which a man can claim over his Beaſt, that he never gave life unto? He that dares diſpute againſt God's Abſolute Right, fancies himſelf as much a God as his Creator; underſtands not the vaſt difference between the Divine nature and his own; between the Soveraignty of God and his own, which is all the theam God himſelf diſcourſeth upon in thoſe ſtately *Chapters*, *Job* 38, 39, *&c.* Not mentioning a word of *Job*'s Sin, but only vindicating the Rights of his own Authority. Nor doth *Job* in his reply, *Job* 40. 4. ſpeak of his Sin, but of his natural vileneſs as a Creature in the preſence of his Creator.

By this Right God unſtops the bottles of Heaven in one place, and ſtops them in another, cauſing it *to Rain upon one City and not upon another*, *Amos* 4. 7. Ordering the Clouds to move to this or that quarter where he hath a mind to be a *Benefactor* or a *Judge*.

6. *Unequal diſpenſations are acts of his Soveraignty.* By this right he is patient toward thoſe, whoſe Sins by the common voice of Men deſerve ſpeedy Judgments, and pours out pain upon thoſe, that are patterns of Virtue to the World. By this he gives ſometimes the worſt of Men an Ocean of Wealth and honor to ſwim in, and reduceth an uſeful and exemplary Grace to a ſcanty Poverty. By this he *Rules the Kingdoms of men*, and ſets a Crown upon the Head of the *baſeſt of men*, *Dan.* 4. 17. While he depoſeth another, that ſeem'd to deſerve a weightier Diadem. This is, as he is the Lord of the Ammunition of his Thunders, and the Treaſures of his Bounty.

7. *He may inflict what torments he pleaſes.* Some ſay by this right of Soveraignty he may inflict what torments he pleaſeth upon an innocent perſon; which indeed will not bear the nature of a puniſhment as an effect of Juſtice, without the ſuppoſal of a crime; but a torment as an effect of that Sovereign Right he hath over his Creature, which is as abſolute over his work, as the *Potters* power is *over his own Clay*, *Jerem.* 18. 6. *Rom.* 9. 21. * May not the Potter after his labour, either ſet his *veſſel* up to adorn his Houſe, or knock it in pieces, and fling it upon the *Dunghil*; ſeparate it to ſome noble uſe, or condemn it to ſome ſordid ſervice? Is the right of God over his Creatures leſs than that of the Potter over his Veſſel, ſince God contributed all to his Creature, but the Potter never made the Clay, which is the ſubſtance of the Veſſel, nor the Water which was neceſſary, to make it tractable, but only moulded the ſubſtance of it into ſuch a ſhape? The Veſſel that is fram'd, and the Potter that frames it differ only in Life, the Body of the Potter whereby he executes his Authority, is of no better a mould than the Clay the matter of his Veſſel; ſhall he have ſo abſolute a power over that, which is ſo near him, and ſhall not God over that which is ſo infinitely diſtant from him? The *Veſſel* perhaps might plead for its ſelf, that it was once part of the Body of a Man, and as good as the *Potter* himſelf; whereas no Creature can plead, it was part of God, and as good as God himſelf. Though there be no Man in the World, but deſerves affliction, yet the *Scripture* ſometimes layes affliction upon the ſcore of God's Dominion, without any reſpect to the ſin of the afflicted perſon. *James* 5. 15. Speaking of a ſick perſon, *if he have committed ſins they ſhall be forgiven him*, whereby is implyed, that he might be ſtruck into ſickneſs by God without any reſpect to a particular ſin, but in a way of Tryal; and that his affliction ſprung not from any exerciſe of Divine Juſtice, but from his abſolute Soveraignty. And ſo in the caſe of the blind man, when the Diſciples askt, for what ſin it was, whether for his *own*, or his *Parents Sin* he was born blind, *John* 9. 3. *Neither hath this man ſinned nor his Parents*; which ſpeaks in its ſelf not againſt the whole current of Scripture; but the words import thus much, that God in this blindneſs from the birth, neither reſpected any ſin of the Mans own, nor of his Parents, but he did it as an abſolute Soveraign, to manifeſt his own

* *Leſſius de perfect. Divin. p. 66. 67.*

Glory in that miraculous cure, which was wrought by Chriſt. Though afflictions do not happen without the deſert of the Creature, yet ſome afflictions may be ſent without any particular reſpect to that deſert, meerly for the manifeſtation of God's Glory, ſince the Creature was made for God himſelf, and his honour, and therefore may be uſed in a ſerviceableneſs to the Glory of the Creator.

2. *His Dominion is abſolute in regard of unlimitedneſs by any Law without him.* He is an abſolute Monarch, that makes Laws for his Subjects, but is not bound by any himſelf, nor receives any Rules, and Laws from his Subjects for the management of his Government. But moſt Governments in the World are bounded by Laws made by common conſent. But when Kings are not limited by the Laws of their Kingdoms, yet they are bounded by the Law of Nature, and by the Providence of God. But God is under no Law without himſelf, his Rule is within him, the Rectitude and Righteouſneſs of his own Nature, he is not under that Law he hath preſcribed to Man. The Law was not made for a *Righteous Man*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 9. Much leſs for a Righteous God. God is his own Law, his own nature is his Rule; as his own Glory is his end, himſelf is his end, and himſelf is his Law. He is moved by nothing without himſelf, nothing hath the Dominion of a motive over him but his own Will, which is his rule for all his actions in Heaven and Earth. *Dan.* 4. 32. *He rules in the Kingdom of men, and gives it to whomſoever he will.* And *Rom.* 9. 18. *He hath Mercy on whom he will have Mercy*; As all things are wrought by him according to his own Eternal Ideas in his own mind, ſo all is wrought by him according to the inward motive in his own Will, which was the manifeſtation of his own honour. The greateſt motives therefore that the beſt perſons have uſed, when they have pleaded for any grant from God, was his own Glory, which would be advanced by an anſwer of their Petition.

3. His Dominion is Abſolute *in regard of Supremacy and uncontroulableneſs.* None can implead him, and cauſe him to render a reaſon of his actions. He is the Soveraign King, *Who may ſay unto him what doſt thou? Eccleſ.* 8. 4. 'Tis an abſurd thing for any to diſpute with God. *Rom.* 9. 20. *Who art thou, O Man, that replyeſt againſt God?* Thou a Man, a piece of Duſt, to argue with God, incomprehenſibly above thy Reaſon, about the reaſon of his Works. Let the Potſheards ſtrive with the Potſheards of the Earth, but *not with him that faſhion'd them. Iſaiah* 45 9. In all the deſolations he works, he aſſerts his own Supremacy to ſilence men. *Pſal.* 46. 10. *Be ſtill, and know, that I am God.* Beware of any quarrelling motions in your minds, 'tis ſufficient, that I am, God, that is, ſupream, and will not be impleaded, and cenſur'd, or worded with by any Creature about what I do. He is not bound to render a reaſon of any of his proceedings. Subjects are accountable to their Princes, and Princes to God, God to none; ſince he is not limited by any Superior, his Prerogative is Supream.

4. His Dominion is Abſolute *In regard of Irreſiſtibleneſs.* Other Governments are bounded by Law, ſo that what a Governour hath ſtrength to do, he hath not a right to do. Other Governors have a limited ability, that what they have a right to do, they have not always a ſtrength to do, they may want a power, to execute their own Counſels. But God is deſtitute of neither; he hath an infinite Right, and an infinite Strength; his word is a Law, he commands things, to ſtand out of nothing, and they do ſo. *He commanded*, or *ſpake ὁ εἰπὼν, light to ſhine out of darkneſs*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. There is no diſtance of time between his Word, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*, *Gen.* 1. 3. Magiſtrates often uſe not their Authority for fear of giving occaſion to inſurrections, which may over-turn their Empire. But if the Lord will work, *Who ſhall let it? Iſaiah* 43. 19. And if God will not work, who ſhall force him? He can check, and overturn all other powers, his Decrees cannot be ſtopped, nor his Hand held back by any; if he Wills to daſh the whole World in pieces, no Creature can maintain its Being againſt

againſt his Order. He ſets *the Ordinances of the Heavens*, and *the dominion thereof in the Earth.* And *ſends Lightnings, that they may go, and ſay* unto him, *here we are*, Job 38. 33, 34.

3. Yet *this Dominion though it be Abſolute, is not Tyrannical; but 'tis managed by the Rules of Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, and Goodneſs.* If his Throne be in the Heavens, it is Pure, and Good: becauſe the Heavens are the pureſt parts of the Creation, and influence by their Goodneſs the lower Earth. Since he is his own Rule, and his Nature is infinitely Wiſe, Holy, and Righteous, he cannot do a thing, but what is unqueſtionably agreeable with Wiſdom, Juſtice, and Purity. In all the exerciſes of his Soveraign Right, he is never unattended with thoſe perfections of his Nature. Might not God by his Abſolute Power have pardon'd Mens guilt, and thrown the invading Sin out of his Creatures? But in regard of his Truth pawn'd in his threatning, and in regard of his Juſtice, which demanded ſatisfaction, he would not. Might not God by his Abſolute Soveraignty admit a Man into his Friendſhip, without giving him any Grace? But in regard of the incongruity of ſuch an act to his Wiſdom and Holineſs, he will not. May he not by his Abſolute Power, refuſe to accept a Man, that deſires to pleaſe him, and reject a purely innocent Creature? But in regard of his Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs he will not. Though Innocence be amiable in its own Nature, yet it is not neceſſary in regard of God's Soveraignty, that he ſhould love it; but in regard of his Goodneſs it is neceſſary, and he will never do otherwiſe. As God never acts to the utmoſt of his Power, ſo he never exerts the utmoſt of his Soveraignty: becauſe it would be inconſiſtent with thoſe other properties, which render him perfectly Adorable to the Creature. As no intilligent Creature, neither Angel nor Man can be fram'd without a Law in his Nature; ſo we cannot imagine God without a Law in his own Nature, unleſs we would fancy him a Rude, Tyrannical, fooliſh Being, that hath nothing of Holineſs, Goodneſs, Righteouſneſs, Wiſdom. If he *made the Heavens in Wiſdom*, Pſal. 136. 5. He made them by ſome Rule, not by a meer Will, but a Rule within himſelf, not without. A wiſe Work is never the Reſult of an abſolute unguided Will.

1. *This Dominion is managed by the Rule of Wiſdom.* What may appear to us, to have no other ſpring than abſolute Soveraignty, would be found to have a depth of amazing Wiſdom, and accountable Reaſon, were our ſhort capacities long enough to fathom it. When the *Apoſtle* had been diſcourſing of the Eternal Counſels of God, in ſeizing upon one Man, and letting go another, in rejecting the *Jews* and gathering in the *Gentiles*, which appears to us to be Reſults only of an abſolute Dominion, yet he reſolves not thoſe amazing acts into that, without taking it for granted, that they were govern'd by exact Wiſdom, though beyond his Ken to ſee, and his Line to ſound. *Rom.* 11. 33. *Oh the depth of the Riches both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God; how unſearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways paſt finding out?* There are ſome things in matters of ſtate, that may ſeem to be acts of meer Will, but if we were acquainted with the *Arcana Imperii*, the inward Engines which moved them, and the ends aimed at in thoſe undertakings, we might find a rich vein of prudence in them, to incline us to Judge otherwiſe than bare Arbitrary proceedings. The other Attributes of Power and Goodneſs are more eaſily perceptible in the works of God, than his Wiſdom. The firſt view of the Creation ſtrikes us with this ſentiment, that the Author of this great Fabrick was mighty, and beneficial; but his Wiſdom lies deeper, than to be diſcern'd at the firſt glance without a diligent enquiry. As at the firſt caſting our Eyes upon the Sea, we behold its motion, colour, and ſomething of its vaſtneſs, but we cannot preſently fathom the depth of it, and underſtand thoſe lower Fountains, that ſupply that great Ocean of Waters: 'Tis part of God's Soveraignty, as it is of the wiſeſt Princes, that he hath a Wiſdom beyond the reach of his Subjects; 'tis not for a finite Nature to underſtand an Infinite Wiſdom, nor for a fooliſh Creature that hath loſt his underſtanding by the fall, to judge of the Reaſon of the methods of a wiſe Counſellor. Yet thoſe

actions that ſavour moſt of Soveraignty, preſent Men with ſome glances of his Wiſdom. Was it meer Will, that he ſuffered ſome Angels to fall? But his Wiſdom was in it for the manifeſtation of his Juſtice; as it was alſo in the caſe of *Pharaoh*. Was it meer Will, that he ſuffered Sin to be committed by Man? was not his Wiſdom in this for the diſcovery of his Mercy, which never had been known without that, which ſhould render a Creature miſerable? *Rom.* 11. 32. *He hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.* Though God had ſuch an abſolute Right, to have annihilated the World, as ſoon as ever he had made it, yet how had this conſiſted with his Wiſdom, to have erected a Creature after his own Image one day, and deſpis'd it ſo much the next, as to Caſhier it from Being? What Wiſdom had it been, to make a thing only to deſtroy it? To repent of his Work as ſoon as ever it came out of his hands, without any occaſion offered by the Creature. If God be ſuppos'd to be Creator, he muſt be ſuppoſed to have an End in Creation; what End can that be, but Himſelf and his own Glory, the manifeſtation of the perfection of his Nature? What Perfection could have been diſcovered in ſo quick an annihilation, but that of his Power in Creating, and of his Soveraignty in ſnatching away the Being of his Rational Creature, before it had laid the methods of acting? What Wiſdom to make a World, and a reaſonable Creature for no uſe? Not to Praiſe, and Honour him, but to be broken in pieces, and deſtroy'd by him?

2. *His Soveraignty is managed according to the rule of Righteouſneſs.* Worldly Princes often fancy Tyranny and Oppreſſion to be the chief marks of Soveraignty, and think their Scepters not beautiful, till died in Blood, nor the Throne ſecure, till eſtabliſhed upon ſlain Carkaſſes. But *Juſtice and Judgment are the Foundation of the Throne* of God, *Pſal.* 89. 14. Alluding perhaps to the ſupporters of Arms, and Thrones, which among Princes are the Figures of Lions, Emblems of Courage, as *Solomon* had, 1 *Kings* 10. 19. But God makes not ſo much Might, as Right the ſupport of his. He ſits on a *Throne of Holineſs*, *Pſal.* 47. 8. As he reigns over the Heathens, referring to the calling of the *Gentiles* after the rejecting the *Jews*; the *Pſalmiſt* here praiſing the Righteouſneſs of it, as the Apoſtle had the unſearchable Wiſdom of it. *Rom.* 11. 33. *In all his ways he is Righteous*, *Pſal.* 145. 17. In his ways of Terror, as well as thoſe of ſweetneſs; in thoſe works wherein little elſe but that of his Soveraignty appears to us. 'Tis always linkt with his Holineſs, that he will not do by his abſolute Right any thing but what is conformable to it: ſince his Dominion is founded upon the Excellency of his Nature, he will not do any thing but what is agreeable to it, and becoming his other perfections. Though he be an abſolute Sovereign, he is not an Arbitrary Governour; *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right? Gen.* 18. 25. *i. e.* 'Tis impoſſible, but he ſhould act righteouſly in every punctilio of his Government, Since his Righteouſneſs capacitates him to be a Judge, not a Tyrant of all the Earth. The *Heathen Poets* repreſented their chief God *Jupiter* with *Themis*, or Right, ſitting by him upon his Throne in all his Orders. God cannot by his abſolute Soveraignty Command ſome things: Becauſe they are directly againſt unchangeable Righteouſneſs as to Command a Creature to hate, or blaſpheme the Creator, not to own him, nor praiſe him. It would be a manifeſt unrighteouſneſs, to order the Creature not to own him, upon whom he depends both in its Being and well Being: This would be againſt that natural Duty, which is indiſpenſably due from every rational Creature to God. This would be to order him, to lay aſide his Reaſon while he retains it, to diſown him to be the Creator, while Man remains his Creature. This is repugnant to the Nature of God, and the true nature of the Creature: Or to exact any thing of Man, but what he had given him a capacity, in his original Nature to perform. If any Command were above our natural Power, it would be unrighteous; as to command a man to graſp the Globe of the Earth, to ſtride over the Sea, to lave out the Waters of the Ocean; theſe things are impoſſible, and become not the Righteouſneſs and Wiſdom of God to enjoyn. There can be no obligation on Man to an impoſſibility. God had a free Dominion over nullity before the Creation, he could

call

call it out into the Being of Man and Beast: But he could not do any thing in Creation fooliſhly, becauſe of his infinite Wiſdom; nor could he by the Right of his abſolute Soveraignty make Man ſinful, becauſe of his Infinite Purity. As it is impoſſible for him not to be Soveraign; 'Tis impoſſible for him to deny his Deity, and his Purity. 'Tis lawful for God to do what he will, but his Will being ordered by the Righteouſneſs of his Nature, as Infinite as his Will, he cannot do any thing but what is juſt; and therefore in his dealing with Men, you find him in *Scripture* ſubmitting the reaſonableneſs and equity of his proceedings to the Judgment of his deprav'd Creatures, and the inward dictates of their own Conſciences. *Iſaiah* 5. 3. *And now, Oh Inhabitants of Jeruſalem, and men of Judah Judge I pray you, between me and my Vineyard.* Though God be the great Soveraign of the World, yet he acts not in a way of abſolute Soveraignty.

He rules by Law, he is a *Law-giver*, as well as a *King*, *Iſaiah* 33. 22. It had been repugnant to the nature of a rational Creature, to be ruled otherwiſe; to be govern'd as a Beaſt, this had been to fruſtrate thoſe Faculties of Will and Underſtanding, which had been given him. To conclude this; when we ſay, God can do this or that, or command this or that, his Authority is not bounded, and limited properly. Who can reaſonably detract from his Almightineſs, becauſe he cannot do any thing, which ſavors of weakneſs; and what detracting is it from his Authority, that he cannot do any thing unſeemly for the dignity of his nature? 'Tis rather from the Infiniteneſs of his Righteouſneſs than the ſtraitneſs of his Authority; at moſt it is but a voluntary bounding his Dominion by the Law of his own Holineſs.

3. *His Soveraignty is managed according to the rule of Goodneſs.* Some Potentates there have been in the World, that have loved to ſuck the Blood, and drink the tears of their Subjects, that would rule more by Fear than Love, * like *Clearchas* the Tyrant of *Heraclia*, who bore the Figure of a *Thunderbolt* inſtead of a *Scepter*, and named his Son *Thunder*; thereby to Tutor him, to terrify his Subjects. But as Gods Throne is a Throne of Holineſs, ſo it is a *Throne of Grace*. *Heb.* 4. 16. A Throne encircled with a Rainbow. *Revel.* 4. 23. *In ſight like to an Emerald.* An Emblem of the Covenant, that hath the pleaſantneſs of a green colour, delightful to the Eye, betokening Mercy. Though his Nature be infinitely excellent above us, and his Power infinitely tranſcendent over us, yet the Majeſty of his Government is temper'd with an unſpeakable Goodneſs. He acts not ſo much as an abſolute Lord, as a Gracious Soveraign and obliging Benefactor. He delights not to make his Subjects ſlaves. Exacts not of them any ſervile and fearful, but a generous and chearful Obedience. He requires them not to Fear or Worſhip him ſo much for his Power as his Goodneſs. He requires not of a rational Creature any thing repugnant to the Honour, Dignity, and Principles of ſuch a Nature; not any thing that may ſhame, diſgrace it, and make it weary of its own Being, and the Service it owes to its Soveraign. He draws by the cords of a Man; his Goodneſs renders his Laws as ſweet as Honey or the Honey-Comb to an unvitiated Palate, and a renew'd Mind. And though it be granted, he hath a full diſpoſe of his Creature, as the Potter of his Veſſel, and might by his abſolute Soveraignty inflict upon an innocent an Eternal Torment, yet his Goodneſs will never permit him to uſe this Soveraign Right to the hurt of a Creature, that deſerves it not. If God ſhould caſt an innocent Creature into the furnace of his wrath, who can queſtion him? But who can think that his Goodneſs will do ſo? Since that is as Infinite as his Authority? As not to puniſh the Sinner, would be a denyal of his Juſtice, ſo to torment an innocent, would be a denial of his Goodneſs. A man hath an abſolute power over his Beaſt, and may take away his Life, and put him to a great deal of pain; but that moral virtue of Pity and Tenderneſs would not permit him to uſe this right, but when it conduceth to ſome greater good, than that can be evil; either for the good of Man, which is the end of the Creature, or for the good of the poor Beaſt it ſelf, to rid him of a greater miſery: None but a ſavage Nature, a diſpoſition to be abhorr'd, would

* *Cauſin.* Poly. Hiſtor. lib. 4. cap. 22.

torture

torture a poor Beaſt meerly for his pleaſure. 'Tis as much againſt the nature of God, to puniſh one Eternally, that hath not deſerved it, as it is to deny himſelf, and act any thing fooliſhly, and unbeſeeming his other perfections, which render him Majeſtical, and Adorable. To afflict an innocent Creature for his own good, or for the good of the World, as in the caſe of the Redeemer, is ſo far from being againſt Goodneſs, that it is the higheſt Teſtimony of his tender Bowels to the Sons of Men. God though he be Mighty *withdraws not his Eyes*, i. e. his tender reſpect *from the Righteous*, *Job* 36. 5, 7, 8. 9, 10. And if he *bind them in Fetters*, 'tis to *ſhew them their Tranſgreſſions*, and *open their Ear to Diſcipline*, and renewing Commands in a more ſenſible ſtrain, *to depart from iniquity*. What was ſaid of *Fabritius*, you may as ſoon remove the Sun from its courſe, as *Fabritius* from his honeſty; may be of God, you may as ſoon daſh in pieces his Throne, as ſeparate his Goodneſs from his Soveraignty.

4. Propoſition, *This Soveraignty is extenſive over all Creatures.* He rules all, as the Heavens do over the Earth. He is *King of Worlds*, *King of Ages*, as the World tranſlated *Eternal* ſignifies, 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. τῷ δὲ βασιλεῖ τῶν αἰώνων. And the ſame Word is tranſlated, *Heb.* 1. 2. By whom alſo he made *the Worlds*, the ſame Word is rendred Worlds, *Heb.* 11. 3. *The Worlds were fram'd by the Word of God.* God is King of Ages or Worlds, of the inviſible World, and the ſenſible, of all from the beginning of their Creation, of whatſoever is meaſur'd by a time. It extends over Angels and Devils, over Wicked and Good, over Rational, and Irrational Creatures; all things bow down under his hand, nothing can be exempted from him: Becauſe there is nothing but was extracted by him from nothing into Being. All things Eſſentially depend upon him: And therefore muſt be Eſſentially Subject to him; the extent of his Dominion flows from the perfection of his Eſſence, ſince his Eſſence is unlimited, his Royalty cannot be reſtrained. His Authority is as void of any imperfection, as his Eſſence is; it reaches out to all points of the Heaven above, and the Earth below. Other Princes Reign in a ſpot of ground. Every worldly Potentate hath the Confines of his Dominions. The *Pyrenean* Mountains divide *France* from *Spain*, and the *Alpes*, *Italy* from *France*. None are call'd Kings abſolutely, but Kings of this or that place. But God is *the* King, the ſpacious Firmament limits not his Dominion. If we could ſuppoſe him bounded by any place in regard of his Preſence; yet he could never be out of his own Dominion; whatſoever he looks upon, whereſoever he were, would be under his Rule. Earthly Kings may ſtep out of their own Countrey into the Territory of a Neighbour Prince; and as one leaves his Countrey, ſo he leaves his Dominion behind him; but Heaven and Earth, and every particle of both is the Territory of God. *He hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom rules over all.*

1. *The Heaven of Angels and other excellent Creatures belong to his Authority.* He is principally call'd the *Lord of Hoſts* in relation to his intire Command over the Angelical Legions: Therefore *Verſe* 21. following the Text, they are call'd his *Hoſts*, and *Miniſters that do his pleaſure*. *Jacob* called him ſo before. *Gen.* 32. 1, 2. When he met the Angels of God, he calls them *the Hoſt of God*, and the *Evangeliſt* long after calls them ſo. *Luke* 2. 13. *A multitude of the Heavenly Hoſt praiſing God*, and all this Hoſt he Commands. *Iſaiah* 45. 12. *My hands have ſtretched out the Heavens, and all their Hoſt have I commanded.* He employs them in his Service, and when he iſſues out his Orders to them, to do this or that, he finds no reſiſtanc of his Will.

And the inanimate Creatures in Heaven are at his beck, they are his Armies in Heaven, diſpoſed in an excellent order in their ſeveral ranks, *Pſal.* 147. 4. *He calls the Stars by Name*; they render a due Obedience to him, as Servants to their Maſter; when he ſingles them out, *and calls them by Name*, to do ſome ſpecial ſervice, he calls them out to their ſeveral Offices, as the General of an Army appoints the ſtation of every Regiment in a Battalia. Or *he calls them by Name*, *i. e.* He impoſeth Names upon them, a ſign of Dominion. The giving

names

Names to the inferior Creatures being the first act of *Adam*'s derivative Dominion over them. These are under the Soveraignty of God. The *Stars* by their influences fight against *Sisera*, *Judg*. 5. 20. And the *Sun* holds in its Reins, and stands stone still, to light *Joshua* to a compleat Victory, *Josh*. 10. 12. They are all Marshall'd in their ranks, to receive his word of Command, and fight in close Order, as being desirous to have a share in the ruine of the Enemies of their Soveraign. And those Creatures which mount up from the Earth, and take their place in the lower Heavens, Vapours whereof Hail and Snow are form'd, are part of the Army, and do not only receive, but fulfill his word of Command, *Psal*. 148. 8. These are his Stores and Magazines of Judgment against a time of trouble, and *a day of Battle and War*, *Job* 38. 22, 23. The Soveraignty of God is visible in all their motions, in their going and returning. If he says go, they go, if he say come, they come, if he say do this, they gird up their Loyns, and stand stiff to their Duty.

2. *The Hell of Devils belong to his Authority.* They have cast themselves out of the Arms of his Grace into the Furnace of his Justice; they have by their revolt forfeited the Treasure of his Goodness, but cannot exempt themselves from the Scepter of his Dominion; when they would not own him as a Lord Father, they are under him as a Lord Judge, they are cast out of his Affection, but not freed from his yoke. He rules over the good Angels as his Subjects, over the evil ones as his Rebels. In whatsoever relation he stands, either as a Friend or Enemy, he never loses that of a Lord. A Prince is the Lord of his Criminals, as well as of his Loyallest Subjects. By this right of his Soveraignty, he uses them to punish some, and be the occasion of benefit to others; on the wicked he employs them as instruments of Vengeance, towards the Godly, as in the case of *Job*, as an Instrument of kindness for the manifestation of his sincerity against the Intention of that malicious Executioner. Though the Devils are the Executioners of his Justice, 'tis not by their own Authority but God's; as those that are employed either to rack, or execute a Malefactor, are Subjects to the Prince not only in the quality of Men, but in the execution of their function. * The Devil by drawing Men to sin acquires no right to himself over the sinner: For Man by Sin offends not the Devil, but God; and becomes guilty of punishment under God. When therefore the Devil is us'd by God for the punishment of any, 'tis an act of his Soveraignty for the manifestation of the order of his Justice. And as most Nations use the vilest persons in Offices of excution, so doth God those vile Spirits. He doth not ordinarily use the good Angels in those Offices of Vengeance, but in the preservation of his People. When he would solely punish, he employs *evil Angels*, *Psal*. 78. 49. A Troop of Devils. His Soveraignty is extended over the *deceiver and the deceived*, *Job*. 12. 16. Over both the Malefactor and the Executioner, the Devil and his Prisoner. He useth the natural malice of the Devils for his own just ends, and by his Soveraign Authority orders them to be the Executioners of his Judgments upon their own Vassals, as well as sometimes inflicters of punishments upon his own Servants.

* *Suarez*. vol. 2. lib. 8. cap. 20. p. 736.

3. *The Earth of Men, and other Creatures belong to his Authority.* Psal. 47. 7. God is King of *all the Earth*, and rules to the ends of it. *Psal* 59. 13. Antient Atheists confin'd God's Dominion to the Heavenly Orbs, and bounded it within the Circuit of the Celestial Sphear, *Job* 22. 14. *He walks in the Circuit of Heaven. i. e.* he exerciseth his Dominion only there. * *Pedum positio* was the sign of the possession of a piece of Land, and the Dominion of the possessor of it; and Land was resign'd by such a Ceremony, as now by the delivery of a *Twig* or *Turf*.

* *Bold*. in loc.

But his *Dominion* extends.

1. *Over the least Creatures.* All the Creatures of the Earth are listed in Christ's Muster-roll, and make up the number of his Regiments. He hath an Host on Earth, as well as in Heaven. *Gen*. 2. 1. *The Heavens and the Earth were finished, and all the Host of them.* And they are *all his Servants*, *Psal*. 119. 91. and move

move at his pleaſure. And he vouchſafes the Title of his Army to the *Locuſt*, *Caterpillar*, and *Palmer Worm*, *Joel* 2. 25. And deſcribes their motions by Military Words, *climbing the Walls*, *marching* not *breaking their ranks*, *Verſe* 7. He hath the Command as a great General over the higheſt *Angel*, and the meaneſt *Worm*; all the kinds of the ſmalleſt *Inſects* he preſſeth for his Service. By this Soveraignty he muzled the devouring nature of the Fire, to preſerve the three Children, and let it looſe to conſume their adverſaries: and if he ſpeak the word, the *ſtormy Waves* are huſh, as if they had no principle of rage within them, *Pſal.* 89. 9. Since the meaneſt Creature attains it end, and no Arrow that God hath by his power ſhot into the World, but hits the mark he aim'd at; we muſt conclude, that there is a Soveraign hand, that governs all. Not a ſpot of Earth, or Air, or Water in the World, but is his Poſſeſſion, not a Creature in any Element, but is his Subject.

2. *His Dominion extends over Men.* It extends over the higheſt Potentate, as well as the meaneſt Peaſant, the proudeſt Monarch is no more exempt than the moſt languiſhing Beggar. He lays not aſide his Authority to pleaſe the Prince, nor ſtrains it up to terrify the indigent. *He accepts not the perſons of Princes, nor regards the rich more than the poor: For they are all the work of his hands*, Job 34. 19. Both the powers and weakneſſes, the Gallantry and Peaſantry of the Earth ſtand and fall at his pleaſure. Man in innocence was under his Authority as his Creature, and Man in his revolt, is further under his Authority as a Criminal. As a Perſon is under the Authority of a Prince as a Governour, while he obeys his Laws, and further under the Authority of the Prince as a Judge, when he violates his Laws. Man is under God's Dominion in every thing, in his ſettlement, in his Calling, in the ordering his very Habitation. *Acts* 17. 26. *He determines the bounds of their Habitations.* He never yet permitted any to be univerſal Monarch in the World, nor over the fourth part of it, though ſeveral in the Pride of their Heart, have deſign'd, and attempted it. The Pope who hath bid the faireſt for it in Spirituals, never attain'd it, and when his power was moſt flouriſhing, there were multitudes, that would never acknowledge his Authority.

3. But eſpecially *this Dominion in the peculiarity of its extent, is ſeen in the exerciſe of it over the Spirits and Hearts of Men.* Earthly Governors have by his indulgence a ſhare with him in a dominion over Mens Bodies, upon which account he graceth *Princes* and *Judges* with the Title of *Gods*. *Pſal.* 82. 6. But the higheſt Prince is but a Prince *according to the fleſh*, as the *Apoſtle* calls Maſters in relation to their Servants. *Coloſ.* 3. 22.

God is the Soveraign; Man rules over the Beaſt in Man, the Body; and God rules over the Man in Man, the Soul. It ſticks not in the outward ſurface, but pierceth to the inward Marrow. 'Tis impoſſible God ſhould be without this; if our Wills were independent on him, we were in ſome ſort equal with himſelf in part God's as well as Creatures. 'Tis impoſſible a Creature, either in whole or in part, can be exempted from it: Since he is the faſhioner of Hearts as well as of Bodies. He is the Father of Spirits: And therefore hath the right of a paternal dominion over them. When he eſtabliſhed Man Lord of the other Creatures, he did not ſtrip himſelf of the propriety. And when he made Man a free Agent, and Lord of the acts of his Will, he did not deveſt himſelf of the Sovereraignty.

His Soveraignty is ſeen,

1. *In Gifting of the Spirits of Men.* Earthly Magiſtrates have hands too ſhort, to inſpire the Hearts of their Subjects with worthy Sentiments. When they conferre an employment, they are not able to convey an ability with it fit for the ſtation. They may as ſoon frame a Statue of liquid Water, and guild, or paint it over with the coſtlieſt colours, as impart to any a State-Head, for a State-Miniſtry. But when God chooſeth a *Saul* from ſo mean an employment as ſeeking of Aſſes, he can treaſure up in him a Spirit fit for Government. And fire *David*, in Age a ſtrip-

ſtripling, and by Education a Shepherd, with Courage to Encounter, and skill to Defeat a maſſy *Goliah*. And when he deſigns a Perſon for Glory to ſtand before his Throne, he can put a *new* and a Royal *Spirit into him*, Ezek. 36. 26. God only can infuſe Habits into the Soul, to capacitate it to act Nobly and Generouſly.

2. His Soveraignty is ſeen *in regard of the inclinations of mens Wills*. No Creature can immediately work upon the Will, to guide it to what point he pleaſeth, though mediately it may, by propoſing Reaſons which may maſter the Underſtanding, and thereby determine the Will. But God bows the hearts of Men by the efficacy of his Dominion, to what Centre he pleaſeth. When the more overweening ſort of Men, that thought their own Heads as fit for a Crown as *Saul's* ſcornfully deſpis'd him, yet *God touched* the Hearts of a Band of Men, to follow and adhere to him, 1 *Sam.* 10. 26, 27. When the Anti-Chriſtian Whore ſhall be ripe for deſtruction, God ſhall *put it into the heart* of the ten Horns or Kings, *to hate the Whore, burn her with Fire, and fulfil his Will*, Rev. 17. 16, 17. He *Faſhions the Hearts* alike, and tunes one String to anſwer another, and both to anſwer his own Deſign. *Pſal.* 33. 15. And while Men ſeem to gratifie their own Ambition and Malice, they execute the Will of God by his ſecret touch upon their Spirits, guiding their Inclinations, to ſerve the glorious Manifeſtation of his Truth. While the Jews would in a reproachful diſgrace to Chriſt, Crucifie two Thieves with him, to render him more uncapable to have any Followers; they accompliſh'd a Propheſie, and brought to light a mark of the *Meſſiah*, whereby he had been Characterred in one of their Prophets, *Iſaiah* 53. 12. That he ſhould be *numbred among Tranſgreſſors*. He can make a man of not willing, willing; The Wills of all Men are in his hand, *i. e.* under the power of his Scepter, to retain, or let go upon this or that errand, to bend this or that way; as Water is carried by Pipes, to what Houſe or Place the Owner of it is pleas'd to order, Prov. 21. 1. *The Kings heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the Rivers of waters he turns it, whitherſoever he will*, without any limitation. He ſpeaks of the Heart of Princes: Becauſe, in regard of their height, they ſeem to be more abſolute and impetuous as Waters; yet God holds them in his hand under his Domioion, turns them to acts of Clemency or Severity, like Waters, either to overflow and dammage, or to refreſh and fructifie. He can convey a *Spirit to them*, or *cut it off* from them, *Pſal.* 76. 12. 'Tis with reference to his efficacious power, in graciouſly turning the heart of *Paul*, that the Apoſtle breaks off his diſcourſe of the ſtory of his Converſion, and breaks out into a magnifying and glorifying of God's Dominion, 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. *Now unto the King eternal, &c. be honor and glory for ever and ever*. Our hearts are more ſubject to the Divine Soveraignty, than our members in their motions are ſubject to our own wills. As we can move our hand Eaſt or Weſt to any quarter of the World, ſo can God bend our Wills to what mark he pleaſes. The *ſecond Cauſe* in every motion depends upon the *firſt*, and that Will being a ſecond Cauſe, may be furthered or hindered in its inclinations or executions by God; he can bend or unbend it, and change it from one actual inclination to another. 'Tis as much under his Authority and Power to move or hinder, as the vaſt Engine of the Heavens is in its motion or ſtanding ſtill, which he can effect by a word. The work depends upon the Workman; the Clock upon the Artificer for the Motions of it.

3. His Dominion is ſeen *in regard of Terror or Comfort*. The Heart or Conſcience is Gods ſpecial Throne on Earth, which he hath reſerv'd to himſelf, and never indulg'd humane Authority to ſit upon it. He ſolely orders this in ways of conviction or Comfort. He can flaſh terror into Mens ſpirits in the midſt of their Earthly Jollities, and put death into the pot of Conſcience, when they are boyling up themſelves in a high pitch of Worldly Delights; and can raiſe Mens ſpirits above the ſenſe of torment under Racks and Flames. He can draw a Hand-Writing, not only in the outward Chamber but the inward Cloſet, bring the Rack into the inwards of a Man. None can infuſe Comfort, when he writes

bitter things, nor can any fill the heart with Gall, when he drops in Hony. Men may order outward Duties, but they cannot unlock the Conſcience, and conſtrain Men to think them Duties, which they are forced by humane Laws outwardly to act. And as the Laws of Earthly Princes are bounded by the outward Man, ſo do their Executions and Puniſhments reach no further than the caſe of the Body. But God can run upon the inward Man as a Gyant, and inflict wounds and gaſhes there.

5. Propoſition, *'Tis an Eternal Dominion.* In regard of the exerciſe of it, it was not from Eternity: Becauſe there was not from Eternity any Creature under the Government of it; but in regard of the foundation of it, his Eſſence, his Excellency, 'tis Eternal: As God was from Eternity Almighty, but there was no exerciſe or manifeſtation of it, till he began to Create. Men are Kings only for a time, their lives expire like a Lamp, and their dominion is extinguiſh'd with their lives; they hand their Empire by Succeſſion to others, but many times it is ſnapt off before they are cold in their Graves. How are the famous Empires of the *Chaldeans*, *Medes*, *Perſians* and *Greeks*, mouldred away, and their place knows them no more? And how are the Wings of the *Roman Eagle* cut, and that Empire which over-ſpread a great part of the World, hath loſt moſt of its Feathers, and is confin'd to a narrower compaſs. The dominion of God flouriſheth from one Generation to another. *He ſits King for ever*, Pſal. 29. 10. His *ſeſſion* ſignifies the eſtabliſhment, and *for ever* the duration, and he *ſits now*, his Soveraignty is as Abſolute, as Powerful as ever. How many Lords and Princes hath this or that Kingdom had? In how many Families hath the Scepter lodg'd? When as God hath had an uninterrupted Dominion. As he hath been always the ſame in his Eſſence, he hath been always glorious in his Soveraignty. Among Men, he that is Lord to day, may be ſtript of it to morrow; the Dominions in the World vary, he that is a Prince may ſee his Royalty upon the Wings, and feel himſelf laden with Fetters. And a Priſoner may be *lifted from his dungeon* to a Throne. But there can be no diminution of Gods Government; *His Throne is from generation to generation*, Lament. 5. 19. It cannot be ſhaken. His Scepter, like *Aarons* Rod, is always green. It cannot be wreſted out of his Hands; none rais'd him to it: None therefore can depoſe him from it; it bears the ſame ſplendor in all humane Affairs, he is an Eternal, an *Immortal King*, 1 Tim. 1. 17. As he is Eternally Mighty, ſo he is Eternally Soveraign; and being an Eternal King, he is a King that gives not a momentary and periſhing, but a durable and everlaſting Life to them that obey him: A durable and eternal puniſhment to them that reſiſt him.

IV. *Wherein this Dominion and Soveraignty conſiſts, and how 'tis manifeſted;*

1. *The firſt act of Soveraignty is the making Laws.* This is Eſſential to God; no Creatures Will can be the firſt rule to the Creature, but only the Will of God. He only can preſcribe Man his duty, and eſtabliſh the rule of it; hence the Law is call'd, *The Royal Law*, James 2. 8. It being the firſt and cleareſt manifeſtation of Soveraignty; as the Power of Legiſlation is of the Authority of a Prince. Both are joyn'd together in *Iſaiah* 53. 22. *The Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King.* Legiſlative Power being the great mark of Royalty. God as a King Enacts Laws by his own proper Authority, and his Law is a Declaration of his own Soveraignty, and of Mens moral ſubjection to him and dependance on him.

* *Suarez.* de Legib. p. 23.

* His Soveraignty doth not appear ſo much in his Promiſes as in his Precepts: A Mans power over another is not diſcovered by promiſing: For a promiſe doth not ſuppoſe the Promiſer either ſuperior or inferior to the Perſon to whom the Promiſe is made. 'Tis not an exerciſing Authority over another, but over a Mans ſelf. No Man forceth another to the acceptance of his Promiſe, but only propoſeth and encourageth to an embracing of it. But commanding ſuppoſeth always an Authority in the Perſon giving the Precept. It obligeth the Perſon to whom the Command is directed. A Promiſe obligeth the Perſon by whom the Promiſe is made. God by his Command binds the Creature,

by

by his promiſe he binds himſelf. He ſtoops below his Soveraignty, to lay obligations upon his own Majeſty. By a Precept he binds the Creature, by a Promiſe he encourageth the Creature to an obſervance of his Precept. What Laws God makes, Man is bound by vertue of his Creation to obſerve, that reſpects the Soveraignty of God. What Promiſes God makes, Man is bound to believe, but that reſpects the Faithfulneſs of God. God manifeſted his Dominion more to the *Jews* than to any other People in the World; He was their Law-giver, both as they were a Church and a Commonwealth. As a Church, he gave them Ceremonial Laws, for the regulating their Worſhip. As a State, he gave them Judicial Laws, for the ordering their Civil Affairs; and as both, he gave them Moral Laws; upon which, both the Laws of the Church and State were founded.

This Dominion of God in this regard will be manifeſt.

1. *In the Supremacy of it.* The ſole power of making Laws doth originally reſide in him. James 4. 12. *There is one Law-giver, who is able to ſave, and to deſtroy.* By his own Law he judges of the eternal States of Men, and no Law of Man is Obligatory, but as it is agreeable to the Laws of this Supream Law-giver, and purſuant to his righteous Rules for the Government of the World. The power that the Potentates of the World have to make Laws, is but derivative from God. If their Dominion be from him, as it is: For *by him Kings reign*, Prov. 8. 15. Their Legiſlative Power, which is a prime Flower of their Soveraignty, is deriv'd from him alſo. And the *Apoſtle* reſolves it into this Original, when he orders us, to be *ſubject to the higher Powers, not only for wrath, but for conſcience ſake*, Rom. 13. 5. Conſcience, in its operations, ſolely reſpects God: And therefore when it is exerciſed as the Principle of Obedience to the Laws of Men, 'tis not with a reſpect to them ſingly conſidered, but as the Majeſty of God appears in their Station and in their Decrees. This power of giving Laws was acknowledged by the Heathen, to be ſolely in God by way of Original: And therefore the greateſt Law-givers among the Heathen, pretended their Laws to be received from ſome Deity, or Supernatural Power by ſpecial Revelation; now whether they did this ſeriouſly, acknowledging themſelves this part of the Dominion of God: (For it is certain, that whatſoever juſt Orders were iſſued out by Princes in the World, was by the ſecret influence of God upon their Spirits. Prov. 8. 15. *By me Princes decree Juſtice*, by the ſecret conduct of Divine Wiſdom) or whether they pretended it only as a publick Engine, to enforce upon People the obſervance of their Decrees, and gain a greater credit to their Edicts, yet this will reſult from it, that the People in general entertain'd this common Notion, that God was the great Law-giver of the World. The firſt Founders of their Societies could never elſe have ſo abſolutely gain'd upon them by ſuch a pretence. There was always a Revelation of a Law from the mouth of God in every age: The Exhortation of *Eliphaz* to *Job*, *Job* 22. 22. Of receiving a *Law from the mouth* of God, at the time before the Moral Law was publiſh'd, had been a vain Exhortation, had there been no Revelation of the mind of God in all Ages.

2. The Dominion of God is manifeſt *in the extent of his Laws*. As he is the Governor and Soveraign of the whole World, ſo he Enacts Laws for the whole World. One Prince cannot make Laws for another, unleſs he makes him his Subject by right of Conqueſt. *Spain* cannot make Laws for *England*, or *England* for *Spain*. But God having the Supream Government, as King over all, is a Law-giver to all, to irrational, as well as rational Creatures. The *Heavens have their Ordinances*, Job 38. 33. All Creatures have a Law imprinted on their beings. Rational Creatures have Divine Statutes copied in their heart. For Men it is clear. *Rom.* 2. 14. Every Son of *Adam* at his coming into the World, brings with him a Law in his Nature, and when Reaſon clears it ſelf up from the Clouds of ſence, he can make ſome difference between Good and Evil; diſcern ſomething of fit and juſt. Every Man finds a Law within him, that checks him if he

offends it. None are without a legal Indictment, and a legal Executioner within them; God or none was the Author of this as a Soveraign Lord, in establishing a Law in man at the same time, wherein, as an Almighty Creator, he imparted a Being. This Law proceeds from God's general Power of Governing, as he is the Author of Nature, and binds not barely as it is the reason of Man, but by the Authority of God, as it is a Law engraven on his Conscience. And no doubt but a Law was given to the Angels; God did not govern those Intellectual Creatures as he doth Brutes, and in a way inferior to his rule of Man. Some sinned, all might have sinned in regard of the changeableness of their Nature. Sin cannot be but against some rule: *Where there is no Law, there is no Transgression*; what that Law was, is not reveal'd, but certainly it must be the same in part with the Moral Law, so far as it agreed with their Spiritual Natures; a love to God, a Worship of him, and a love to one another in their Societies and Persons.

3. The Dominion of God is manifest *in the reason of some Laws, which seem to be nothing else than purely his own Will.* Some Laws there are for which a reason may be rendered from the nature of the thing enjoyned, as to *Love*, *Honor* and *Worship* God. For others, none but this, God will have it so; such was that positive Law to *Adam*, of *not eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*, Gen. 2. 17. which was meerly an asserting his own Dominion, and was different from that Law of Nature God had written in his heart. No other reason of this seems to us but a resolve, to try Mans Obedience in a way of absolute Soveraignty, and to manifest his right over all Creatures, to reserve what he pleased to himself, and permit the use of what he pleased to Man, and to signifie to Man, that he was to depend on him who was his Lord, and not on his own will. There was no more hurt in it self, for *Adam* to have eaten of that, than of any other in the Garden; the Fruit was pleasant to the Eye, and good for Food, but God would shew the right he had over his own Goods, and his Authority over Man, to reserve, what he pleases of his own Creation from his touch; that since Man could not claim a propriety in any thing, he was to meddle with nothing but by the leave of his Soveraign; either discovered by a special or general License. Thus God shewed himself the Lord of Man, and that Man was but his Steward, to act by his Orders. If God had forbidden Man the use of more Trees in the Garden, his command had been just; Since as a Soveraign Lord he might dispose of his own Goods; and when he had granted him the whole compass of that pleasant Garden, and the whole World round about for him and his Posterity, it was a more tolerable exercise of his Dominion, to reserve this *one Tree*, as a mark of his Soveraignty, when he had left *all others* to the use of *Adam*. He reserv'd nothing to himself as Lord of the Manor, but this; and *Adam* was prohibited nothing else but this one, as a sign of his subjection. Now for this no reason can be rendered by any Man, but meerly the Will of God; this was meerly a fruit of his Dominion.

For the Moral Laws a reason may be rendred; to *Love* God, hath reason to enforce it besides God's will, *viz.* The *Excellency of his Nature*, and the greatness and multitudes of his Benefits. To love our Neighbor, hath enforcing Reasons, *viz.* the Conjunction in Blood, and the preservation of Humane Society, and the need we may stand in of their love our selves. But no reason can be assign'd of this positive Command about the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, but meerly the pleasure of God. It was a Branch of his pure Dominion, to try Mans Obedience; and a mark of his Goodness, to try it by so easie and light a Precept, when he might have extended his Authority further. Had not God given this or the like Order, his Absolute Dominion had not been so conspicuous. 'Tis true, *Adam* had a Law of Nature in him, whereby he was obliged to perpetual Obedience; and though it was a part of Gods Dominion to implant it in him, yet his Supream Dominion over the Creatures had not been so visible to Man, but by this, or a Precept of the same kind. What was Commanded, or

Prohibited

Prohibited by the Law of Nature, did beſpeak a comelineſs in it ſelf, it appear'd Good or Evil to the reaſon of Man, but this was neither Good nor Evil in it ſelf, it receiv'd its ſole Authority from the abſolute Will of God, and nothing could reſult from the Fruit it ſelf, as a reaſon why Man ſhould not taſte it, but only the ſole Will of God. And as Gods Dominion was moſt conſpicuous in this Precept, ſo Mans Obedience had been moſt eminent in obſerving it. For in his Obedience to it, nothing but the ſole Power and Authority of God, which is the proper rule of Obedience, could have been reſpected, not any Reaſon from the thing it ſelf.

To this we may refer ſome other Commands, as that of appointing the time of ſolemn and publick Worſhip, the *Seventh day*; though the Worſhip of God be a part of the Law of Nature, yet the appointing a particular Day, wherein he would be more formally and ſolemnly acknowledged than on other Days, was grounded upon his abſolute Right of Legiſlation: For there was nothing in the time it ſelf, that could render that day more Holy than another, though God reſpected his *finiſhing the work of Creation* in his Inſtitution of that Day, *Gen.* 2.3. Such were the *Ceremonial Commands* of Sacrifices, and Waſhings under the Law, and the Commands of Sacraments under the Goſpel: The one to laſt till the *firſt Coming* of Chriſt, and his Paſſion; the other to laſt till the *ſecond Coming* of Chriſt, and his Triumph. Thus he made natural and unavoidable uncleanneſſes to be ſins, and the touching a dead Body to be pollution, which in their own nature were not ſo.

4. The Dominion of God appears *in the Moral Law, and his Majeſty in publiſhing it.* As the *Law of Nature* was writ by his own Fingers in the Nature of Man, ſo it was Engraven by his own Finger in the *Tables of Stone*; Exod. 31.18. Which is very emphatically expreſt to be a mark of Gods Dominion. *Exod.* 32.16. *And the Tables were the work of God; and the Writing, was the Writing of God engraven upon the Tables*; and when the *firſt Tables* were broken, though he orders *Moſes* to frame the Tables, yet the *Writing of the Law*, he reſerves to himſelf, *Exod.* 34. 1. 'Tis not ſaid of any part of the *Scripture*, that it was Writ by the Finger of God, but only of the *Decalogue*; herein he would have his Soveraignty eminently appear; it was publiſh'd by God in ſtate, with a numerous attendance of his *Heavenly Militia*, Deut. 32.2. And the Artillery of Heaven was ſhot off at the ſolemnity: And therefore it is call'd *a fiery Law*, coming *from his right hand*, i. e. His Soveraign Power. It was publiſh'd with all the marks of Supream Majeſty.

5. The Dominion of God appears *in the Obligation of the Law, which reacheth the Conſcience.* The Laws of every Prince are fram'd for the outward conditions of Men; they do not by their Authority bind the Conſcience; and what Obligations do reſult from them upon the Conſcience, is either from their being the ſame immediately with Divine Laws, or as they are according to the juſt power of the Magiſtrate, founded on the Law of God. Conſcience hath a protection from the King of Kings, and cannot be arreſted by any humane Power. God hath given Man but an Authority over half the Man, and the worſt half too, that which is of an Earthly Original; but reſerved the Authority over the better and more Heavenly half to himſelf. The Dominion of Earthly Princes extends only to the bodies of Men, they have no authority over the Soul, their puniſhment and rewards cannot reach it: And therefore their Laws by their ſingle Authority cannot bind it, but as they are co-incident with the Law of God, or as the Equity of them is ſubſervient to the preſervation of humane Society, a regular and righteous thing, which is the Divine end in Government, and ſo they bind, as they have a relation to God as the Supream Magiſtrate. The Conſcience is only intelligible to God in its ſecret Motions, and therefore only guidable by God; God only pierceth into the Conſcience by his Eye: And therefore only can conduct it by his Rule. Man cannot tell whither we embrace this Law in our Heart and Conſci-

ences,

ences, or only in appearance. *He only can judge it*, Luke 12. 3, 4. And therefore he only can impose Laws upon it; 'tis out of the reach of humane penal Authority, if their Laws be transgress'd inwardly by it. Conscience is a Book in some sort as Sacred as the Scripture, no addition can be lawfully made to it, no substraction from it. Men cannot diminish the duty of Conscience, or raze out the Law God hath stampt upon it. They cannot put a *supersedeas* to the Writ of Conscience, or stop its mouth with a *Noli Prosequi*. They can make no addition by their Authority to bind it; 'tis a Flower in the Crown of Divine Soveraignty only.

His Soveraignty appears *in a power of dispensing with his own Laws*. 'Tis as much a part of his Dominion, to dispense with his Laws, as to enjoyn them; he only hath the power of relaxing his own right, no Creature hath power to do it; that would be to usurp a Superiority over him, and order above God himself. Repealing or dispensing with the Law, is a Branch of Royal Authority. 'Tis true, God will never dispense with those Moral Laws, which have an eternal reason in themselves, and their own nature: as for a Creature, to Fear, Love, and Honor God; this would be to dispense with his own Holiness, and the Righteousness of his Nature, to sully the purity of his own Dominion; it would write folly upon the first Creation of Man after the Image of God, by writing mutability upon himself, in framing himself after the corrupted Image of Man. It would null and frustrate the excellency of the Creature, wherein the Image of God mostly shines; nay, it would be to dispense with a Creatures being a Creator, and make him independent upon the Soveraign of the World in Moral Obedience.

But God hath a right to dispense with the ordinary Laws of Nature in the inferior Creatures; he hath a power to alter their course by an arrest of Miracles, and make them come short, or go beyond his Ordinances established for them. He hath a right to make the Sun stand still, or move backward; to bind up the Womb of the Earth, and bar the influences of the Clouds, bridle in the rage of the Fire, and the fury of Lions, make the liquid Waters stand like a Wall, or pull up the Dam which he hath set to the Sea, and command it to overflow the neighboring Countries. He can dispense with the natural Laws of the whole Creation, and strain every string beyond its ordinary pitch.

Positive Laws he hath revers'd; as the Ceremonial Law given to the Jews: The very nature indeed of that Law requir'd a Repeal, and fell of Course; when that which was intended by it was come, it was of no longer significancy; as before it was a useful shadow, it would afterwards have been an empty one. Had not God took away this, Christianity had not in all likelyhood been propagated among the Gentiles. This was the *partition wall between Jews and Gentiles*, Eph. 2. 14. Which made them a distinct Family from all the World, and was the occasion of the enmity of the Gentiles against the Jews. When God had by bringing in what was signified by those rites, declar'd his decree for the ceasing of them; & when the *Jews*, fond of those Divine Institutions, would not allow him the right of Repealing what he had the Authority of Enacting, he resolved for the asserting his Dominion, to bury them in the ruines of the Temple and City, and make them for ever uncapable of practising the main and essential parts of them: For the Temple being the Pillar of the legal Service, by demolishing that, God hath taken away the right of Sacrificing, it being peculiarly annex'd to that place; they have no Altar dignified with a Fire from Heaven to consume their Sacrifices, no legal High Priest to offer them, God hath by his Providence chang'd his own Law, as well as by his Precept.

Yea, he hath gone higher by vertue of his Soveraignty, and chang'd the whole scene and methods of his Government after the Fall, from King Creator to King Redeemer. He hath revok'd the Law of Works as a Covenant, releas'd the penalty of it from the believing Sinner, by transferring it upon the Surety who interpos'd himself by his own Will and Divine designation. He hath establish'd another

another Covenant upon other promiſes in a higher root, with greater Priviledges and eaſier terms. Had not God had this right of Soveraignty, not a Man of *Adams* Poſterity could have been bleſſed; he and they muſt have lain groaning under the miſery of the Fall, which had render'd both himſelf, and all in his loyns, unable to obſerve the Terms in the firſt Covenant.

He hath, as ſome ſpeak, diſpens'd with his own Moral Law in ſome caſes; in commanding *Abraham* to Sacrifice his Son, his only Son, a righteous Son, a Son whereof he had the Promiſe, that *in Iſaac ſhould his Seed be call'd*; yet he was commanded to Sacrifice him by the right of his abſolute Soveraignty, as the Supream Lord of the Lives of his Creatures, from the higeſt Angel to the loweſt Worm, whereby he bound his Subjects to this Law, not himſelf. Our Lives are due to him when he calls for them, and they are a juſt forfeit to him at the very moment we ſin, at the very moment we come into the World, by reaſon of the venom of our Nature againſt him, and the diſturbance the firſt ſin of Man (whereof we are inheritors) gave to his Glory. Had *Abraham* Sacrificed his Son of his own head, he had ſinned, yea in attempting it; but being Authoriz'd from Heaven, his act was Obedience to the Soveraign of the World, who had a power to diſpenſe with his own Law; and with this Law he had before diſpens'd, in the caſe of *Cains* murder of *Abel*, as to the immediate puniſhment of it with death, which indeed was ſetled afterwards by his Authority, but then omitted becauſe of the paucity of Men, and for the Peopling the World; but ſetled afterwards, when there was almoſt, though not altogether, the like occaſion of omitting it for a time.

3. His Soveraignty appears *in puniſhing the Tranſgreſſion of his Law.*

1. *This is a branch of Gods Dominion as Law-giver.* So was the vengeance God would take upon the *Amalekites*. Exod. 17. 16. *The Lord hath ſworn, that the Lord will have war.* The *Hebrew* is, *the hand upon the Throne of the Lord*, as in the Margent. As a *Law-giver* he *ſaves or deſtroys*, James 4. 12. He acts according to his own Law, in a congruity to the Sanction of his own Precepts; though he be an Arbitrary Law-giver, appointing what Laws he pleaſes, yet he is not an Arbitrary Judge. As he commands nothing, but what he hath a right to command, ſo he puniſheth none but whom he hath a right to puniſh, and with ſuch puniſhment as the Law hath denounced. All his acts of Juſtice and inflictions of Curſes, are the effects of this Soveraign Dominion, Pſal. 29. 10. *He ſits King upon the floods*: Upon the Deluge of Waters wherewith he drown'd the World, ſay ſome. 'Tis a right belonging to the Authority of Magiſtrates, to pull up the infectious Weeds that corrupt a Commonwealth. 'Tis no leſs the right of God as the Law-giver and Judge of all the Earth, to ſubject Criminals to his vengeance, after they have rendered themſelves abominable in his Eyes, and carried themſelves unworthy Subjects of ſo great and glorious a King. The firſt name whereby God is made known in Scripture, is *Elohim*, Gen. 1. 1. *In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth.* A name which ſignifies his power of judging, in the opinion of ſome Criticks; from him it is deriv'd to Earthly Magiſtrates; their Judgment is ſaid therefore to be the *Judgment of God*, Deut. 1. 17. When Chriſt came, he propos'd this great motive of Repentance, from the *Kingdom of Heaven being at hand*; the Kingdom of his Grace, whereby to invite Men; the Kingdom of his Juſtice, in the puniſhment of the neglecters of it, whereby to terrifie Men. Puniſhments, as well as Rewards, belong to Royalty; it iſſued accordingly; thoſe that Believ'd and Repented, came under his gracious Scepter; thoſe that neglected and rejected it, fell under his Iron Rod. *Jeruſalem* was deſtroy'd, the Temple demoliſh'd, the Inhabitants loſt their lives by the edge of the Sword, or linger'd them out in the chains of a miſerable Captivity. This term of Judge, which ſignifies a Soveraign right to govern and puniſh Delinquents, *Abraham* gives him, when he came to root out the People of *Sodom*, and make them the Examples of his Vengeance, *Gen.* 18. 25.

2. Pu-

2. *Puniſhing the Tranſgreſſions of his Law; This is a neceſſary branch of Dominion.* His Soveraignty in making Laws would be a trifle, if there were not alſo an Authority to vindicate thoſe Laws from Contempt and Injury; he would be a Lord only ſpurn'd at by Rebels. Soveraignty is not preſerved without Juſtice. When the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks of the Majeſty of Gods Kingdom, he tells us, That *Righteouſneſs and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne*, Pſal. 97. 1,2. Theſe are the Engines of Divine Dignity, which render him Glorious and Majeſtick. A Legiſlative power would be trampled on without executive; by this the reverential apprehenſions of God are preſerved in the World. He is known to be Lord of the World, *by the Judgments which he executes*, Pſal. 9. 16. When he ſeems to have loſt his Dominion, or given it up in the World, he recovers it by puniſhment. When he takes ſome away *with a whirl-wind, and in his wrath*, the natural conſequence Men make of it, is this, *Surely there is a God that judgeth the Earth*, Pſal. 58. 9,11. He reduceth the Creature by the laſh of his Judgments, that would not acknowledge his Authority in his Precepts. Thoſe ſins which diſown his Government in the heart and conſcience, as Pride, inward Blaſphemy, *&c.* he hath reſerved a time hereafter to reckon for. He doth not preſently ſhoot his arrows into the marrow of every Delinquent, but thoſe ſins which traduce his Government of the World, and tear up the Foundations of humane converſe, and a publick reſpect to him, he reckons with particularly here as well as hereafter, that the life of his Soveraignty might not always faint in the World.

3. *This of puniſhing was the ſecond diſcovery of his Dominion in the World.* His firſt act of Soveraignty was the giving a Law; the next, his appearance in the State of a Judge. When his Orders were violated, he reſcues the honor of them by an execution of Juſtice. He firſt judg'd the Angels, puniſhing the evil ones for their crime; the *firſt* Court he kept among them as a Governor, was to give them a Law; the *ſecond* Court he kept, was as a Judge trying the Delinquents, and adjudging the Offenders, to be *reſerved in chains of darkneſs* till the final Execution, *Jude 6.* And at the ſame time probably he confirmed the good ones in their obedience by Grace. So the firſt diſcovery of his Dominion to Man, was the giving him a Precept; the next, was the inflicting a puniſhment for the breach of it. He ſummons *Adam* to the Bar, indicts him for his Crime, finds him guilty by his own Confeſſion, and paſſeth Sentence on him, according to the rule he had before acquainted him with.

4. *The means whereby he puniſheth, ſhews his Dominion.* Sometimes he muſters up *hail* and *mildew*; ſometimes he ſends regiments of Wild Beaſts, ſo he threatens *Iſrael*; *Levit.* 26. 22. Sometimes he ſends out a party of Angels, to beat up the quarters of Men, and make a carnage among them, 2 *Kings* 19. 35. Sometimes he mounts his *Thundring* Battery, and ſhoots forth his Ammunition from the Clouds; as againſt the *Philiſtines*, 1 *Sam.* 7. 10. Sometimes he ſends the ſlighteſt Creatures to ſhame the Pride, and puniſh the ſin of Man; as *Lice*, *Frogs*, *Locuſts*; as upon the *Egyptians*, the 8, 9, 10. *chap.* of *Exodus.*

2. *This Dominion is manifeſted by God, as a proprietor and Lord of his Creatures, and his own Goods.*

And this is evident,

1. *In the choice of ſome perſons from Eternity.* He hath ſet apart ſome from Eternity, wherein he will diſplay the invincible efficacy of his Grace, and thereby infallibly bring them to the fruition of Glory. *Eph.* 1. 4, 5. *According as he hath choſen us in him before the Foundation of the World, that we ſhould be Holy and without blame before him in Love, having Predeſtinated us to the Adoption of Children by Jeſus Chriſt to himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will.* Why doth he write ſome names in the *Book of Life*, and leave out others? why doth he enroll ſome, whom he intends to make Denizons of Heaven, and refuſe to put others in his regiſter? The *Apoſtle* tells us, 'Tis the pleaſure of his Will. You may render a reaſon for many of Gods actions, till you come to this the top and Foundation

dation of all; and under what head of reaſon can man reduce this act, but to that of his Royal Prerogative? Why doth God ſave ſome, and condemn others at laſt? Becauſe of the Faith of the one, and unbelief of the other. Why do ſome Men believe? Becauſe God hath not only given them the means of Grace, but accompanied thoſe means with the efficacy of his Spirit. Why did God accompany thoſe means with the efficacy of his Spirit in ſome, and not in others? Becauſe he had decreed by Grace to prepare them for Glory. But why did he Decree, or chooſe ſome, and not others? Into what will you reſolve this, but into his Soveraign Pleaſure? Salvation and Condemnation at the laſt upſhot, are acts of God, as the Judge conformable to his own Law of giving Life to Believers, and inflicting Death upon Unbelievers; for thoſe a reaſon may be rendred; but the choice of ſome, and preterition of others, is an act of God as he is a Soveraign Monarch, before any Law was actually tranſgreſs'd, becauſe not actually given. When a Prince redeems a Rebel, he acts as a Judge according to Law; but when he calls ſome out to pardon, he acts as a Soveraign by a Prerogative above Law; into this the *Apoſtle* reſolves it, *Rom.* 9. 13, 15. When he ſpeaks of Gods loving *Jacob* and hating *Eſau*, and that before they had done either good or evil: It is, *Becauſe God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and compaſſion on whom he will have compaſſion.* Though the firſt ſcope of the *Apoſtle* in the beginning of the *Chapter*, was to declare the reaſon of Gods rejecting the Jews, and calling in the Gentiles; had he only intended to demoliſh the pride of the Jews, and flat their opinion of merit, and aim'd no higher than that Providential act of God; he might, convincingly enough to the reaſon of Men, have argued from the Juſtice of God, provoked by the obſtinacy of the Jews, and not have had recourſe to his Abſolute Will; but ſince he aſſerts this latter,* the ſtrength of his Argument ſeems to lie thus; If God by his Abſolute Soveraignty may reſolve and fix his love upon *Jacob*, and eſtrange it from *Eſau*, or any other of his Creatures, before they have done good or evil, and Man have no ground to call his Infinite Majeſty to account, may he not deal thus with the *Jews*, when their demerit would be a barr to any complaints of the Creature againſt him? If God were conſidered here in the quality of a *Judge*, it had been fit to have conſidered the matter of Fact in the Criminal; but he is conſidered as a *Soveraign*, rendring no other reaſon of his action but his own Will, *whom he will he hardens*, ver. 18. And then the *Apoſtle* concludes, ver. 20. *Who art thou, O man, that repliest againſt God?* If the reaſon drawn from Gods Soveraignty doth not ſatisfie in this enquiry, no other reaſon can be found wherein to acquieſce. For the laſt condemnation there will be ſufficient reaſon to clear the Juſtice of his proceedings. But in this caſe of Election, no other reaſon but what is alledg'd, *viz. The Will of God* can be thought of, but what is liable to ſuch knotty Exceptions that cannot well be untyed.

* *Amyrald.* diſſert. p. 101, 102.

1. *It could not be any merit in the Creature, that might determine God to chooſe him.* If the Decree of Election falls not under the merit of Chriſts Paſſion, as the procuring Cauſe, it cannot fall under the merit of any part of the corrupted Maſs. The Decree of ſending Chriſt did not precede, but follow'd in order of Nature the determination of chooſing ſome. When Men were choſen as the ſubjects for Glory, Chriſt was choſen as the means for the bringing them to Glory, *Eph.* 1. 4. *Choſen us in him, and predeſtinated us to the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt.* The choice was not meerly in Chriſt as the moving Cauſe; that the *Apoſtle* aſſerts, to be *the good pleaſure of his Will*; but in Chriſt, as the means of conveying to the choſen Ones the fruits of their Election. What could there be in any Man, that could invite God to this act, or be a cauſe of diſtinction of one branch of *Adam* from another? Were they not all hew'd out of the ſame Rock, and tainted with the ſame corruption in Blood? Had it been poſſible to inveſt them with a power of merit at the firſt, had not that venom contracted in their nature, degraded all of Power for the future? What merit was there in any but of wrathful puniſhment, ſince they were all conſidered as Criminals, and the curſed brood of an ungrateful Rebel? what dignity can there be in the nature of the pureſt part of clay, to be made a Veſſel of Honor, more than in another part of Clay as pure as that which was

form'd into a Veſſel for mean and ſordid uſe? What had any one to move his mercy more than another; ſince they were all Children of Wrath, and equally dawb'd with Original guilt and filth? Had not all an equal proportion of it to provoke his Juſtice? What merit is there in one dry Bone more than another, to be inſpir'd with the breath of a Spiritual Life? Did not all lie wallowing in their own filthy Blood; and what could the ſteam and noyſomneſs of that deſerve at the hands of a pure Majeſty, but to be caſt into a ſink furtheſt from his ſight? Were they not all conſidered in this deplorable poſture with an equal proportion of Poyſon in their Nature, when God firſt took his Pen and ſingled out ſome names to write in the Book of Life? It could not be merit in any one piece of this abominable Maſs, that ſhould ſtir up that reſolution in God to ſet apart this Perſon for a Veſſel of Glory, while he permitted another to putrifie in his own Gore. He loved *Jacob* and hated *Eſau*, though they were both parts of the common Maſs, the Seed of the ſame Loyns, and lodg'd in the ſame Womb.

2. *Nor could it be any foreſight of Works to be done in time by them, or of Faith, that might determine God to chooſe them.* What good could he foreſee reſulting from extream Corruption, and a Nature alienated from him? What could he foreſee of good to be done by them, but what he reſolved in his own Will, to beſtow an ability upon them to bring forth? His choice of them was to a Holineſs, not for a Holineſs preceding his determination, *Eph.* 1.4. He hath choſen us, *that we might be holy* before him; he ordained us *to good works*, not for them, *Eph.* 2.10. What is a fruit, cannot be a moving Cauſe of that whereof it is a Fruit. Grace is a Stream from the Spring of electing Love; the Branch is not the cauſe of the Root, but the Root of the Branch, nor the Stream the cauſe of the Spring, but the Spring the cauſe of the Stream. Good works ſuppoſe Grace, and a good and right habit in the perſon; as rational acts ſuppoſe reaſon. Can any Man ſay that the rational acts man performs after his Creation, were a cauſe why God Created him? This would make Creation, and every thing elſe, not ſo much an act of his Will, as an act of his Underſtanding. God foreſaw no rational act in Man, before the act of his Will to give him Reaſon; nor foreſees Faith in any, before the act of his Will determining to give him Faith, Eph. 2.8. *Faith is the gift of God.* In the Salvation which grows up from this firſt purpoſe of God, he regards not the Works we have done, as a principal Motive to ſettle the Top-ſtone of our Happineſs, but his own purpoſe, and the Grace given in Chriſt, 2 Tim. 1.9. *Who hath ſaved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our own works, but according to his own purpoſe, and Grace which was given to us in Chriſt, before the world began.* The honor of our Salvation cannot be challeng'd by our Works, much leſs the honor of the Foundation of it. It was a pure gift of Grace, without any reſpect to any Spiritual, much leſs Natural Perfection. Why ſhould the *Apoſtle* mention that Circumſtance, when he ſpeaks of Gods loving *Jacob* and hating *Eſau, when neither of them had done good or evil*, Rom. 9.11. if there were any foreſight of Mens works, as the moving Cauſe of his love or hatred? God regarded not the *works* of either as the firſt cauſe of his Choice, but acted by his own Liberty without reſpect to any of their Actions, which were to be done by them in time. If Faith be the Fruit of Election, the preſcience of Faith doth not influence the Electing act of God. *Tit.* 1.1. 'Tis called, *The Faith of Gods elect.* Paul *an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, according to the Faith of Gods elect*, i. e. Setled in this Office to bring the Elect of God to Faith. If Men be choſen by God upon the foreſight of Faith, or not choſen till they have Faith, they are not ſo much Gods Elect, as God their Elect; they chooſe God by Faith, before God chooſeth them by love. It had not been the Faith of Gods Elect, *i. e.* Of thoſe already choſen, but the Faith of thoſe that were to be choſen by God afterwards. * Election is the cauſe of Faith, and not Faith the cauſe of Election. Fire is the cauſe of Heat, and not the Heat of Fire; the Sun is the cauſe of the Day, and not the Day the cauſe of the riſing of the Sun. Men are not choſen becauſe they Believe, but they Believe becauſe they are choſen: The *Apoſtle* did ill elſe to appropriate that to the Elect, which they had no more intereſt in by vertue

* *Dalle* in loc.

vertue of their Election, than the verieſt Reprobate in the World. If the foreſight of what works might be done by his Creatures, was the motive of his chooſing them, why did he not chooſe the Devils to Redemption, who could have done him better ſervice by the ſtrength of their Nature, than the whole Maſs of *Adam*'s poſterity?

Well then, there is no poſſible way to lay the original Foundation of this act of Election, and preterition in any thing but the abſolute Soveraignty of God.

Juſtice or Injuſtice comes not into conſideration in this Caſe. There is no debt which Juſtice or Injuſtice always reſpects in its Acting: If he had pleaſed, he might have choſen all, if he had pleaſed, he might have choſen none. It was in his Supream Power, to have reſolved to have left all *Adams* Poſterity under the rack of his Juſtice; if he determined to ſnatch out any, it was a part of his Dominion, but without any injury to the Creatures he leaves under their own guilt. Did he not paſs by the Angels, and take Man? And by the ſame right of Dominion may he pick out ſome Men from the common Maſs, and lay aſide others to bear the puniſhment of their Crimes. Are they not all his Subjects? All are his Criminals, and may be dealt with at the pleaſure of their undoubted Lord and Soveraign. This is a work of Arbitrary Power: Since he might have choſen none, or choſen all, as he ſaw good himſelf. 'Tis at the liberty of the Artificer, to determine his Wood or Stone to ſuch a Figure, that of a Prince or that of a Toad; and his Materials have no right to complain of him, ſince it lies wholly upon his own liberty. They muſt have little ſence of their own vileneſs, and Gods infinite Excellency above them by right of Creation, that will contend that God hath a leſſer right over his Creatures, than an Artificer over his Wood or Stone. If it were at his liberty whither to redeem Man, or ſend Chriſt upon ſuch an undertaking; 'tis as much at his liberty, and the prerogative is to be allow'd him, what perſons he will reſolve to make capable of enjoying the Fruits of that Redemption. One Man was as fit a ſubject for Mercy as another; as they all lay in their Original Guilt. Why would not Divine Mercy caſt its eye upon this Man, as well as upon his Neighbor? There was no cauſe in the Creature, but all in God, it muſt be reſolved into his own Will.

Yet not into a Will without Wiſdom. God did not chooſe hand over head, and act by meer Will without Reaſon and Underſtanding; an infinite Wiſdom is far from ſuch a kind of procedure; but the reaſon of God is inſcrutable to us: unleſs we could underſtand God, as well as he underſtands himſelf; the whole ground lies in God himſelf, no part of it in the Creature, Rom. 9. 15, 16. *Not in him that wills, nor in him that runs, but in God that ſhews mercy.* Since God hath revealed no other Cauſe than his Will, we can reſolve it into no other than his Soveraign Empire over all Creatures. 'Tis not without a ſtop to our Curioſity, that in the ſame place where God aſſerts the Abſolute Soveraignty of his Mercy to *Moſes*, he tells him he could not ſee his Face. Exod. 33. 19, 20. *I will be Gracious, to whom I will be Gracious*: and he ſaid, *Thou canſt not ſee my Face.* The Rayes of his Infinite Wiſdom, are too bright and dazling for our weakneſs. The *Apoſtle* acknowledged, not only a Wiſdom in this Proceeding, but a Riches and Treaſure of *Wiſdom*; not only that, but a Depth and Vaſtneſs of thoſe Riches of *Wiſdom*, but was unable to give us an Inventory and Scheme of it. *Rom.* 11. 33. The ſecrets of his Counſels are too deep for us to wade into; in attempting to know the reaſon of thoſe Acts, we ſhould find our ſelves ſwallowed up into a bottomleſs Gulf. Though the Underſtanding be above our capacity, yet the Admiration of his Authority and Submiſſion to it, are not. *We ſhould caſt our ſelves down at his feet, with a full reſignation of our ſelves to his Soveraign pleaſure**. This is a more comely carriage in a Chriſtian, than all the contentious endeavors to meaſure God by our line.

* This was Dr. *Goodwins* Speech when he was in trouble.

2. *In beſtowing Grace where he pleaſes.* God in Converſion and Pardon, works not as a Natural Agent, putting forth Strength to the utmoſt, which God muſt do, if he did renew Man naturally, as the Sun ſhines, and the Fire burns,

which always act, *ad extremum virium*, unleſs a Cloud interpoſe, to eclipſe the one, and Water to extinguiſh the other. But God acts as a voluntary Agent, which can freely exert his Power when he pleaſe, and ſuſpend it when he pleaſe. Though God be neceſſarily Good, yet he is not neceſſitated to manifeſt all the Treaſures of his Goodneſs to every Subject; he hath power to diſtil his Dews upon one part and not upon another. If he were neceſsitated to expreſs his Goodneſs without a liberty, no thanks were due to him. Who thanks the Sun for ſhining on him, or the Fire for warming him? None, becauſe they are neceſſary Agents, and can do no other.

What is the reaſon he did not reach out his Hand to keep all the Angels from ſinking as well as ſome, or recover them when they were ſunk? What is the reaſon he engrafts one Man into the true Vine, and lets another remain a wild Olive? Why is not the efficacy of the Spirit always link'd with the motions of the Spirit? Why doth he not mould the heart into a Goſpel frame, when he fills the Ear with a Goſpel ſound? Why doth he ſtrike off the chains from ſome, and tear the vail from the heart, while he leaves others under their Natural Slavery and *Egyptian* Darkneſs? Why do ſome lie under the bands of Death, while another is rais'd to a Spiritual Life? What reaſon is there for all this, but his abſolute Will? The *Apoſtle* reſolves the queſtion, if the queſtion be ask'd why he begets one and not another? Not from the Will of the Creature, but *his own Will* is the determination of one, *James* 1. 18. Why doth he work in one, *to will and to do*, and not in another? Becauſe of *his good pleaſure*, is the anſwer of another, *Phil.* 2. 13. He could as well new Create every one, as he at firſt created them, and make Grace as univerſal as Nature and Reaſon; but it is not his pleaſure ſo to do.

1. *'Tis not for want of ſtrength in himſelf.* The power of God is unqueſtionably able to ſtrike off the chains of unbelief from all; he could ſurmount the obſtinacy of every Child of Wrath, and inſpire every Son of *Adam* with Faith as well as *Adam* himſelf. He wants not a Vertue ſuperior to the greateſt reſiſtance of his Creature; a Victorious Beam of Light might be ſhot into their Underſtandings, and a Flood of Grace might over-ſpread their Wills with one word of his Mouth, without putting forth the utmoſt of his Power. What hinderance could there be in any created Spirit, which cannot be eaſily pierced into, and new moulded by the Father of Spirits? Yet he only breaths this efficacious Vertue into ſome, and leaves others under that inſenſibility and hardneſs which they love, and ſuffers them to continue in their benighting Ignorance, and conſume themſelves in the embraces of their dear, though deceitful *Dalilah*'s.

He could have Conquered the reſiſtance of the *Jews*, as well as chaſed away the darkneſs and ignorance of the *Gentiles*. No doubt, but he could over-power the Heart of the moſt malicious Devil, as well as that of the ſimpleſt and weakeſt Man. But the Breath of the Almighty Spirit is in his own Power, to breath *where he liſts*, John 3. 8. 'Tis at his liberty, whither he will give to any the feeling of the invincible efficacy of his Grace. He did not want ſtrength to have kept Man as firm as a Rock againſt the Temptation of Satan, and pour'd in ſuch fortifying Grace, as to have made him impregnable againſt the Powers of Hell, as well as he did ſecure the ſtanding of the *Angels* againſt the Sedition of their Fellows. But it was his Will to permit it to be otherwiſe.

2. *Nor is it from any Prerogative in the Creature.* He converts not any for their *natural* Perfection: Becauſe he ſeizeth upon the moſt ignorant. Nor for their *moral* Perfection: Becauſe he converts the moſt ſinful. Nor for their *civil* Perfection: Becauſe he turns the moſt deſpicable.

1. *Not for their natural perfection of knowledge.* He opened the minds and hearts of the more ignorant. Were the nature of the Gentiles better manur'd than that of the *Jews*, or did the Tapers of their Underſtandings burn clearer? No, the one were skill'd in the Propheſies of the *Meſſiah*, and might have compared the Predictions

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they own'd with the Actions and Sufferings of Christ, which they were ſpectators of. He let alone thoſe that had expectations of the *Meſſiah*, and expectations about the time of Chriſts appearance, both grounded upon the Oracles wherewith he had intruſted them. The Gentiles were unacquainted with the Prophets, and therefore deſtitute of the expectations of the *Meſſiah*, *Eph.* 2. 12. They were *without Chriſt*. Without any Revelation of Chriſt, becauſe *aliens from the Commonwealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers to the Covenant of Promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the World*, without any knowledge of God, or promiſes of Chriſt. The *Jews* might ſooner in a way of reaſon have been wrought upon, than the Gentiles who were ignorant of the Prophets, by whoſe Writings they might have examined the Truth of the *Apoſtles* declarations; thus are they refus'd, that were the kindred of Chriſt according to the Fleſh, and the Gentiles that were at a greater diſtance from him, brought in by God. Thus he catcheth not at the ſubtle and mighty Devils, who had an Original in Spiritual Nature more like to him, but at weak and ſimple Man.

2. *Not for any Moral Perfection*: Becauſe he converts the moſt ſinful. The Gentiles ſteep'd in Idolatry and Superſtition. He ſow'd more Faith among the *Romans* than in *Jeruſalem*, more Faith in a City that was the common Sewer of all the Idolatry of the Nations conquered by them, than in that City which had ſo ſignally been own'd by him, and had not practiſed any Idolatry ſince the *Babyloniſh* Captivity. He planted Saintſhip at *Corinth*, a place notorious for the infamous Worſhip of *Venus*, a Superſtition attended with the groſſeſt Uncleanneſs. At *Epheſus*, that preſented the whole World with a cup of Fornication in their Temple of *Diana*. Among the *Coloſſians*, Votaries to *Cybele*, in a manner of Worſhip attended with beaſtly and laſcivious Ceremonies. And what character had the *Cretians* from one of their own Poets, mentioned by the Apoſtle to *Titus*, whom he had plac'd among them, to further the progreſs of the Goſpel, but the vileſt and moſt abominable? *Tit.* 1. 12. *Lyars*, not to be credited; *evil Beaſts*, not to be aſſociated with; *ſlow Bellies*, fit for no ſervice. What prerogative was there in the nature of ſuch putrefaction? As much as in that of a Toad, to be elevated to the dignity of an Angel. What ſteam from ſuch Dung-hills could be welcome to him, and move him to caſt his eye on them, and ſweeten them from Heaven? What treaſures of worth were here, to open the treaſures of his Grace? Were ſuch filthy ſnuffs fit of themſelves to be kindled by, and become a lodging for a Goſpel beam? What invitements could he have from Lying, Beaſtlineſs, Gluttony, but only from his own Soveraignty? By this he plucks'd Fire-brands out of the Fire, while he left ſtraiter and more comely ſticks to conſume to aſhes.

3. *Not for any Civil Perfection*: Becauſe he turns the moſt deſpicable. He elevates not Nature to Grace, upon the account of Wealth, Honor, or any Civil ſtation in the World; he diſpenſeth not ordinarily thoſe Treaſures to thoſe that the miſtaken World fooliſhly admire and dote upon, 1 *Cor.* 1. 26. *Not many mighty, not many noble.* A purple Robe is not uſually deck'd with this Jewel. He takes more of mouldy Clay than refin'd Duſt, to caſt into his Image; and lodges his Treaſures more in the Earthly Veſſels, than in the Worlds Golden ones. He gives out his richeſt Doles, to thoſe that are the ſcorn and reproach of the World. Should he impart his Grace moſt to thoſe that abound in Wealth or Honor, it had been ſome Foundation for a Conception, that he had been mov'd by thoſe vulgarly eſteem'd Excellencies, to indulge them more than others. But ſuch a conceit languiſheth, when we behold the ſubjects of his Grace as void originally of any allurements, as they are full of provocations.

Hereby he declares himſelf free from all Created engagements, and that he is not led by any external Motives in the Object.

4. *'Tis not from any Obligation which lies upon him.* He is indebted to none, diſoblig'd by all. No Man deſerves from him any Act of Grace, but every Man deſerves what the moſt deplorable are left to ſuffer. He is obliged by the Children

dren of Wrath to nothing else but showers of Wrath, owes no more a debt to fall'n Man, than to fall'n Devils, to restore them to their first station by a superlative Grace; how was he more bound to restore them, than he was to preserve them, to catch them after they Fell, than to put a bar in the way of their Falling? God, as a Soveraign, gave Laws to Men, and a strength sufficient to keep those Laws. What obligation is there upon God to repair that strength Man wilfully lost, and extract him out of that condition into which he voluntarily plung'd himself? What if man sinned by Temptation, which is a Reason alledged by some? Might not many of the Devils do so too? Though there was a first of them that sinned without a Temptation, yet many of them might be seduced into Rebellion by the Ringleader. Upon that account, he is no more bound to give Grace to all Men than to Devils. If he promis'd life upon Obedience, he threatned death upon Transgression. By Mans disobedience God is quit of his Promise, and owes nothing but Punishment upon the violation of his Law. Indeed Man may pretend to a claim of sufficient strength from him by Creation, as God is the Author of Nature, and he had it; but since he hath extinguish'd it by his sin, he cannot in the least pretend any Obligation on God for a new strength. If it be a *peradventure* whither *he will give Repentance*, as it is, 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. There is no tye in the case; a tye would put it beyond a peradventure with a God, that never forfeited his Obligation. * No Husbandman thinks himself oblig'd to bestow cost and pains, Manure and Tillage upon one Field more than another; though the nature of the Ground may require more, yet he is at his liberty whither he will expend more upon one than another. He may let it lie Fallow as long as he please. God is less oblig'd to Till and Prune his Creatures, than Man is oblig'd to his Field or Trees. If a King Proclaim a Pardon to a company of Rebels, upon the condition of each of them paying such a sum of Money; their Estates before were capable of satisfying the Condition, but their Rebellion hath reduc'd them to an indigent Condition; the Proclamation it self is an Act of Grace, the Condition requir'd is not impossible in it self; the Prince out of a tenderness to some, sends them that sum of Money he hath by his Proclamation oblig'd them to pay, and thereby enabled them to answer the Condition he requires: The first he doth by a Soveraign Authority; the second he doth by a Soveraign Bounty, he was oblig'd to neither of them; punishment was a Debt due to all of them: If he would remit upon Condition, he did relax his Soveraign Right; and if he would by his Largess make any of them capable to fulfil the Condition, by sending them presently a sufficient sum to pay the Fine, he acted as Proprietor of his own Goods, to dispose of them in such a quantity to those to whom he was not oblig'd to bestow a mite.

* *Claudes* sur la Parabole des Noces, p. 29.

5. *It must therefore be an Act of his meer Soveraignty.* This can only sit Arbitrator in every gracious Act. Why did he give Grace to *Abel* and not to *Cain*, since they both lay in the same Womb, and equally deriv'd from their Parents a taint in their Nature: But that he would shew a standing Example of his Soveraignty to the future Ages of the World in the first Posterity of Man? Why did he give Grace to *Abraham*, and separate him from his Idolatrous Kindred, to dignifie him to be the root of the *Messiah*? Why did he confine his promise to *Isaac*, and not extend it to *Ishmael* the Seed of the same *Abraham* by *Hagar*, or to the Children he had by *Keturah* after *Sarahs* death? What reason can be alledged for this, but his Soveraign Will? Why did he not give the fallen Angels a moment of Repentance after their sin, but condemned them to irrevocable pains? Is it not as free for him to give Grace to whom he please, as Create what Worlds he please; to form this corrupted Clay into his own Image, as to take such a parcel of Dust from all the rest of the Creation, whereof to compact *Adam*'s body? Hath he not as much jurisdiction over the sinful mass of his Creatures in a new Creation, as he had over the *Chaos* in the old? And what reason can be rendered, of his advancing this part of Matter to the Nobler Dignity of a Star, and leaving that other part to make up the dark Body of the Earth? To compact one part into a glorious Sun, and another part into a hard Rock, but his Royal Prerogative? What is

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the reaſon a Prince ſubjects one Malefactor to puniſhment, and lifts up another to a place of truſt and profit? That *Pharaoh* honored the Butler with an attendance on his Perſon, and remitted the Baker to the hands of the Executioner? It was his pleaſure. And is not as great a right due to God, as is allow'd to the Worms of the Earth? What is the reaſon he hardens a *Pharaoh*, by a denying him that Grace, which ſhould mollifie him, and allows it to another? 'Tis becauſe *he will*: Rom. 9. 18. *Whom he will he hardens.* Hath not Man the liberty to pull up the Sluce, and let the Water run into what part of the Ground he pleaſes? What is the reaſon ſome have not a Heart to underſtand the Beauty of his Ways? Becauſe the Lord doth *not give* it them, *Deut.* 29. 4. Why doth he not give all his Converts an equal meaſure of his Sanctifying Grace; ſome have Mites, and ſome have Treaſures? Why doth he give his Grace to ſome ſooner, to ſome later; ſome are inſpir'd in their Infancy, others not till a full Age, and after, ſome not till they have fallen into ſome groſs Sin, as *Paul*; ſome betimes, that they may do him ſervice; others later, as the Thief upon the Croſs, and preſently ſnatcheth them out of the World? Some are weaker, ſome ſtronger in nature, ſome more beautiful and lovely, others more uncomely and ſluggiſh. 'Tis ſo in ſupernaturals. What reaſon is there for this, but his own will? This is inſtead of all that can be aſſign'd on the part of God. He is the free diſpoſer of his own Goods, and as a Father, may give a greater Portion to one Child than to another. And what reaſon of complaint is there againſt God; may not a Toad complain that God did not make it a Man, and give it a portion of reaſon? Or a Fly complain, that God did not make it an Angel, and give it a Garment of Light, had they but any ſpark of Underſtanding; as well as Man complain, that God did not give him Grace as well as another; Unleſs he ſincerely deſired it, and then was denyed it, he might complain of God, though not as Soveraign, yet as a Promiſer of Grace to them that ask it. God doth not render his Soveraignty formidable; he ſhuts not up his Throne of Grace from any that ſeek him; he invites Man, his Arms are open, and the Scepter ſtretched out; and no Man continues under the arreſt of his Luſts, but he that is unwilling to be otherwiſe, and ſuch a one hath no reaſon to complain of God.

3. His Soveraignty is manifeſt *in diſpoſing the means of Grace to ſome, not to all.* He hath caus'd the Sun to ſhine bright in one place, while he hath left others benighted, and deluded by the Devils Oracles. Why do the *Evangelical* dews fall in this or that place, and not in another? Why was the Goſpel publiſh'd in *Rome* ſo ſoon, and not in *Tartary*? Why hath it been extinguiſh'd in ſome places, as ſoon almoſt as it had been kindled in them? Why hath one place been honored with the beams of it in one Age, and been covered with darkneſs the next? One Country hath been made a Sphear for this Star that directs to Chriſt, to move in, and afterwards it hath been taken away, and placed in another: Sometimes more clearly it hath ſhone, ſometimes more darkly in the ſame place; what is the reaſon of this? 'Tis true, ſomething of it may be referr'd to the Juſtice of God, but much more to the Soveraignty of God. That the Goſpel is publiſh'd later and not ſooner, the *Apoſtle* tells us, is *according to the Commandment of the living God*, Rom. 16. 26.

1. *The means of Grace after the Families from* Adam *became diſtinct, were never granted to all the World.* After that fatal breach in *Adam*'s Family, by the death of *Abel*, and *Cain*'s ſeparation, we read not of the means of Grace continued among *Cain*'s Poſterity; it ſeems to be continued in *Adam*'s ſole Family, and not publiſh'd in Societies till the time of *Seth*, Gen. 4. 26. *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.* It was continued in that Family till the Deluge, which was 1523 *years* after the Creation, according to ſome; or 1656 *years* according to others. After that, when the World degenerated, it was communicated to *Abraham*, and ſetled in the Poſterity that deſcended from *Jacob*: Though he left not the World without a Witneſs of himſelf, and ſome ſprinklings of Revelations in other parts, as appears by the Book of *Job*, and the Diſcourſes of his Friends.

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2. *The Jews had this priviledge granted them above other Nations, to have a clearer Revelation of God.* God ſeparated them from all the World, to honor them with the *depoſitum* of his Oracles, Rom. 3. 2. *To them were committed the Oracles of God.* In which regard all other Nations are ſaid to be *without God*, as being deſtitute of ſo great a priviledge, *Eph.* 2. 12. The Spirit blew in *Canaan*, when the Lands about it felt not the ſaving breath of it. *He hath not dealt ſo with any Nation, and as for his Judgments they have not known them*, Pſal. 147. 20. The reſt had no warnings from the Prophets, no dictates from Heaven but what they had by the light of Nature, the view of the Works of Creation, and the Adminiſtration of Providence, and what remain'd among them of ſome ancient Traditions deriv'd from *Noah*, which in tract of time were much defaced. We read but of one *Jonah* ſent to *Niniveh*, but frequent Alarms to the *Iſraelites* by a multitude of Prophets commiſſioned by God. 'Tis true, the Door of the Jewiſh Church was open to what Proſelytes would enter themſelves, and embrace their Religion and Worſhip; but there was no publick Proclamation made in the World; only God by his Miracles in their deliverance from *Egypt* (which could not but be famous among all the Neighbor Nations) declared them to be a people favor'd by Heaven. But the Tradition from *Adam* and *Noah* was not publickly reviv'd by God in other parts, and rais'd from that Grave of forgetfulneſs wherein it had lain ſo long buried. Was there any reaſon in them for this Indulgence? God might have been as liberal to any other Nation, yea to all the Nations in the World, if it had been his Soveraign pleaſure. Any other people were as fit to be entruſted with his Oracles, and be Subjects for his Worſhip as that people; yet all other Nations, till the rejection of the *Jews*, becauſe of their rejection of Chriſt, were ſtrangers from the Covenant of Promiſe. Theſe People were part of the common maſs of the World: They had no prerogative in Nature above *Adam*'s Poſterity. Were they the extract of an innocent part of his Loyns, and all the other Nations drain'd out of his Putrefaction? Had the blood of *Abraham*, from whom they were more immediately deſcended, any more precious tincture than the reſt of Mankind? They as well as other Nations were made of *one blood*, *Acts* 17. 16. And that corrupted both in the Spring and in the Rivulets. Were they better than other Nations, when God firſt drew them out of their ſlavery? We have *Joſhua*'s authority for it, that they had complyed with the *Egyptian Idolatry, and ſerved other Gods* in that place of their ſervitude, *Joſh.* 24 14. Had they had an abhorrency of the Superſtition of *Egypt*, while they remain'd there, they could not ſo ſoon have erected a Golden Calf for Worſhip, in imitation of the *Egyptian* Idols. All the reſt of Mankind had as inviting reaſons to preſent God with as thoſe people had. God might have granted the ſame priviledge to all the World as well as to them, or denyed it them, and endow'd all the reſt of the World with his Statutes: but the enriching ſuch a ſmall company of people with his Divine ſhowers, and leaving the reſt of the World as a barren Wilderneſs in Spirituals, can be plac'd upon no other account originally, than that of his unaccountable Soveraignty of his love to them: There was nothing in them to merit ſuch high Titles from God, as his First-born, his peculiar Treaſure, the Apple of his Eye. He diſclaims any righteouſneſs in them, and ſpeaks a word ſufficient to damp ſuch thoughts in them, by charging them with their wickedneſs, while he *loaded them with his benefits*, Deut. 9. 4, 6. The Lord *gives thee not* this Land for *thy righteouſneſs*: For thou art a *ſtiff-necked* people. It was an act of God's free pleaſure, *to chooſe them to be a people to himſelf*, Deut. 7. 6.

12. *God afterwards rejected the Jews, gave them up to the hardneſs of their hearts, and ſpread the Goſpel among the Gentiles.* He hath caſt off the *children* of the Kingdom, thoſe that had been enroll'd for his Subjects for many Ages, who ſeem'd by their deſcents from *Abraham*, to have a right to the priviledges of *Abraham*, and called Men from the *Eaſt* and from the *Weſt*, from the darkeſt corners of the World to ſit down with *Abraham, Iſaac* and *Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven*, i. e. To partake with them of the Promiſes of the Goſpel, *Matth.* 8. 11. The People that were accounted Accurſed for the *Jews*, enjoy the means of

Grace,

Grace, which have been hid from thoſe, that were once dignified, theſe 1600 *years*; that they have neither *Ephod* nor *Teraphim*, nor Sacrifice, nor any true Worſhip of God among them. *Hoſ.* 3. 4. Why he ſhould not give them Grace, to acknowledge, and own the perſon of the *Meſſiah*, to whom he had made the promiſes of him for ſo many ſucceſſive ages, but let their *heart be fat*, and *their Ears heavy*, *Iſaiah* 6.10. Why the Goſpel at length after the Reſurrection of Chriſt ſhould be preſented to the Gentiles, not by chance, but purſuant to the reſolution, and prediction of God declared by the Prophets, that it ſhould be ſo in time? Why he ſhould let ſo many hundreds of years paſs over, after the World was peopled, and let the Nations all that while ſoak in their Idolatrous Cuſtoms? Why he ſhould not call the *Gentiles* without rejecting the *Jews*, and bind them both up together in the bundle of Life? Why he ſhould acquaint ſome people with it, a little after the publiſhing it in *Jeruſalem*, by the deſcent of the Spirit, and others not a long time after? Some in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity enjoyed it, others have it not, as thoſe in *America*, till the laſt age of the World; can be referred to nothing but his Soveraign pleaſure.

What merit can be diſcovered in the *Gentiles*? There is ſomething of Juſtice in the caſe of the *Jews* rejection, nothing but Soveraignty in the *Gentiles* reception into the Church. If the *Jews* were bad, the *Gentiles* were in ſome ſort worſe: The *Jews* own'd the one true God without mixture of Idols, though they own'd not the *Meſſiah* in his appearance, which they did in a promiſe; but the *Gentiles* own'd neither the one, nor the other. Some tell us, it was for the merit of ſome of their Anceſtors. How comes the means of Grace then to be taken from the *Jew*, who had, (if any people ever had) meritorious Anceſtors for a plea? If the merit of ſome of their former progenitors were the Cauſe, what was the reaſon the debt due to their merit, was not paid to their immediate progeny, or to themſelves, but to a poſterity ſo diſtant from them; and ſo abominably depraved, as the *Gentile* World was, at the day of the Goſpel-Sun ſtriking into their *Horizon*? What merit might be in their Anceſtors (if any could be ſuppoſed in the moſt refined rubbiſh,) 'twas ſo little for themſelves, that no Oyl could be ſpared out of their Lamps for others. What merit their Anceſtors might have, might be forfeited by the ſucceeding Generations. 'Tis ordinarily ſeen, that what honour a Father deſerves in a State for publick Service, may be loſt by the Son, forfeited by Treaſon, and himſelf attainted.

Or was it out of a foreſight that the *Gentiles* would embrace it, and the *Jews* reject it, that the *Gentiles* would embrace it in one place and not in another? How did God foreſee it but in his own Grace, which he was reſolved to diſplay in one, not in another? It muſt be then ſtill reſolved into his Soveraign pleaſure. Or did he foreſee it in their Wills and Nature? What, were they not all one common droſs? Was any part of *Adam* by nature better than another? How did God foreſee that which was not, nor could be, without his pleaſure to give ability and Grace to receive?

Well then, what reaſon but the Soveraign pleaſure of God can be alledged, why Chriſt forbad the *Apoſtles* at their firſt Commiſſion to Preach to the *Gentiles*? *Matth.* 10.15. But at the ſecond and ſtanding Commiſſion orders them to Preach to *every Creature*. Why did he put a demurr to the reſolutions of *Paul* and *Timothy*. to impart light to *Bithynia*, or order them to go into *Macedonia*? Was that Countrey more worthy upon whom lay a great part of the bloud of the World ſhed in *Alexanders* time? *Acts* 16.6,7,9,10. Why ſhould *Corazin* and *Bethſaida* enjoy thoſe means, that were not granted to the *Tyrians* and *Sidonians*, who might probably have ſooner reached out their Arms to welcome it? *Matth.* 11.21. Why ſhould God ſend the Goſpel into our *Iſland*, and cauſe it to flouriſh ſo long here, and not ſend it, or continue it in the furtheſt *Eaſtern* parts of the World? Why ſhould the very profeſſion of Chriſtianity poſſeſs ſo ſmall a compaſs of ground in the World, but five *parts in* Thirty, the *Mahometans* holding ſix *parts*, and the other Nineteen overgrown with *Paganiſme*, where either the Goſpel was never planted, or elſe ſince rooted up? To whom will you refer this, but to the

ſame cauſe our Saviour doth the Revelation of the Goſpel to Babes, and not to the wiſe, even to his Father? *For ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight. Matth.* 11. 25,26. *For ſo was thy good pleaſure before thee* (as in the original.) 'Tis at his pleaſure whether he will give any a clear Revelation of his Goſpel, or leave them only to the light of Nature. He could have kept up the firſt beam of the Goſpel in the promiſe in all Nations among the Apoſtaſies of *Adam*'s poſterity, or renewed it in all Nations, when it began to be darkned, as well as he firſt publiſht it to *Adam* after his fall. But it was his Soveraign pleaſure, to permit it to be obſcur'd in one place, and to keep it lighted in another.

4. His Soveraignty is manifeſt *in the various influences of the means of Grace.* He ſaith to theſe waters of the Sanctuary, as to the Floods of the Sea, *Hitherto you ſhall go and no further.* Sometimes they waſh away the filth of the fleſh, and outward man, but not that of the Spirit. The Goſpel Spiritualizeth ſome, and only moralizeth others; ſome are by the power of it ſtruck down to Conviction, but not rais'd up to Converſion. Some have only the gleams of it in their Conſciences, and others more powerful flaſhes; ſome remain in their thick darkneſs under the beaming of the Goſpel every day in their Face, and after a long inſenſibleneſs are rouz'd by its light and warmth. Sometimes there is ſuch a powerful breath in it, that it levels the haughty imaginations of Men, and lays them at its Feet, that before ſtrutted againſt it in the pride of their Heart. The foundation of this is not in the Goſpel it ſelf, which is always the ſame, nor in the Ordinances which are Channels as ſound at one time as at another, but Divine Soveraignty that Spirits them as he pleaſeth, and *blows when and where it liſts.* It has ſometimes conquered its *thouſands*, *Acts* 2. 41. At another time ſcarce its *tens*; ſometimes the Harveſt hath been great, when the Labourers have been but few; at another time, it hath been ſmall, when the Labourers have been many. Sometimes whole Sheaves, at another time ſcarce gleanings. The Evangelical Net hath been ſometimes full at a caſt, and at every caſt; at another time many have laboured all night and day too, and catched nothing. *Acts* 2. 47. *The Lord added to the Church daily.* The Goſpel Chariot doth not always return with Captives chain'd to the ſides of it, but ſometimes blurr'd and reproached, wearing the marks of Hells ſpite, inſtead of imprinting the marks of its own Beauty. In *Corinth* it triumph'd over *many* people; *Acts* 18. 10. In *Athens* 'tis mockt, and gathers but a few cluſters. *Acts* 17. 32, 34. God keeps the Key of the Heart as well as of the Womb. The *Apoſtles* had a power of publiſhing the Goſpel, and working miracles, but under the Divine conduct. It was an inſtrumentality *dur ante bene placito*, and as God ſaw it convenient. Miracles were not upon every occaſion allow'd to them to be wrought, nor ſucceſs upon every Adminiſtration granted to them. God ſometimes lent them the Key, but to take out no more Treaſure, than was allotted to them

There is a variety in the time of Goſpel operation; ſome riſe out of their Graves of Sin, and Beds of ſluggiſhneſs at the firſt appearance of this Sun, others lie ſnorting longer. Why doth not God Spirit it at one ſeaſon as well as at another, but ſet his diſtinct periods of time; but becauſe he will ſhew his abſolute freedom?

And do we not ſometimes experiment that after the moſt ſolemn preparations of the Heart, we are fruſtrated of thoſe incomes we expected: Perhaps it was becauſe we thought Divine returns were due to our preparations, and God ſtops up the Channel, and we return dryer than we came, that God may confute our falſe opinion, and preſerve the Honour of his own Soveraignty. Sometimes we leap with *John Baptiſt* in the Womb at the appearance of Chriſt; ſometimes we lye upon a lazy Bed when he knocks from Heaven. Sometimes the Fleece is dry and ſometimes wet, and God with-holds to drop down his dew of the Morning upon it. The dews of his Word, as well as the droppings of the Clouds belong to his Royalty. Light will not ſhine into the Heart, though it ſhine round about us, without the Soveraign Order of that God, *who commanded Light to ſhine out of the darkneſs* of the Chaos. 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. And it is not ſeen alſo in regard of the refreſh-

refreſhing influences of the Word? ſometimes the ſtrongeſt arguments, and cleareſt promiſes prevail nothing towards the quelling, black and deſpairing imaginations, when afterwards we have found them frighted away by an unexpected word, that ſeem'd to have leſs virtue in it ſelf, than any that paſſed in vain before it. The reaſonings of Wiſdom have dropt down like arrows againſt a brazen Wall, when the ſpeech of a weaker perſon hath found an efficacy. 'Tis God, by his Soveraignty Spirits one word and not another. Sometimes a ſecret word comes in, which was not thought of before, as dropt from Heaven, and gives a refreſhing, when emptineſs was found in all the reſt. One word from the Lips of a Soveraign Prince is a greater Cordial than all the Harangues of ſubjects without it. What is the reaſon of this variety, but that God would increaſe the proofs of his own Soveraignty? That as it was a part of his Dominion to Create the Beauty of a World, ſo it is no leſs, to Create the Peace as well as the Grace of the Heart. *Iſaiah* 57. 19. *I create the fruit of the Lips peace.*

Let us learn from hence to have adoring thoughts of, not murmuring fancies againſt the Soveraignty of God. To acknowledge it with thankfulneſs in what we have, to implore it with a Holy ſubmiſſion, in what we want. To own God as a Soveraign in a way of dependance, is the way to be own'd by him as Subjects in a way of favour.

5. *His Soveraignty is manifeſted in giving a greater meaſure of knowledge to ſome, than to others.* What Parts, Gifts, excellency of Nature any have above others, are God's donative. *He gives Wiſdom to the Wiſe, and Knowledge to them that know underſtanding, Dan.* 2. 21. Wiſdom the habit, and Knowledge the right uſe of it in diſcerning the right nature of objects, and the fitneſs of means, conducing to the end; all is but a beam of Divine Light; and the different degrees of Knowledge in one man above another, are the effects of his Soveraign pleaſure. He enlightens not the minds of all men, to know every part of his Will; one *eats with a doubtful Conſcience*, another in *Faith* without any ſtaggering. *Romans* 14. 2. *Peter* had a deſire to keep up Circumciſion, not fully underſtanding the mind of God in the abolition of the Jewiſh Ceremonies. While *Paul* was clear in the Truth of that Doctrine. A thought comes into our mind, that like a Sun-beam makes a Scripture-truth viſible in a moment, which before we were poring upon without any ſucceſs; this is from his pleaſue. One in the Primitive times had the gift of Knowledge, another of Wiſdom, one the gift of Propheſie, another of Tongues, one the gift of Healing, another that of diſcerning Spirits; why this Gift to one man, and not to another? Why ſuch a diſtribution in ſeveral Subjects? Becauſe it is his Soveraign pleaſure. *The Spirit divides to every man ſeverally as he will*, 1 *Cor.* 12. 11. Why doth he give *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab* the gift of Engraving, and making curious works for the Tabernacle, *Exod* 31. 3. and not others? Why doth he beſtow the Treaſures of Evangelical Knowledge upon the meaneſt of Earthen Veſſels, the poor *Galileans*, and neglect the *Phariſees* ſtor'd with the Knowledge both of Naturals and Morals? Why did he give to ſome, and not to others, *to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven*, *Matt.* 13. 11. The reaſon is implyed in the words: *Becauſe it was the Myſtery of his Kingdom*, and therefore was the act of his Soveraignty. How would it be a Kingdom and Monarchy, if the Governour of it were bound to do what he did? 'Tis to be reſolv'd only into the Soveraign right of propriety of his own Goods, that he furniſheth Babes with a ſtock of Knowledge, and leaves the *Wiſe* and *Prudent* empty of it. *Matth.* 11. 26. *Even ſo Father, for ſo it ſeem'd good in thy ſight.* Why did he not reveal his mind to *Eli* a grown man, and in the higheſt Office in the *Jewiſh* Church, but open it to *Samuel* a ſtripling; Why did the Lord go from the one to the other? Becauſe his motion depends upon his own Will. Some are of ſo dull a conſtitution, that they are uncapable of any impreſſion, like rocks too hard for a ſtamp; others like water, you may ſtamp what you pleaſe, but it vaniſheth as ſoon as the Seal is remov'd. 'Tis God forms Men as he pleaſeth, Some have parts to govern a Kingdom, others ſcarce brains to conduct their own affairs. One is fit to Rule Men, and another ſcarce fit to keep Swine. Some

have capacious Souls in crazy and deform'd Bodies, others contracted Spirits and heavier minds in a richer and more beautiful caſe. Why are not all ſtones alike? ſome have a more ſparkling light, as Gems, more orient then Pebbles. Some are Stars of firſt, and others of leſs Magnitude, others as mean as Glo-worms, a ſlimy luſtre: 'Tis becauſe he is the Soveraign diſpoſer, of what belongs to him; and gives here, as well as at the Reſurrection, to one a *Glory of the Sun*, to another that of the *Moon*, and to a third a leſs, reſembling that of a *Star*. 1 *Cor.* 15. 40. And this God may do by the ſame right of Dominion, as he exerciſed, when he endow'd ſome kinds of Creatures with a greater perfection than others, in their Nature. Why may he not as well garniſh one Man with a greater proportion of gifts, as make a man differ in excellency from the Nature of a Beaſt? Or frame Angels to a more purely ſpiritual nature than a man? Or make one Angel a *Cherubim*, or *Seraphim* with a greater meaſure of light than another? Though the foundation of this is his Dominion, yet his wiſdom is not unintereſted in his Soveraign diſpoſal; he garniſheth thoſe with a greater ability, whom he intends for greater ſervice, than thoſe that he intends for leſs, or none at all: As an Artificer beſtows more labour, and carves a more excellent Figure upon thoſe Stones, that he deſigns for a more honourable place in the building. But though the intending this or that man for ſervice, be the motive of laying in a greater proviſion in him than in others, yet ſtill it is to be referred to his Soveraignty ſince that firſt act of culling him out for ſuch an end, was the fruit ſolely of his Soveraign pleaſure. As when he reſolv'd to make a Creature, actually to glorify him, in wiſdom he muſt give him reaſon; yet the making ſuch a Creature was an act of his abſolute Dominion.

6. His Soveraignty is manifeſt *in the calling ſome to a more ſpecial ſervice in their Generation*. God ſettles ſome in immediate Offices of his ſervice, and perpetuates them in thoſe Offices with a neglect of others, who ſeem to have a greater pretence to them. *Moſes* was a great ſufferer for *Iſrael*, the ſollicitor for them in *Egypt*, and the conductor of them from *Egyt* to *Canaan*; yet he was not choſen to the high Prieſthood, but that was an Office ſetled upon *Aaron*, and his poſterity after him in a lineal deſcent; *Moſes* was only pitched upon for the preſent reſcue of the Captiv'd *Iſraelites*, and to be the inſtrument of Divine Miracles; but notwithſtanding all the ſucceſs he had in his conduct, his faithfulneſs in his employment, and the tranſcendent familiarity he had with the great Ruler of the World, his poſterity were left in the common level of the Tribe of *Levi* without any ſpecial mark of dignity upon them above the reſt for all the ſervices of that great Man. Why *Moſes* for a Temporary Magiſtracy, *Aaron* for a perpetual Prieſthood above all the reſt of the *Iſraelites*, hath little reaſon but the abſolute pleaſure of God who diſtributes his employments, as he pleaſeth; and as a Maſter orders this Servant to do the nobleſt work, and another to labour in baſer Offices according to his pleaſure? Why doth he call out *David* a Shepherd to ſway the Jewiſh Scepter above the reſt of the Brothers, that had a fairer appearance, and had been bred in Arms, and enur'd to the Toils and Watchings of a Camp? Why ſhould *Mary* be the Mother of Chriſt, and not ſome other of the ſame Family of *David* of a more ſplendid birth, and a nobler education? Though ſome other Reaſons may be render'd, yet that which affords the greateſt acquieſcence, is the Soveraign Will of God. Why did Chriſt chooſe out of the meaneſt of the People the *Twelve Apoſtles*, to be Heralds of his Grace in *Judæa* and other parts of the World? And afterwards ſelect *Paul* before *Gamaliel* his Inſtructor, and others of the *Jews*, as Learned as himſelf, and advance him to be the moſt eminent Apoſtle above the heads of thoſe who had miniſtred to Chriſt in the days of his Fleſh? Why ſhould he preſerve Eleven of thoſe he firſt called, to propagate and enlarge his Kingdom, and leave the other to the employment of ſhedding his Blood? Why in the times of our Reformation he ſhould chooſe a *Luther* out of a Monaſtery, and leave others in their ſuperſtitious naſtineſs, to periſh in the Traditions of their Fathers? Why ſet up *Calvin* as a Bulwark of the Goſpel, and let others as Learned as himſelf, wallow in the ſink of Popery? 'Tis his

his pleaſure to do ſo. The Potter hath power to ſeparate this part of the Clay to form a Veſſel for a more publick uſe, and another part of the Clay to form a Veſſel for a more private one. God takes the meaneſt Clay to form the moſt excellent and honourable Veſſels in his Houſe. As he form'd Man, that was to Govern the Creatures, of the ſame Clay and Earth, whereof the Beaſts were form'd, and not of that nobler Element of Water, which gave birth to the Fiſh and Birds. So he forms ſome that are to do him the greateſt ſervice, of the meaneſt materials, to manifeſt the abſolute right of his Dominion.

7. *His Soveraignty is manifeſt in the beſtowing much Wealth and Honour upon ſome, and not vouchſafing it to the more induſtrious Labours, and attempts of others.* Some are abas'd and others are elevated, ſome are enricht, and others impoveriſht, ſome ſcarce feel any Croſs, and others ſcarce feel any Comfort in their whole lives. Some Sweat and Toil, and what they labour for, runs out of their reach; others ſit ſtill, and what they wiſh for, falls into their lap. One of the ſame Clay hath a Diadem to beautify his Head, and another wants a covering to protect him from the weather. One hath a ſtately Palace to lodge in, and another is ſcarce Maſter of a Cottage where to lay his Head. A Scepter is put into one mans hand, and a Spade into anothers. A rich Purple garniſheth one Mans Body, while another wraps himſelf in Dunghil rags. The Poverty of ſome and the Wealth of others is an effect of the Divine Soveraignty, whence God is ſaid, to be the *Maker* of the *Poor as well as the Rich*, *Prov.* 22. 2. Not only of their perſons but of their conditions. The Earth and the fulneſs thereof is his propriety, and he hath as much a right, as *Joſeph* had, to beſtow changes of Rayment, upon what *Benjamins* he pleaſe. There is an Election to a greater degree of worldly felicity, as there is an Election of ſome to a greater degree of ſupernatural Grace and Glory. As he makes it *rain upon one City and not upon another*, *Amos*, 4. 7. So he cauſeth proſperity to diſtil upon the Head of one, and not upon another, Crowning ſome with earthly Bleſſings, while he croſſeth others with continual afflictions: For he ſpeaks of himſelf as a great proprietor, of the Corn that nouriſheth us, and the Wine that cheers us, and the Wood that warms us, *Hoſea*, 2. 8. 9. *I will take away*, not your Corn and Wine, but *my Corn*, *my Wine*, *my Wooll*. His right, to diſpoſe of the Goods of every particular perſon, is unqueſtionable. He can take away from one, and paſs over the propriety to another; thus he devolv'd the right of the *Egyptian* Jewels to the *Iſraelites*, and beſtow'd upon the Captives, what before he had vouchſafed to the oppreſſors. As every Soveraign ſtate demands the Goods of their Subjects for the publick advantage in a caſe of exigency, though none of that wealth was gain'd by any publick Office, but by their private induſtry, and gain'd in a Countrey, not ſubject to the Dominion of thoſe, that require a portion of them. By this right he changes ſtrangely the ſcene of the World, ſometimes thoſe that are high, are reduc'd to a mean and ignominious condition, thoſe that are mean, are advanc'd to a ſtate of Plenty and Glory. The Counter which in accounting ſignifies now but a Penny, is preſently rais'd up to ſignify a pound. The proud Ladies of *Iſrael* inſtead of a Girdle of curious needle-word, are brought to make uſe of a *Cord*; as the vulgar Tranſlates *Rent*, a rag or liſt of Cloth. *Iſaiah* 3. 24. And Sack-cloth for a Stomacher inſtead of Silk. This is the Soveraign act of God, as he is the Lord of the World. Pſal. 71. 6,7. *Promotion comes neither from the Eaſt, nor from the Weſt, nor from the South, but God is Judge, he pulls down one, and ſets up another.* He doth no wrong to any man, if he lets him languiſh out his days in poverty, and diſgrace. If he gives, or takes away, he meddles with nothing, but what is his own more than ours. If he did diſpenſe his benefits equally to all, Men would ſoon think it their due. The inequality and changes preſerve the notion of Gods Soveraignty, and correct our natural unmindfulneſs of it; if there were *no changes*, God would not be fear'd as the *King of all the Earth*, *Pſal.* 55. 19. To this might alſo be referred his inveſting ſome Countries with greater Riches in their Bowels and on the ſurface. The diſpoſing ſome in the fruitful and pleaſant Regions of *Canaan* or *Italy*, while he ſettles others in the Icy and barren parts of the Northern Climates.

8. His

8. His Soveraignty is manifeſt *in the times and ſeaſons of diſpenſing his Goods.* He is Lord of the times *when*, as well as of the Goods *which* he doth diſpoſe of to any perſon; theſe *the Father hath put in his own power*, *Acts* 1. 7. As it was his Soveraign pleaſure, to reſtore the Kingdom to *Iſrael*, ſo he would pitch upon the time, when to do it, and would not have his Right invaded, ſo much as by a queſtion out of curioſity. This diſpoſing of opportunities, in many things can be referred to nothing elſe but his Soveraign pleaſure. Why ſhould Chriſt come at the twilight and evening of the World, at the fulneſs, and not at the beginning of time? Why he ſhould be from the infancy of the World, ſo long wrapt up in a promiſe, and not appear in the fleſh till the laſt times and gray hairs of the World, when ſo many perſons in all Nations had been hurried out of the World without any notice of ſuch a Redeemer? What was this but his Soveraign Will? Why the *Gentiles* ſhould be left ſo long in the *Devils* chains, wallowing in the ſink of their abominable ſuperſtitions, ſince God had declar'd his intention by the Prophets, to call multitudes of them, and reject the *Jews?* Why he ſhould deferre it ſo long, can be referred to nothing but the ſame cauſe. What is the reaſon the vail continues ſo long upon the heart of the *Jews*, that is promiſed, one time or other, to be taken off? Why doth God delay the accompliſhment of thoſe glorious predictions of the happineſs and intereſt of that people, is it becauſe of the ſin of their Anceſtors, a reaſon that cannot bear much weight. If we caſt it upon that account, their converſion can never be expected, can never be effected; if for the ſins of their Anceſtors, is it not alſo for their own ſins? Do their ſins grow leſs in number, or leſs venimous, or provoking in quality by this delay? Is not their Blaſphemy of Chriſt as malicious, their hatred of him as ſtrong, and rooted, as ever? Do they not as much approve of the bloody act of their Anceſtors, ſince ſo many ages are paſt, as their Anceſtors did applaud it at the time of the Execution? Have they not the ſame diſpoſition and Will, diſcovered ſufficiently by the ſcorn of Chriſt, and of thoſe that profeſs his Name, to act the ſame thing over again, were Chriſt now in the ſame ſtate in the World, and they inveſted with the ſame power of Government? If their Converſion were deferr'd one age after the death of Chriſt for the ſins of their preceding Anceſtors, is it to be expected now, ſince the preſent generation of the *Jews* in all Countreys have the ſins of thoſe remote, the ſucceeding, and their more immediate Anceſtors lying upon them. This therefore cannot be the reaſon, but as it was the Soveraign pleaſure of God to foretell his intention, to overcome the ſtoutneſs of their hearts, ſo it is his Soveraign pleaſure, that it ſhall not be perform'd, till the *fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in*, Rom. 11. 25. As he is Lord of his own Grace, ſo he is Lord of the *Time*, when to diſpenſe it. Why did God create the World in *Six days*, which he could have erected, and beautified in a moment? Becauſe it was his pleaſure ſo to do. Why did he frame the World, when he did, and not many ages before? Becauſe he is Maſter of his own work, Why did he not reſolve to bring *Iſrael* to the fruition of *Canaan* till after *four hundred years?* Why did he draw out their deliverance to ſo long time after he began to attempt it? Why ſuch a multitude of Plagues upon *Pharaoh* to work it, when he could have cut ſhort the work by one mortal blow upon the Tyrant and his accomplices? It was his Soveraign pleaſure to act ſo, though not without other reaſons intelligible enough by looking into the ſtory. Why doth he not bring Man to a perfection of ſtature in a moment after his Birth, but let him continue in a tedious infancy in a ſemblance to Beaſts for want of an exerciſe of reaſon? Why doth he not bring this or that Man, whom he intends for ſervice to a fitneſs in an inſtant but by long tracts of Study, and through many *Meanders* and *Labyrinths?* Why doth he tranſplant a hopeful perſon in his youth to the pleaſures of another World, and let another of an eminent Holineſs, continue in the miſery of this, and wade through many Floods of afflictions? What can we chiefly refer all theſe things to, but his Soveraign pleaſure? The *times are determined by God*, *Acts* 7. 26.

3. *The Dominion of God is manifeſted as a Governour, as well as a Law-giver and Proprietor.*

1. *In*

1. *In disposing of States and Kingdoms.* Psal. 75. 7. *God is Judge, he pulls down one, and sets up another*; *Judge* is to be taken not in the same sence, that we commonly use the Word for a judicial Minister in a way of Tryal, but for a Governour; as you know the extraordinary Governours rais'd up among the *Jews*, were call'd Judges, whence one intire Book in the Old Testament is so denominated, the Book of *Judges*. God hath a Prerogative, to *change times and seasons*, *Dan.* 2. 21. i. e. The Revolutions of Government, whereby times are alter'd.* How many Empires that have spread their wings over a great part of the World, have had their Carkasses torn in pieces; and unheard of Nations pluckt off the wings of the *Roman* Eagle, after it had prey'd upon many Nations of the World? And the *Macedonian* Empire was as the Dew, that is dried up a short time after it falls. He erected the *Chaldean* Monarchy, us'd *Nebuchadnezzar* to overthrow and punish the ungrateful *Jews*; and by a Soveraign act gave a great parcel of Land into his hands; and what he thought was his right by conquest, was God's donative to him. You may read the Charter to *Nebuchadnezzar*, whom he terms his Servant. *Jer.* 27. 6. *And now I have given all those Lands*, the Lands are mentioned, *v.* 3. *Into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon my Servant.* Which Decree he pronounceth after his asserting his right of Soveraignty over the *whole Earth*, Ver. 5. After that, he puts a period to the *Chaldean* Empire, and by the same Soveraign Authority decrees *Babylon* to be a spoil to the Nations of the North Countrey, and delivers her up as a spoil to the *Persian*, *Jer.* 50. 9. 10. And this for the manifestation of his Soveraign Dominion, that he was the *Lord, that made peace, and created evil*, Isaiah 45. 6, 7. God afterwards overthrows that by the *Grecian Alexander*, propheſied of under the Figure of a *Goat*, with *one horn between his Eyes*, *Dan.* 8. The swift current of his victories, as swift as his motion shew'd it to be from an extraordinary hand of Heaven, and not either from the policy or strength of the *Macedonian*. His strength in the Prophet is described to be less, being but *one horn* running against the *Persian*, describ'd under the Figure of a *Ram with two horns* *. And himself acknowledg'd a Divine motion exciting him to that great attempt, when he saw *Joddus* the High Priest, coming out in his Priestly Robes, to meet him at his approach to *Jerusalem*; whom he was about to worship, acknowledging that the Vision, which put him upon the *Persian* War, appear'd to him in such a garb. What was the reason *Israel* was rent from *Judah*, and both split into two distinct Kingdoms? because *Rehoboam* would not hearken to sober and sound Counsels, but follow the advice of upstarts. What was the reason he did not hearken to sound advice, since he had so advantageous an Education under his Father *Solomon* the wisest Prince of the World? *The Cause was from the Lord*, 1 *Kings* 12. 15. That he might perform, what he hah before spoke. In this he acted according to his Royal Word, but in the first Resolve he acted as a Soveraign Lord that had the disposal of all Nations in the World. And though *Ahab* had a numerous posterity, *Seventy Sons* to inherit the Throne after him, yet God by his Soveraign Authority gives them up into the hands of *Jehu*, who strips them of their Lives and Hopes together; not a man of them succeeded in the Throne, but the Crown is transferr'd to *Jehu* by God's disposal.

In Wars, whereby flourishing Kingdoms are overthrown, God hath the chief hand; in reference to which it is observed, that in the two Prophets *Isaiah* and *Jeremy*, God is called *the Lord of Hosts* 130 times. 'Tis not the Sword of the Captain, but the Sword of the Lord, bears the first rank; *The Sword of the Lord and of* Gideon. *Judg.* 7. 18. The Sword of a Conqueror is the Sword of the Lord, and receives its *Charge* and Commission from the great Soveraign. *Jerem.* 47. 6, 7. We are apt to confine our thoughts to second Causes, lay the fault upon the miscarriages of persons, the Ambition of the one, and the Covetousness of another, and regard them not as the effects of Gods Soveraign Authority, linking second Causes together, to serve his own purpose. The skill of one man may lay open the folly of a Counsellor, an earthly force may break in pieces the power of a mighty Prince. But *Job* in his consideration of those things, refers the matter higher. *Job* 12. 18. *He looseth the bond of Kings, and girdeth their Loyns*

* Mr. *Mede* in one of his Letters.

* *Josephus.*

Loyns with a Girdle. He looſeth the bonds of Kings, i. e. takes off the yokes they lay upon their Subjects; *and girds their Loyns with a girdle*; *A Cord* as the Vulgar; he lays upon them thoſe Fetters they fram'd for others, ſuch a Girdle or Band as is the mark of Captivity, as the words, *Verſe* 19. confirm it. *He leads Princes away ſpoil'd, and overthrows the mighty.* God lifts up ſome to a great height, and caſts down others to a diſgraceful ruine. All thoſe changes in the face of the World, the revolutions of Empires, the deſolating and ravaging wars which are often immediately the birth of the Vice, Ambition, and fury of Princes, are the Royal acts of God as Governour of the World. All Government belongs to him, he is the Fountain of all the Great and Petty Dominions in the World: And therefore may place in them what Subſtitutes and Vicegerents he pleaſeth; As a Prince may remove his Officers at pleaſure, and take their Commiſſions from them. The higheſt are ſetled by God, *durante bene placito*, and non *quamdiu bene ſe geſſerint.* Thoſe Princes that have been the Glory of their Countrey, have ſway'd the Scepter but a ſhort time, when the more Wolviſh ones have remain'd longer in Commiſſion, as God hath ſeen fit for the ends of his own Soveraign Government. Now by the revolutions in the World and Changes in Governours and Government, God keeps up the acknowledgment of his Soveraignty, when he doth arreſt grand and publick Offenders, that wear a Crown by his Providence, and employ it by their pride againſt him, that plac'd it there. When he arraigns ſuch by a ſignal hand from Heaven, he makes them the publick examples of the rights of his Soveraignty, declaring thereby, that the *Cedars* of *Lebanon* are as much at his foot, as the *Shrubs* of the Valley; that he hath as Soveraign an Authority over the Throne in the Palace, as over the Stool in the Cottage.

2. The Dominion of God is manifeſted *in raiſing up and ordering the Spirits of men according to his pleaſure.* He doth as the Father of Spirits, communicate an influence to the Spirits of Men as well as an exiſtence; he puts what inclinations he pleaſeth into the Will, ſtores it with what habits he pleaſe, whither natural or ſupernatural, whereby it may be render'd more ready to act according to the Divine purpoſe. The Will of Man is a finite principle, and therefore ſubject to him who hath an infinite Soveraignty over all things; and God having a Soveraignty over the Will in the manner of its acting, cauſeth it to Will, what he Wills, as to the outward act, and the outward manner of performing it. There are many examples of this part of his Soveraignty. God by his Soveraign conduct, ordered *Moſes* a Protectoreſs as ſoon as his Parents had form'd an *Ark of Bulruſhes*, wherein to ſet him floting on the River, *Exod.* 2. 3, 4, 5, 6. They expoſe him to the Waves, and the Waves expoſe him to the view of *Pharaohs* Daughter, whom God by his ſecret ordering her motion, had poſted in that place; and though ſhe was the Daughter of a Prince that inveterately hated the whole Nation, and had by various Arts endeavour'd to extirpate them; yet God inſpires the Royal Lady with ſentiments of compaſſion to the forlorn Infant, though ſhe knew him to be one of the *Hebrews* Children, *Verſe* 6. *i. e.* one of that race, whom her Father had devoted to the hands of an Executioner, yet God that doth by his Soveraignty rule over the Spirits of all men, moves her to take that Infant into her protection, and nouriſh him at her own charge, give him a liberal Education, Adopt him her Son, who in time was to be the ruine of her race, and the Saviour of his Nation. Thus he appointed *Cyrus* to be his *Shepherd*, and gave him a Paſtoral Spirit for the Reformation of the City, and *Temple of Jeruſalem*, *Iſaiah* 44. 28. And *Iſaiah* 45. 5. Tells them in the Propheſie, that he had *girded* him, though *Cyrus* had *not known* him, i. e. God had given him a military Spirit and Strength for ſo great an attempt, though he did not know, that he was acted by God for thoſe Divine purpoſes. And when the time came for the Houſe of the Lord to be re-built, the Spirits of the People were rais'd up, not by themſelves, but by God. *Ezra* 1. 5. *Whoſe Spirit God had rais'd to go up.* And not only the Spirit of *Zerubbabel* the Magiſtrate, and of *Joſhua* the Prieſt, but the Spirit of all the People, from the higheſt to the meaneſt that attended him, were acted by God, to ſtrengthen their hands, and promote

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the *work*, *Hag.* 1. 14. The Spirits of Men, even in thoſe works which are naturally deſirable to them, as the Reſtauration of the *City*, and rebuilding of the *Temple* was to thoſe *Jews*, are acted by God, as the Soveraign over them, much more when the wheels of Mens Spirits are lifted up above their ordinary temper and motion. It was this Empire of God, good *Nehemiah* regarded, as that whence he was to hope for ſucceſs; he did not aſſure himſelf ſo much of it, from the favour he had with the King, nor the reaſonableneſs of his intended Petition, but the abſolute Power God had over the Heart of that great *Monarch*: And therefore he ſupplicates the Heavenly, before he petitioned the Earthly Throne. *Nehem.* 2. 4. *So I pray'd to the God of Heaven.* The Heathens had ſome glance of this; 'tis an expreſſion that *Cicero* hath ſome where, *That the* Roman *Commonwealth was rather Govern'd by the aſſiſtance of the ſupream Divinity over the Hearts of Men, than by their own Counſels and Management.* How often hath the feeble courage of Men been heightned to ſuch a pitch, as to ſtare death in the face, which before were dampt with the leaſt thought or glance of it? This is a fruit of God's Soveraign Dominion.

3. The Dominion of God is manifeſt *in reſtraining the furious paſſions of Men, and putting a block in their way.* Sometimes God doth it by a remarkable hand, as the *Babel*-builders were diverted from their proud deſign by a ſudden confuſion of their Language, and rendring it unintelligible to one another; ſometimes by ordinary, though unexpected means; as when *Saul* like a *Hawk* was ready to prey upon *David*, whom he had hunted as a *Partridge* upon the Mountains, he had another object preſented for his arms and fury by the *Philiſtines* ſuddain invaſion of a part of his Territory, 1 *Sam.* 23. 26, 27, 28. But it is chiefly ſeen by an inward curbing mutinous affections, when there is no viſible cauſe. What reaſon but this can be render'd, why the Nations bordering on *Canaan*, who bore no good Will to the *Jews*, but rather wiſhed the whole race of them rooted out from the face of the Earth, ſhould not invade their Countrey, pillage their Houſes, and plunder their Cattle, while they were left naked of any Humane defence, the Males being annually employ'd at one time at *Jeruſalem* in Worſhip; what reaſon can be render'd, but an inviſible curb God put into their Spirits? What was the reaſon not a Man of all the Buyers and Sellers in the Temple ſhould riſe againſt our Saviour, when with a high hand he began to whip them out; but a Divine Bridle upon them? though it appears by the queſtioning his Authority, that there were *Jews* enough to have chas'd out him, and his company. *John* 2. 15. 18. What was the reaſon that at the publiſhing the Goſpel by the *Apoſtles* at the firſt deſcent of the Spirit, thoſe that had us'd the Maſter ſo barbarouſly a few days before, were not all in a foam againſt the Servants, that by preaching that Doctrine upbraided them with the late Murder? Had they better ſentiments of the Lord, whom they had put to death? Were their Natures grown tamer, and their Malignity expell'd? No, but that Soveraign who loos'd the Reins of their malicious corruption, to execute the Maſter for the purchaſe of Redemption, curb'd it from breaking out againſt the Servants, to further the propagation of the Doctrine of Redemption. He that reſtrains the roaring Lion of Hell, reſtrains alſo his Whelps on Earth; he, and they muſt have a Commiſſion, before they can put forth a finger, to hurt, how malicious ſoever their Nature and Will be. His Empire reaches over the Malignity of Devils, as well as the nature of Beaſts. The Lions out of the Den, as well as thoſe in the Den, are bridled by him in favour of his *Daniel*'s. His Dominion is above that of Principalities and Powers, their Decrees are at his Mercy, whither they ſhall ſtand or fall; he hath a vote above their ſtiffeſt Reſolves. His ſingle word, *I will*, or *I forbid*, outweighs the moſt reſolute purpoſes of all the Mighty *Nimrods* of the Earth in their rendezvouſes, and Cabals, in their Aſſociations and Counſels. *Iſaiah* 8. 9, 10. *Aſſociate your ſelves, O ye people, and ye ſhall be broken in pieces, take Counſel together, and it ſhall come to naught. When the Enemy ſhall come in like a flood*, with a violent and irreſiſtable force, intending nothing but ravage and deſolation, *the Spirit of the Lord ſhall lift up a ſtandard againſt them, Iſaiah* 59. 19. Shall give a ſudden

check and damp their Spirits, and put them to a ſtand. When *Laban* furiouſly purſued *Jacob* with an intent to do him an ill turn, God gave him a *Command* to do otherwiſe, *Gen.* 31. 24. Would *Laban* have reſpected that Command any more, than he did the light of Nature, when he Worſhiped Idols, had not God exerciſed his Authority, in inclining his Will to obſerve it, or laying reſtraints upon his natural inclinations, or denying his concourſe to the acting thoſe ill intentions, he had entertain'd? The ſtilling the principles of commotion in Men, and the noiſe of the Sea, are arguments of the Divine Dominion, neither the one, nor the other is in the power of the moſt Soveraign Prince without Divine aſſiſtance. As no Prince can command a calm to a raging Sea, ſo no Prince can order ſtillneſs to a tumultuous People; they are both put together as equally parts of the Divine Prerogative, *Pſal.* 65. 7. Which *ſtills the noiſe of the Sea, and tumults of the People.* And *David* owns Gods Soveraignty more than his own, *in ſubduing the People under him, Pſal.* 18. 47. In this his Empire is illuſtrious, *Pſal.* 29. 10. *The Lord ſitteth upon the flouds, yea, the Lord ſitteth King for ever*; a King impoſſible to be depos'd; not only on the natural floods of the Sea, that would naturally overflow the World; but the metaphorical Floods or tumults of the People, the Sea in every wicked man's heart, more apt to rage morally, than the Sea to foam naturally; if you will take the interpretation of an Angel, Waters and Flouds in the Prophetick ſtile ſignify the inconſtant and mutable People. *Revel.* 17. 1. 5. *The Waters where the whore ſits, are People, and Multitudes, and Nations, and Tongues.* So the Angel expounds to *John* the Viſion, which he ſaw, *Verſe* 1. The Heathens acknowledg'd this part of God's Soveraignty in the inward reſtraints of Men. Thoſe Apparitions of the Gods, and Goddeſſes, in *Homer* to ſeveral of the great Men, when they were in a Fury, were nothing elſe in the Judgment of the wiſeſt *Philoſophers*, than an exerciſe of God's Soveraignty in quelling their paſſions, checking their uncomely intentions, and controuling them in that which their rage prompted them to. And indeed did not God ſet bounds to the ſtorms in Mens hearts, we ſhould ſoon ſee the Funeral, not only of Religion, but Civility; the one would be blown out, and the other torn up by the Roots.

4. The Dominion of God is manifeſt *in defeating the purpoſes and devices of Men.* God often makes a mock of humane projects, and doth as well accompliſh that which they never dreamt of, as diſappoint that which they confidently deſign'd. He is preſent at all Cabals, laughs at Mens formal and ſtudied Counſels, bears a hand over every Egg they hatch, thwarts their beſt compacted deſigns, ſupplants their contrivances, breaks the Engines they have been many years rearing, diverts the intentions of Men, as a mighty Wind blows an Arrow from the mark, which the Archer intended. *Job* 5. 12. *He diſappointeth the devices of the crafty, ſo that their hands cannot perform their enterprize. He taketh the wiſe in their own craftineſs, and the Council of the froward is carried headlong.* Enemies often draw an exact ſcheme of their intended proceedings, Marſhal their Companies, appoint their Rendezvous, think to make but one morſel of thoſe they hate; God by his Soveraign Dominion turns the ſcale, changeth the gloomineſs of the oppreſſed into a Sun-ſhine, and the Enemies Sun-ſhine into darkneſs. When the Nations were gathered together againſt *Sion*, and ſaid, *Let her be defiled, and let our Eye look upon Sion, Micah* 4. 11. What doth God do in this caſe? *Ver.* 12. *He ſhall gather them.* i. e. Thoſe conſpiring Nations, as *ſheaves into the floor*; then he ſounds a Trumpet to *Sion, Ariſe and threſh O Daughter of Sion, for I will make thy Horn Iron, and thy Hoofs Braſs, and thou ſhalt beat in pieces many People: And I will conſecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their ſubſtance unto the Lord of the whole Earth.* I will make them, and their Councels, them, and their ſtrength, the monuments and ſignal marks of my Empire over the whole Earth.

When you ſee the cunningeſt deſigns baffled by ſome ſmall thing intervening, when you ſee Men of profound Wiſdom infatuated, miſtake their way, and *grope in the noon day as in the night. Job.* 5. 14. bewildred in a plain way. When you ſee the hopes of mighty attempters daſht into deſpair, their Triumphs turn'd into Funerals, and their joyful exectations into ſorrowful diſappointments; when you ſee the weak devoted to deſtruction, victorious, and the moſt preſumptuous

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defeated in their purpoſes, then read the Divine Dominion in the deſolation of ſuch devices. How often doth God take away the Heart and Spirit of grand Deſigns, and burſt a mighty Wheel, by ſnatching but one Man out of the World? How often doth he *cut off the ſpirits of Princes*, *Pſal.* 76. 12. either from the World by death, or from the execution of their projects by ſome unforeſeen interruption, or from favouring thoſe contrivances, which before they cheriſh'd by a change of their minds? How often hath Confidence in God, and Religious Prayer, edg'd the weakeſt and ſmalleſt number of weapons, to make a carnage of the carnally confident? How often hath preſumption been diſappointed, and the contemn'd Enemy rejoyc'd in the ſpoils of the proud expectant of victory. * *Phydias* made the Image of *Nemeſis* or revenge at *Marathon*, of that Marble, which the haughty *Perſians* deſpiſing the weakneſs of the *Athenian* Forces, brought with them, to erect a Trophy for an expected, but an ungain'd victory. *Hamans* Neck by a ſudden turn was in the Halter, when the *Jews* Necks were deſign'd to the Block. *Julian* deſign'd the overthrow of all the Chriſtians, juſt before his Breaſt was pierced by an unexpected Arrow. The Powder-Traytors were all ready to give fire to the Mine, when the Soveraign hand of Heaven ſnatcht away the Match. Thus the great Lord of the World cuts off Men on the pinacle of their deſigns, when they ſeem to threaten Heaven and Earth. Puts out the Candle of the wicked, which they thought to uſe to light them to the execution of their purpoſes; turns their own Counſels into a curſe to themſelves, and a Bleſſing to their Adverſaries, and makes his greateſt Enemies contribute to the effecting his purpoſes. How may we take notice of Gods abſolute diſpoſal of things in private Affairs, when we ſee one Man with a ſmall meaſure of Prudence, and little Induſtry have great ſucceſs, and others with a greater meaſure of Wiſdom, and greater toil and labour, find their enterprizes melt between their Fingers? It was *Solomons* obſervation, *That the race was not to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong, neither bread to the wiſe, nor riches to men of underſtanding, nor yet favour to men of skill.* Eccleſ. 9. 11.

* *Cauſin*, ſymb. lib. 2. cap 65.

Many things might interpoſe to ſtop the ſwift in his Race, and damp the courage of the moſt valiant. Things do not happen according to Mens ability, but according to the over-ruling Authority of God. God never yet granted Man the dominion of his own way, no more than to be Lord of his own time: *the way of man is not in himſelf, it is not in him that walketh to direct his ſteps*, Jerem. 10. 23. He hath given Man a power of acting, but not the Soveraignty to command ſucceſs. He makes even thoſe things which Men intended for their ſecurity, to turn to their ruine. *Pilate* delivered up Chriſt, to be accounted a friend to *Cæſar*, and *Cæſar* ſoon after proves an enemy to him, removes him from his Government, and ſends him into baniſhment. The *Jews* imagined by the crucifying Chriſt to, keep the *Roman* Enſigns at a diſtance from them, and this haſted their march by Gods Soveraign diſpoſal, which ended in a total deſolation. *He makes the Judges fools*, *Job* 12. 17. by taking away his light from their underſtanding, and ſuffering them to go on in the vanity of their own Spirits; that his Soveraignty in the management of things may be more apparent: For then he is known to be Lord, when he *ſnares the wicked in the work of his own hands*, *Pſal.* 9. 16. You have ſeen much of this Doctrine in your experience; and if my judgment fail me not, you will yet ſee much more.

5. The Dominion of God is manifeſt *in ſending his Judgments upon whom he pleaſes. He kills, and makes alive, he wounds, and heals* whom he pleaſeth. His Thunders are his own, and he may caſt them upon what Subjects he thinks good. He hath a right in a way of Juſtice to puniſh all Men, he hath his choice in a way of Soveraignty, to pickout whom he pleaſe, to make the examples of it. Might not ſome Nations be as wicked as thoſe of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, yet have not been ſcorcht with the like dreadful Flames? *Zoar* was untoucht, while the other Cities her neighbours were burnt to aſhes. Were there never any places and perſons ſucceſſors in *Sodoms* guilt? Yet thoſe only by his Soveraign Authority are ſeparated by him, to be the examples of his *Eternal vengeance*, *Jude* 7. Why

are not Sinners as *Sodom*, like as thoſe antient ones, ſcalded to death by the like fiery drops; 'tis becauſe it is his pleaſure; and the ſame reaſon is to be rendred, why he would in a way of Juſtice cut off the *Jews* for their ſins, and leave the *Gentiles* untoucht in the midſt of their Idolatries. When the Church was conſumed, becauſe of her iniquities, they acknowledg'd God's Soveraignty in this. *Iſaiah* 64. 7, 8. *We are the Clay, and thou art our Potter, and we all the work of thy hands*; thou haſt a liberty either to break or preſerve us. Judgments move according to Gods Order. When the Sword hath a charge againſt *Askelon* and the Sea-ſhore, thither it muſt march, and touch not any other place or perſon, as it goes, though there may be demerit enough for it to puniſh. *Jer.* 47. 6. 7. When the Prophet had ſpake to the Sword, *Oh thou Sword of the Lord, how long will it be, ere thou be quiet? Put up thy ſelf into thy ſcabbard, reſt and be ſtill.* The Prophet anſwers for the Sword, *how can it be quiet, ſeeing the Lord hath given it a charge againſt* Askelon, *there hath he appointed it?* If he hath appointed a judgment againſt *London*, or *Weſtminſter*, or any other place, there it ſhall drop, there it ſhall pierce, and in no other place without a like charge. God as a Soveraign, gives inſtructions to every Judgment, when, and againſt whom it ſhall march, and what Cities, what Perſons it ſhall arreſt; and he is punctually obeyed by them as a Soverign Lord. All Creatures ſtand ready for his Call, and are prepared to be Executioners of his Vengeance, when he ſpeaks the word; they are his Hoſts by Creation, and in array for his ſervice; at the ſound of his Trumpet, or beat of his Drum, they troop together with their Arms in their hands, to put his Orders exactly in execution.

6. The Dominion of God is manifeſt, *in appointing to every man his calling and ſtation in the World.* If the hairs of every mans Head fall under his Soveraign care, the Calling of every man, wherein he is to glorify God, and ſerve his Generation, which is of a greater concern than the Hairs of the Head, falls under his Dominion. He is the Maſter of the great Family; and divides to every one his work as he pleaſeth. The whole work of the *Meſſiah*, the time of every action, as well as the hour of his Paſſion was ordered, and appointed by God. The *ſeparation of* Paul *to the Preaching of the Goſpel*, was by the Soveraign diſpoſal of God, *Rom.* 1. 1. By the ſame exerciſe of his Authority, that he *ſets every man the bounds of his Habitation*, *Acts* 17. 26. he preſcribes alſo to him the nature of his work. He that ordered *Adam*, the Father of Mankind his work, and the place of it, the *dreſſing the Garden*, *Gen.* 2. 15. doth not let any of his poſterity be their own chooſers, without an influence of his Soveraign direction on them. Though our Callings are our work, yet they are by God's Order, wherein we are to be faithful to our great Maſter and Ruler.

7. The Dominion of God is manifeſt *in the means and occaſions of mens Converſion.* ſometimes one occaſion, ſometimes another, one word lets a man go, another arreſts him, and brings him before God, and his own Conſcience; 'tis as God gives out the Order. He lets *Paul* be a Priſoner at *Jeruſalem*, that his Cauſe ſhould not be determined there, moves him to appeal to *Cæſar*, not only to make him a Priſoner but a Preacher in *Cæſar*'s Court, and render his Chains an occaſion to bring in a Harveſt of Converts in *Nero*'s Palace. 1 *Phil.* 12. 13. His *bonds in* or *for Chriſt* are *manifeſt in all the Palace*, not the bare knowledge of his bonds, but the Soveraign deſign of God in thoſe bonds, and the ſucceſs of them; the bare knowledge of them would not make others more *confident* for the Goſpel, as it follows *Verſe* 14. without a providential deſign of them. *Oneſimus* running from his Maſter, is guided by God's Soveraign Order into *Pauls* company, and thereby into Chriſt's Arms, and he who came a *Fugitive*, returns a *Chriſtian*. *Phil.* 10. 15. Some by a ſtrong affliction, have had by the Divine Soveraignty their underſtandings awakened to conſider, and their Wills ſpirited to converſion. *Monica* being call'd *Meribibula* or toſs-pot, was brought to conſider her way, and reform her Life. A word hath done that at one time, which hath often before fallen without any fruit. Many have come to ſuck in the Eloquence of the Miniſter, and have found

found in the Honey for their Ears a ſting for their Conſciences. *Auſtin* had no other intent in going to hear *Ambroſe*, but to have a taſte of his famous Oratory; but while *Ambroſe* ſpake a Language to his Ear, God ſpake a Heavenly Dialect to his Heart. No reaſon can be render'd of the order and timing, and influence of thoſe things, but the Soveraign pleaſure of God, who will attend one occaſion and ſeaſon with his Bleſſing and not another.

8. The Dominion of God is manifeſt *in diſpoſing of the Lives of men.* He keeps the key of Death, as well as that of the Womb in his own hand; he hath given Man a Life, but not power to diſpoſe of it, or lay it down at his pleaſure: And therefore he hath order'd Man not to Murder, not another, not himſelf; Man muſt expect his Call and Grant, to diſpoſe of the Life of his Body. Why doth he cut the thred of this Mans Life, and ſpin anothers out to a longer term? Why doth one dye an inglorious death, and another more honourable? One ſilently drops away in the multitude, while another is made a Sacrifice for the Honour of God, or the ſafety of his Countrey. This is a mark of Honour he gives to one and not to another. *Phil.* 1. 29. *To you it is given.* The manner of *Peters* death was appointed. *John* 21. 19. Why doth a ſmall and ſlight Diſeaſe againſt the Rules of Phyſick, and the Judgment of the beſt Practitioners, diſlodge one Mans Soul out of his Body, while a greater Diſeaſe is maſter'd in another, and diſcharges the Patient to enjoy himſelf a longer time in the Land of the Living? Is it the effect of means ſo much, as of the Soveraign diſpoſer of all things? If means only did it, the ſame means would alway work the ſame effect, and ſooner maſter a Dwarfiſh than a Giant-like Diſtemper. *Our times are only in Gods hands, Pſal.* 31. 15. Either to cut ſhort, or continue long. As his Soveraignty made the firſt Marriage knot, ſo he reſerves the ſole Authority to himſelf to make the Divorce.

4. The Dominion of God is manifeſt *in his being a Redeemer*, as well as Law-giver, Proprietor, and Governour. His Soveraignty was manifeſt in the Creation in beſtowing upon this or that part of matter a form more excellent than upon another. He was a Law-giver to Men and Angels, and preſcribed them Rules according to the Council of his own Will. Theſe were his Creatures and perfectly at his diſpoſal; but in Redemption a Soveraignty is exerciſed over the Son, the *Second Perſon* in the Trinity, one equal with the Father in Eſſence and Works, by whom the Worlds were Created, and by whom they do conſiſt. The whole Goſpel is nothing elſe but a Declaration of his Soveraign pleaſure concerning Chriſt and concerning us in him; 'tis therefore call'd *the Myſtery of his Will, Eph.* 1. 9. The Will of God as diſtinct from the Will of Chriſt, a purpoſe in himſelf, not mov'd thereunto by any; the whole deſign was fram'd in the Deity, and as much the purpoſe of his Soveraign Will, as the contrivance of his immenſe Wiſdom. He decreed in his own pleaſure, to have the Second Perſon aſſume our Nature for to deliver Mankind from that miſery, whereinto it was fallen: The whole of the Goſpel and the Priviledges of it are in that Chapter reſolved into the Will and Pleaſure of God.

God is therefore called *The Head of Chriſt*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 3. As Chriſt is Superior to all men, and the Man Superior to the Woman, ſo is God Superior to Chriſt, and of a more eminent Dignity; in regard of the conſtituting him Mediator, Chriſt is Subject to God, as the Body to the Head. Head is a Title of Government and Soveraignty, and Magiſtrates were called the Heads of the People. As Chriſt is the Head of Man, ſo is God the Head of Chriſt, and as man is ſubject to Chriſt, ſo is Chriſt ſubject to God; not in regard of the Divine Nature, wherein there is an equality, and conſequently no Dominion of Juriſdiction; nor only in his humane Nature, but in the Oeconomy of a Redeemer, conſidered as one deſign'd, and conſenting to be incarnate, and take our fleſh, ſo that after this agreement, God had a Soveraign right to diſpoſe of him according to the Articles conſented to. In regard of his undertaking, and the advantage he was to bring to the Elect of God upon the Earth, he calls God by the ſolemn Title of his *Lord*, in that Prophetick

phetick Pſalm of him. Pſal. 16. 2. *Oh my Soul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, thou art my Lord, my Goodneſs extends not unto thee, but unto the Saints that are in the Earth.* It ſeems to be the ſpeech of Chriſt in Heaven, mentioning the Saints on Earth as at a diſtance from him. I can add nothing to the glory of thy Majeſty, but the whole fruit of my Mediation and Sufferings will redound to the Saints on Earth; and it may be obſerved, that God is call'd the Lord of Hoſts in the Evangelical Prophets *Iſaiah*, *Haggai*, *Zachary*, and *Malachy*, more in reference to this affair of Redemption, and the deliverance of the Church, than for any other works of his Providence in the World.

1. This Soveraignty of God appears, *in requiring ſatisfaction for the ſin of man.* Had he indulg'd Man after his Fall, and remitted his offence without a juſt compenſation for the injury he had received by his Rebellion, his Authority had been vilified, Man would always have been attempting againſt his juriſdiction, there would have been a continual ſucceſſion of Rebellions on Mans part, and if a continual ſucceſſion of indulgences on Gods part, he had quite diſown'd his Authority over Man, and ſtript himſelf of the flower of his Crown; ſatisfaction muſt have been requir'd ſome time or other, from the perſon thus rebelling, or ſome other in his ſtead; and to require it after the firſt act of Sin, was more preſervative to the right of the Divine Soveraignty, than to do it after a multitude of repeated Revolts. God muſt have laid aſide his Authority, if he had laid aſide wholly the exacting puniſhment for the offence of Man.

2. This Soveraignty of God appears, *in appointing Chriſt to this work of Redemption.* His Soveraignty was before manifeſt over Angels and Men by the right of Creation, there was nothing wanting to declare the higheſt charge of it, but his ordering his own Son to become a mortal Creature; the Lord of all things to become lower than thoſe Angels, that had, as well as all other things, receiv'd their Being and Beauty from him, and to be reckon'd in his death among the duſt and refuſe of the World: He by whom God created all things, not only became a man, but a Crucified man by the Will of his Father. *Gal.* 1.4. *Who gave himſelf for our ſins according to the Will of God*; to which may referre that expreſſion. *Prov.* 8. 22. of his being *poßeſſed by God in the beginning of his way.* Poſſeſſion is the Dominion of a thing inveſted in the Poſſeſſor; he was poſſeſſed indeed as a Son by Eternal Generation. He was poſſeſſed alſo in the beginning of his way or works of Creation as a Mediator by ſpecial Conſtitution; to this the expreſſion, ſeems to referre, if you read on to the end of *Verſe* 31. wherein Chriſt ſpeaks of his *rejoycing in the habitable part of his Earth*, the Earth of the great God, who had deſign'd him to this ſpecial work of Redemption. He was a Son by Nature, but a Mediator by Divine Will; in regard of which Chriſt is often call'd Gods Servant, which is a relation to God as a Lord. God being the Lord of all things, the Dominion of all things inferior to him is inſeparable from him, and in this regard, the whole of what Chriſt was to do, and did actually do, was acted by him as the Will of God, and is expreſt ſo by himſelf in the Propheſie, *Pſal.* 40. 7. *Lo I come.* Verſe 8. *I delight to do thy Will*, which are put together, *Heb.* 10. 7. *Lo I come to do thy Will O God.* The deſigning Chriſt to this work was an act of Mercy, but founded on his Soveraignty. His compaſſionate Bowels might have pitied us without his being Soveraign, but without it could not have relieved us. It was the Counſel of his own Will, as well as of his Bowels. None was his Counſellor, or perſwader to that Mercy he ſhew'd, *Rom.* 11. 34. *Who hath been his Counſellor*, for it refers to that Mercy, in *ſending the deliverer out of* Sion, *Verſe* 26. as well as to other things, the Apoſtle had been diſcourſing of. As God was at liberty to Create, or not to Create, ſo he was at liberty to Redeem or not to Redeem, and at his liberty whither to appoint Chriſt to this work, or not to call him out to it. In giving this order to his Son, his Soveraignty was exerciſed in a higher manner, than in all the orders and inſtructions he hath given out to Men or Angels, and all the Employments ſhe ever ſent them upon. Chriſt hath names which ſignify an Authority over him. He is called *an Angel*, and a *Meſſenger*,

Meſſenger, Mal. 3. 1. An *Apoſtle, Heb.* 3. 1. Declaring thereby, that God hath as much Authority over him, as over the Angels, ſent upon his Meſſages, or over the Apoſtles commiſſion'd by his Authority, as he was conſider'd in the quality of Mediator.

3. This Soveraignty of God appears *in transferring our ſins upon Chriſt.* The Supream Power in a Nation can only appoint or allow of a commutation of puniſhment; 'Tis a part of Sovereignty, to transfer the penalty due to the crime of one upone another, and ſubſtitute a ſufferer with the ſufferers own conſent, in the place of a criminal, whom he had a mind to deliver from a deſerv'd puniſhment. God transferr'd the ſins of Men upon Chriſt, and inflicted on him a puniſhment for them. He ſumm'd up the debts of Man, charg'd them upon the ſcore of Chriſt, imputing to him the guilt, and inflicting upon him the penalty. *Iſai.* 53. 6. *The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all*; He made them all to meet upon his back. *He hath made him to be ſin for us.* 2 *Cor.* 5. 21. He was made ſo by the Sovereign pleaſure of God. A puniſhment for ſin, as moſt underſtand it, which could not be Righteouſly inflicted, had not ſin been firſt Righteouſly imputed by the conſent of Chriſt, and the order of the Judge of the World. This imputation could be the immediate act of none but God, becauſe he was the ſole Creditor. A Creditor is not bound to accept of another's Suretyſhip, but it is at his liberty whither he will or no; and when he doth accept of him, he may challenge the Debt of him, as if he were the principal Debtor himſelf. Chriſt made himſelf ſin for us, by a voluntary ſubmiſſion, and God made him ſin for us, by a full imputation, and treated him penally, as he would have done thoſe ſinners in whoſe ſtead he ſuffer'd. Without this Act of Soveraignty in God, we had for ever periſhed: For if we could ſuppoſe Chriſt laying down his life for us without the pleaſure and order of God, he could not have been ſaid to have born our puniſhment; What could he have undergone in his Humanity, but a temporal death, but more than this was due to us, even the wrath of God, which far exceeds the calamity of a meer bodily death? The Soul being principal in the crime, was to be principal in the puniſhment. The wrath of God could not have dropt upon his Soul, and render'd it ſo full of Agonies, without the hand of God. A Creature is not capable to reach the Soul, neither as to comfort nor terror; and the Juſtice of God could not have made him a ſufferer, if it had not firſt conſider'd him a ſinner by imputation, or by inhærency and actual commiſſion of a crime in his own perſon. The latter was far from Chriſt, who was holy, harmleſs and undefiled. He muſt be conſider'd then in the other ſtate of imputation, which could not be without a Sovereign appointment, or at leaſt conceſſion of God: For without it, he could have had no more Authority to lay down his life for us, than *Abraham* could have had to have ſacrific'd his Son, or any man to expoſe himſelf to death without a call; Nor could any Plea have been entred in the Court of Heaven, either by Chriſt for us, or by us for our ſelves. And though the death of ſo great a perſon had been meritorious in it ſelf, it had not been meritorious for us, or accepted for us; Chriſt is *deliver'd up by him, Rom.* 8. 32. in every part of that condition wherein he was, and ſuffer'd, and to that end, that *we might become the Righteouſneſs of God in him,* 2 *Cor.* 5. 21. That we might have the Righteouſneſs of him that was God, imputed to us, or that we might have a Righteouſneſs as great, and proportion'd to the Righteouſneſs of God, as God requir'd. It was an act of Divine Soveraignty, to account him, that was Righteous, a ſinner in our ſtead, and to account us, who were ſinners, Righteous upon the merit of his death.

4. *This was done by the command of God, by God as a Law-giver,* having the ſupream Legiſlative and Præceptive Authority; In which reſpect, the whole work of Chriſt is ſaid to be an anſwer to a Law, not one given to him, but put into his Heart, as the Law of Nature was in the Heart of Man at firſt, *Pſal.* 40. 7, 8. *Thy Law is within my heart.* This Law was not the Law of Nature, or Moral Law, though that was alſo in the Heart of Chriſt, but the command of doing thoſe things

things which were neceſſary for our Salvation, and not a command ſo much of doing, as of dying. The Moral Law in the heart of Chriſt would have done us no good without the Mediatory Law; We had been where we were by the ſole obſervance of the Precepts of the Moral Law, without his ſuffering the penalty of it. The Law in the Heart of Chriſt was the Law of ſuffering, or dying, the doing that for us by his death, which the blood of Sacrifices was unable to effect. Legal *Sacrifices thou wouldſt not, thy Law is within my heart*, i. e, thy Law ordered me to be a Sacrifice; It was that Law, his obedience to which was principally accepted and eſteem'd, and that was principally his *paſſive*, his obedience to death. *Phil.* 2. 8. This was the ſpecial command received from God, that he ſhould dye. *John* 10. 18. 'Tis not ſo clearly manifeſted, when this command was given, whither after the incarnation of Chriſt, or at the point of his conſtitution as Mediator, upon the tranſaction between the Father and the Son concerning the affair of Redemption. *The promiſe* was given *before the World began. Tit.* 1. 2. Might not the Precept be given before the World began, to Chriſt, as conſider'd in the quality of Mediator and Redeemer? Precepts and Promiſes uſually attend one another; every Covenant is made up of both. Chriſt conſider'd here as the Son of God in the Divine Nature, was not capable of a command or promiſe, but conſider'd in the relation of Mediator between God and Man, he was capable of both; Promiſes of Aſſiſtance were made before his actual incarnation, of which the Prophets are full: Why not Precepts for his Obedience, ſince long before his incarnation this was his ſpeech in the Prophet, thy Law is within my heart? However, a Command, a Law it was, which is a fruit of the Divine Soveraignty: That as the Soveraignty of God was impeached, and violated by the diſobedience of *Adam*, it might be own'd and vindicated by the obedience of Chriſt; That as we fell by diſloyalty to it, we might riſe by the higheſt ſubmiſſion to it in another head, infinitely ſuperior in his Perſon to *Adam*, by whom we fell.

5. This Soveraignty of God appears, *in exalting Chriſt to ſuch a Soveraign dignity as our Redeemer.* * Some indeed ſay, that this Soveraignty of Chriſt's Humane Nature was natural, and the right of it reſulted from its Union with the Divine, as a Lady of mean condition, when eſpous'd and Married to a Prince, hath by virtue of that a natural right to ſome kind of juriſdiction over the whole Kingdom: becauſe ſhe is one with the King. But to wave this, the Scripture placeth wholly the conferring ſuch an Authority upon the Pleaſure and Will of God. As Chriſt was a gift of God's Soveraign Will to us, ſo this was a gift of God's Soveraign Will to Chriſt. *Matt.* 28. 28. *All power is given me.* And he *gave him to be head over all things to the Church*, Eph. 1. 22. *God gave him a name above every name*, Phil. 2. 9. And therefore his Throne he ſits upon, is call'd *The Throne of his Father*, *Rev.* 3. 21. And he *committed all Judgment to the Son*; i. e. All Government and Dominion; An Empire in Heaven and Earth: *Joh.* 5. 22. and that becauſe he is *the Son of Man. v.* 27. which may be underſtood, that the Father hath given him Authority to exerciſe that Judgment and Government, as the Son of Man, which he originally had as the Son of God; or rather becauſe he became a Servant, and humbled himſelf to death, he gives him this Authority as the reward of his Obedience and Humility, conformable to *Phil.* 2. 9. This is an act of the high Soveraignty of God, to obſcure his own Authority in abſence, and take into aſſociation with him, or vicarious ſubordination to him, the Humane Nature of Chriſt as united to the Divine; Not only lifting it above the heads of all the Angels, but giving that perſon in our nature an Empire over them, whoſe Nature was more excellent than ours. Yea the Soveraignty of God appears in the whole management of this Kingly Office of Chriſt: for it is managed in every part of it, according to God's order. *Ezek.* 37. 24, 25. *David my ſervant ſhall be King over them*, and *my ſervant David ſhall be their Prince for ever.* He ſhall be a *Prince* over them, but *my Servant* in that Principality, in the exerciſe and duration of it. The Soveraignty of God is paramount, in all that Chriſt hath done as a Prieſt, or ſhall do as a King.

* *Leſſius de perfect. divin. lib.* 10. p. 65.

The

The USE.

I. For Inſtruction.

1. *How great is the contempt of this Soveraignty of God?* Man naturally would be free from Gods Empire, to be a ſlave under the Dominion of his own luſt. The Soveraignty of God as a Law-giver is moſt abhorr'd by Man, *Lev.* 26. 43. The *Iſraelites*, the beſt people in the world, were apt by nature not only to *deſpiſe*, but *abhor his Statutes.* There is not a Law of God, but the corrupt heart of Man hath an abhorrency of. How often do Men wiſh, that God had not enacted this or that Law that goes againſt the grain, and in wiſhing ſo, wiſh that he were no Soveraign, or not ſuch a Soveraign as he is in his own nature, but one according to their corrupt model. This is the great quarrel between God and Man, whither he or they ſhall be the Soveraign Ruler. He ſhould not by the will of Man rule in any one Village in the World; Gods vote ſhould not be predominant in any one thing. There is not a Law of his, but is expos'd to contempt by the perverſeneſs of Man, Prov. 1. 21. *Ye have ſet at naught all my counſel, and would have none of my reproof.* Septuag. *Ye have made all my counſels without authority.* The nature of Man cannot endure one Precept of God, nor one rebuke from him: And for this cauſe God is at the expence of Judgments in the World, to aſſert his own Empire to the Teeth and Conſciences of Men, Pſal. 59. 13. *Lord conſume them in wrath, and let them know that God rules in Jacob, to the ends of the Earth.* The Dominion of God is not ſlighted by any Creature of this World but Man; all others obſerve it by obſerving his Order, whither in their natural Motions, or preternatural Irruptions; they punctually enact according to their Commiſſion. Man only ſpeaks a Dialect againſt the ſtrain of the whole Creation, and hath none to imitate him among all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth, but only among thoſe in Hell. Man is more impatient of the yoke of God, than of the yoke of Man. There are not ſo many Rebellions committed by Inferiors againſt their Superiors and Fellow-Creatures, as are committed againſt God. A willing and eaſie ſinning, is an equalling the Authority of God to that of Man. Hoſ. 6. 7. *They like men have tranſgreſs'd my Covenant.* * They have made no more account of breaking my Covenant, than if they had broken ſome League or Compact made with a meer Man, ſo ſlightly do they eſteem the Authority of God. Such a diſ-eſteem of the Divine Authority is a vertual undeifying of him. To ſlight his Soveraignty, is to ſtab his Deity: Since the one cannot be preſerved without the ſupport of the other, his Life would expire with his Authority. How baſe and brutiſh is it for vile Duſt and mouldring Clay, to lift up it ſelf againſt the Majeſty of God, whoſe Throne is in the Heavens, who ſways his Scepter over all parts of the World? A Majeſty before whom the Devils ſhake, and the higheſt Cherubims tremble. 'Tis as if the Thiſtle that can preſently be trod down by the foot of a wild Beaſt, ſhould think it ſelf a match for the *Cedar* of *Lebanon*, as the phraſe is, 2 *Kings* 14. 9. * Munſter.

Let us conſider this *in general*, and alſo *in the ordinary practice of Men.*

First, *In General.*

1. *All ſin in its nature is a contempt of the Divine Dominion.* As every act of Obedience is a confirmation of the Law, and conſequently a ſubſcription to the Authority of the Law-giver, *Deut.* 27. 26. ſo every breach to it is a conſpiracy againſt the Soveraignty of the Law-giver; ſetting up our Will againſt the Will of God, is an Articling againſt his Authority, as ſetting up our reaſon againſt the methods of God, is an Articling againſt his Wiſdom; the intendment of every act of ſin, is to wreſt the Scepter out of Gods hand. The Authority of God is the firſt attribute in the Deity, which it directs its edge againſt; 'tis called therefore a *tranſgreſſion of his Law*, 1 John 3. 4. And therefore a ſlight or neglect of the Majeſty of God; and the not keeping his Commands, is call'd a *forgetting God*, Deut. 8. 11. *i. e.* a forgetting him to be our abſolute Lord. As the firſt notion we have of God as a Creator, is that of his Soveraignty, ſo the firſt perfection that ſin ſtruck at in the violation of the Law, was his Soveraignty as a Law-giver.

Breaking the Law is a diſhonoring God, Rom. 2. 23. a Snatching off his Crown; to obey our own Wills before the Will of God, is to prefer our ſelves as our own Soveraigns before him. Sin is a wrong and injury to God, not in his Eſſence, that is above the reach of a Creature, nor in any thing profitable to him, or pertaining to his own intrinſick advantage; not an injury to God in Himſelf, but in his Authority, in thoſe things which pertain to his Glory, a diſowning his due right, and not uſing his Goods according to his will. Thus the whole World may be call'd, as God calls *Chaldea*, *A Land of Rebels*, Jer. 50. 21. *Go up againſt the Land of Merathaim, or Rebels*: Rebels not againſt the Jews, but againſt God. The mighty oppoſition in the heart of man to the Supremacy of God, is diſcovered emphatically by the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 8. 7. in that expreſſion, *The carnal mind is enmity againſt God*, i. e. againſt the Authority of God: becauſe *it is not ſubject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.* It refuſeth not ſubjection to this or that part, but to the whole; to every mark of Divine Authority in it, it will not lay down its arms againſt it, nay it cannot but ſtand upon its terms againſt it; the Law can no more be fulfill'd by a carnal Mind, than it can be diſowned by a Soveraign God. God is ſo Holy, that he cannot alter a righteous Law; and Man is ſo averſe, that he cares not for, nay cannot fulfil one tittle; ſo much doth the nature of Man ſwell againſt the Majeſty of God. Now an enmity to the Law which is in every ſin, implies a perverſity againſt the Authority of God that enacted it.

2. All ſin in its nature is *the deſpoiling God of his ſole Soveraignty, which was probably the firſt thing the Devil aim'd at.* That pride was the ſin of the Devil, the Scripture gives us ſome account of, when the Apoſtle adviſeth not *a novice*, or one that hath but lately embraced the Faith, to be choſen a Biſhop, 1 *Tim.* 3. 6. *Leſt being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil*; Leſt he fall into the ſame ſin, for which the Devil was condemned. But in what particular thing this pride was manifeſt, is not ſo eaſily diſcernable; the Ancients generally conceived it, to be an affecting the Throne of God, grounding it on Iſaiah 14. 12. *How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, Son of the morning! for thou haſt ſaid in thy heart, I will aſcend into Heaven, I will exalt my Throne above the Stars of God.* 'Tis certain the Prophet ſpeaks there of the King of *Babylon*, and taxeth him for his Pride, and gives to him the title of *Lucifer*, perhaps likning him in his Pride to the Devil, and then it notes plainly the particular ſin of the Devil, attempting a ſhare in the Soveraignty of God; and ſome ſtrengthen their conjecture from the Name of the Arch-Angel who contended againſt Satan. *Jude* 9. which is *Michael*, which ſignifies, *who as God?* or, *who like God?* The Name of the Angel giving the ſuperiority to God, intimating the contrary diſpoſition in the Devil, againſt whom he contended. 'Tis likely his ſin was an affecting an equality with God in Empire, or a freedom from the Soveraign Authority of God: Becauſe he imprinted ſuch a kind of perſwaſion on Man at his firſt Temptation, *Ye ſhall be as Gods*, Gen. 3. 5. and though it be reſtrained to the matter of knowledge, yet that being a fitneſs for Government, it may be extended to that alſo. But it is plainly a perſwading them, that they might be in ſome ſort equal with God, and independent on him as their Superior. What he had found ſo fatal to himſelf, he imagined would have the ſame ſucceſs in the ruine of Man. And ſince the Devil hath in all Ages of the World uſurpt a Worſhip to himſelf, which is only due to God, and would be ſerved by Man, as if he were the God of the World. Since all his endeavor was to be Worſhip'd as the Supream God on Earth, 'tis not unreaſonable to think, that he invaded the Supremacy of God in Heaven, and endeavor'd to be like the moſt High before his baniſhment, as he hath attempted to be like the moſt High ſince. And ſince the Devil and Anti-Chriſt are reputed by *John* in the *Revelation* to be ſo near of kin, and ſo like in diſpoſition, why might not that which is the ſin of Anti-Chriſt, the image of him, be alſo the ſin of Satan, *To exalt himſelf above all that is called God*, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 4. and *ſit as God in his Temple*, affecting a Partnerſhip in his Throne and Worſhip? Whither it was this, or attempting an unaccountable Dominion over created things, or becauſe he was the prime Angel, and the moſt illuſtrious of that mag-

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magnificent Corporation, he might think himſelf fit to Reign with God, over all things elſe; Or if his ſin were envy, as ſome think at the Felicity of Man in Paradiſe; It was ſtill a quarrelling with God's Dominion, and right of diſpoſing his own Goods and Favors; He is therefore call'd *Belial*; 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15. *What concord hath Chriſt with Belial, i. e.* with the Devil, one *without yoke*, as the word *Belial* ſignifies.

3 'Tis more plain, that *this was the ſin of Adam.* The firſt act of *Adam*, was to exerciſe a Lordſhip over the lower Creatures, in giving Names to them, a token of Dominion, *Gen.* 2. 19. The next was, to affect a Lordſhip over God, in rebelling againſt him; After he had writ the firſt mark of his own delegated Dominion in the names he gave the Creatures, and own'd their dependance on him as their Governor, he would not acknowledge his own dependance on God. As ſoon as the Lord of the World had put him into poſſeſſion of the Power he had allotted him, he attempted to ſtrip his Lord of that which he had reſerv'd to himſelf; He was not content to lay a yoke upon the other Creatures, but deſirous to ſhake off the Divine Yoke from himſelf, and be ſubject to none but his own will; Hence *Adam*'s ſin is more particularly call'd *Diſobedience*, *Rom.* 5. 19. For in the eating the Apple there was no moral Evil in it ſelf, but a contradiction to the poſitive Command and Order of God; whereby he did diſown Gods right of Commanding him, or reſerving any thing from him to his own uſe. The Language all his Poſterity ſpeaks, *Let us break his bands, and caſt away his cords from us*, Pſal. 2. 3. was learn'd from *Adam* in that act of his. The next act we read of, was that of *Cains* murdering *Abel*, which was an invading Gods right, in aſſuming an Authority to diſpoſe the Life of his Brother, a Life which God had given him, and reſerved the period of it in his own hands. And he perſiſts in the ſame uſurpation, when God came to examine him, and ask him where his Brother was, how ſcornful was his anſwer? Gen. 4. 9. *Am I my brothers keeper?* as much as if he had ſaid, What have you to do to examine me? or, What Obligation is there upon me to render an account of him? Or, as one ſaith, *'Tis as much as if he had ſaid, *Go look him your ſelf.* The Soveraignty of God did not remain undiſturb'd; as ſoon as ever it appear'd in Creation, the Devils rebell'd againſt it in Heaven, and Man would have baniſh'd it from the Earth.

* *Trap.* in loc.

4. The Soveraignty of God *hath not been leſs invaded by the uſurpations of Men.* One ſingle Order of the Roman Epiſcopacy, hath endeavored to uſurp the Prerogatives of God: The Pope will prohibit what God hath allow'd; the Marriage of Prieſts; the receiving of the Cup, as well as of the Bread, in the Sacrament; the eating of this or that ſort of Meat at ſpecial Times, Meats which God hath Sanctified, and forbid them too, upon pain of Damnation. 'Tis an invaſion of Gods Right, to forbid the uſe of what God hath granted; as though the Earth, and the fulneſs thereof, were no longer the *Lords*, but the *Popes*: Much more to forbid what God hath commanded; as if Chriſt over-reach'd his own Authority, when he enjoyn'd all to drink of the Sacramental Wine, as well as eat of the Sacramental Bread. No Lord but will think his right uſurp'd by that Steward, who ſhall permit to others what his Lord forbids, and forbid that which his Maſter allows, and act the Lord inſtead of the Servant. Add to this the pardon of many Sins, as if he had the ſole Key to the Treaſures of Divine Mercy, the diſpoſing of Crowns and Dominions at his pleaſure; as if God had deveſted himſelf of the Title of King of Kings, and tranſferr'd it upon the See of *Rome*. The allowing publick Stews, diſpenſing with Inceſtuous Marriages, as if God had acted more the part of a Tyrant, than of a righteous Soveraign in forbidding them; Depriving the Jews of the propriety in their Eſtates, upon their Converſion to Chriſtianity; as if the pilfering Mens goods were the way to teach them ſelf-denyal, the firſt Doctrine of Chriſtian Religion, and God ſhall have no honor from the Jew without a breach of his Law by theft from the Chriſtian. Granting many years Indulgences upon ſlight performances, the repeating ſo many *Ave-Maries* and *Pater-Noſters* in a day; Canonizing Saints; claiming the Keys of Heaven, and diſpo-

ſing of the honors and glory of it: And propoſing Creatures as Objects of Religious Worſhip, wherein he anſwers the Character of the Apoſtle, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 4. *Shewing himſelf that he is God*, in challenging that Power which is only the right of Divine Soveraignty; exalting himſelf above God, in indulging thoſe things which the Law of God never allow'd, but hath ſeverely prohibited.

This controuling the Soveraignty of God, not allowing him the rights of his Crown, is the Soul and Spirit of many errors. Why are the Decrees of Election and Preterition denyed? becauſe Men will not acknowledge God the Soveraign diſpoſer of his Creature. Why is effectual Calling and efficacious Grace denyed? becauſe they will not allow God the proprietor and diſtributer of his own goods. Why is the ſatisfaction of Chriſt deny'd? becauſe they will not allow God a power to vindicate his own Law, in what way he pleaſeth. Moſt of the errors of Men may be reſolv'd into a denyal of Gods Soveraignty; All have a tincture of the firſt evil Sentiment of *Adam*.

2. The Soveraignty of God *is contemned in the practices of Men.*

1. *As he is a Law-giver.*

1. *When Laws are made, and urg'd in any State contrary to the Law of God.* 'Tis part of Gods Soveraignty to be a Law-giver; not to obey his Law is a breach made upon his right of Government; But it is Treaſon in any againſt the Crown of God, to Mint Laws with a ſtamp contrary to that of Heaven, whereby they renounce their due ſubjection, and vie with God for Dominion; ſnatch the Supremacy from him, and account themſelves more Lords than the Soveraign Monarch of the World. When Men will not let God be the Judge of good and evil, but put in their own vote, controuling his to eſtabliſh their own; Such are not content to be as Gods, ſubordinate to the ſupream God, to ſit at his feet; Nor co-ordinate with him, to ſit equal upon his Throne; but paramount to him, to over-top and ſhadow his Crown. A boldneſs that leaves the Serpent in the firſt temptation, under the character of a more commendable modeſty; who adviſed our firſt Parents to attempt to be *as Gods*, but not above him, and would enervate a Law of God, but not enact a contrary one to be obſerv'd by them. Such was the uſurpation of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *to ſet up a golden Image* to be ador'd, *Dan.* 3. as if he had power to mint Gods, as well as to conquer Men; to ſet the ſtamp of a Deity upon a piece of Gold, as well as his own Effigies upon his currant Coyn. Much of the ſame nature was that of *Darius* by the motion of his Flatterers, to prohibit any Petition to be made to God for the ſpace of *thirty days*, as though God was not to have a Worſhip without a Licenſe from a doting piece of Clay. *Dan.* 6. 7. * *So Henry the third of France*, by his Edict ſilenced Maſters of Families from praying with their Houſholds. And it is a farther contempt of Gods Authority, when good Men are oppreſt by the ſole weight of Power for not obſerving ſuch Laws, * as if they had a real Soveraignty over the Conſciences of Men more than God himſelf. When the *Apoſtles* were commanded by an *Angel* from God, to *preach in the Temple* the Doctrine of Chriſt, *Acts* 5. 19, 20. they were fetch'd from thence with a *Guard* before the *Councel*, *ver.* 26. And what is the Language of thoſe States-men to them? as abſolute as God himſelf could ſpeak to any Tranſgreſſors of his Law; *ver.* 28. *Did not we ſtraitly command you, that you ſhould not teach in this Name?* 'Tis ſufficient that we gave you a command to be ſilent, and publiſh no more this Doctrine of *Jeſus*; 'Tis not for you to examine our Decrees, but reſt in our order *as Loyal Subjects*, and comply with your Rulers; they might have added, though it be with the damnation of your ſouls. How would thoſe over-rule the *Apoſtles* by no other reaſon but their abſolute pleaſure? And though God had eſpous'd their cauſe, by delivering them out of the Priſon wherein they had lock'd them the day before; yet not one of all this Councel had the wit or honeſty to entitle it a fighting againſt God, but *Gamaliel*, *ver.* 39. So fooliſhly fond are Men to put themſelves in the place of God, and uſurp a Juriſdiction over Mens Conſciences; and to preſume, that Laws made againſt the intereſt and command of God, muſt be of more force than the Laws of God's enacting.

* *Trap.* in loc.

* *Faucheur*, vol. 2. p. 663, 664.

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2. The Soveraignty of God is contemn'd *in making additions to the Laws of God.* The Authority of a Soveraign Law-giver is invaded and villified, when an inferior presumes to make orders equivalent to his *Edicts.* 'Tis a *Præmunire* against Heaven, to set up an Authority distinct from that of God, or to enjoyn any thing as necessary in matter of Worship, for which a Divine Commission cannot be shewn. God was alway so tender of this part of his Prerogative, that he would not have any thing wrought in the Tabernacle, not a Vessel, not an Instrument but what himself had prescrib'd, Exod. 25. 9. *According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the Tabernacle, and the pattern of all the Instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it*; which is strictly urg'd again, *ver.* 40. *Look that thou make them after their pattern*; Look to it, beware of doing any thing of thine own head, and justling with my Authority. It was so afterwards in the matter of the Temple which succeeded the Tabernacle; God gave the model of it to *David*, and *made him understand in writing by his hand upon him, even all the works of this pattern*, 1 Chron. 28. 19. Neither the Royal Authority in *Moses*, who was King in *Jesurun*; nor in *David*, who was a Man after Gods own Heart, and called to the Crown by a special and extraordinary Providence; nor *Aaron*, and the High Priests his Successors, invested in the Sacerdotal Office, had any Authority from God to do any thing in the framing the Tabernacle or Temple of their own Heads. God barr'd them from any thing of that nature, by giving them an exact pattern, so dear to him was always this Flower of his Crown: And afterwards, the power of appointing Officers and Ordinances in the Church was delegated to Christ, and was among the rest of those Royalties given to him, which he fully compleated for the *edifying of the body*, Ephes. 4. 11, 12. And he hath the Elogy by the Spirit of God, to be *faithful, as Moses was, in all his house, to him that appointed him*, Heb. 3. 2. Faithfulness in a Trust, implies a punctual observing directions; God was still so tender of this, that even Christ the Son should no more do any thing in this concern, without appointment and pattern, than *Moses a servant*, ver. 5, 6. It seems to be a Vote of Nature, to refer the Original of the modes of all Worship to God: and therefore in all those varieties of Ceremonies among the Heathens, there was scarce any but were imagin'd by them to be the Dictates and Orders of some of their pretended Deities, and not the resolves of meer Humane Authority. What intrusion upon Gods right hath the Papacy made in regard of Officers, *Cardinals*, *Patriarchs*, &c. not known in any Divine Order? In regard of Ceremonies in Worship, prest as necessary to obtain the favor of God, *Holy-water*, *Crucifixes*, *Altars*, *Images*, *Cringings*, reviving many of the *Jewish* and *Pagan* Ceremonies, and adopting them into the Family of Christian Ordinances; as if God had been too Absolute and Arbitrary in repealing the one, and dashing in pieces the other. When God had by his Soveraign order fram'd a Religion for the heart, Men are ready to usurp an Authority to frame one for the sence, to dress the Ordinances of God in new and gaudy Habits, to take the eye by a vain Pomp; thus affecting a Divine Royalty, and acting a silly childishness, and after this, to impose the observation of those upon the Consciences of Men, is a bold ascent into the Throne of God; To impose Laws upon the Conscience, which Christ hath not imposed, hath deservedly been thought the very Spirit of *Antichrist*; It may be call'd also the Spirit of *Anti-God*. God hath reserv'd to himself the sole Soveraignty over the Conscience, and never indulg'd Men any part of it; he hath not given Man a power over his own Conscience, much less one Man a power over anothers Conscience. Men have a power over outward things, to do this or that where it is determined by the Law of God, but not the least Authority to controul any dictate or determination of Conscience: The sole Empire of that is appropriate to God, as one of the great Marks of his Royalty. What an usurpation is it of God's right, to make Conscience a slave to Man, which God hath solely, as the father of Spirits, subjected to himself? An usurpation, which, though the Apostles, those extraordinary officers might better have claim'd, yet they utterly disown'd any imperious *dominion* over the Faith of others, 2 *Cor.* 1. 24. Though in this they do not seem to

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climb up above God, yet they ſet themſelves in the Throne of God, envy him an abſolute Monarchy, would be ſharers with him in his Legiſlative Power, and graſp one end of his Scepter in their own hands. They do not pretend to take the Crown from Gods head, but diſcover a bold ambition to ſhuffle their hairy Scalps under it, and wear part of it upon their own, that they may rule with him, not under him; And would be joint *Lords of his Manor* with him, who hath by the *Apoſtle* forbidden any to be *Lords of his heritage*, 1 Pet. 5.3. And therefore they cannot aſſume ſuch an Authority to themſelves, till they can ſhew where God hath reſign'd this part of his Authority to them. If their *Expoſition* of that place, Matth. 16.18. *Upon this rock I will build my Church*, be granted to be true, and that the Perſons and Succeſſors of *Peter* are meant by that Rock, it could be no Apology for their Uſurpations; 'tis not *Peter* and his Succeſſors ſhall build, but *I will build*: Others are Inſtruments in Building, but they are to obſerve the directions of the Grand Architect.

3. The Soveraignty of God is contemned, *when men prefer Obedience to ments Laws, before Obedience to God.* As God hath an undoubted right as the Law-giver and Ruler of the World, to enact Laws, without conſulting the pleaſure of Men, or requiring their conſent to the verifying and eſtabliſhing his Edicts, ſo are Men oblig'd by their Allegiance, as Subjects, to obſerve the Laws of their Creator, without conſulting whither they be agreeable to the Laws of his revolted Creatures. To conſult with Fleſh and Blood whither we ſhould obey, is to Authorize Fleſh and Blood above the pureſt and moſt Soveraign Spirit. When Men will obey their Superiors, without taking in the condition the *Apoſtle* preſcribes to Servants, *Col.* 3. 22. *In ſingleneſs of heart, fearing God*; and poſt-pone the fear of God to the fear of Man, 'tis to render God of leſs Power with them than the drop of a Bucket, or duſt of the Ballance. When we out of fear of puniſhment will obſerve the Laws of Men againſt the Laws of God, 'tis like the *Egyptians*, to worſhip a ravenous *Crocodile* inſtead of a Deity; when we ſubmit to humane Laws, and ſtagger at Divine, 'tis to ſet Man upon the Throne of God, and God at the foot-ſtool of Man; to ſet Man *above*, and God *beneath*; to make him the *tail*, and not the *head*, as God ſpeaks in another caſe of *Iſrael*, *Deut.* 28.13. When we pay an outward obſervation to Divine Laws, becauſe they are back'd by the Laws of Man, and humane Authority is the motive of our obſervance, we ſubject Gods Soveraignty to Mans Authority; what he hath from us, is more owing to the pleaſure of Men, than any value we have for the Empire of God. When Men ſhall commit Murders, and imbrue their hands in Blood by the order of a Grandee; when the worſt ſins ſhall be committed by the order of Papal Diſpenſations; When the uſe of his Creatures, which God hath granted and ſanctified, ſhall be abſtain'd from for ſo many days in the Week, and ſo many Weeks in the Year, becauſe of a *Roman* Edict; the Authority of Man is acknowledg'd not only equal, but ſuperior to that of God: The dominion of duſt and clay is preferr'd before the undoubted right of the Soveraign of the World: The Commands of God are made leſs than humane, and the Orders of Men more authoritative than Divine, and a grand Rebels Uſurpation of Gods right is countenanced. When Men are more devout in obſervance of uncertain Traditions, or meer humane Inventions, than at the hearing of the unqueſtionable Oracles of God. When Men ſhall ſqueez their Countenances into a more ſerious Figure, and demean themſelves in a more Religious Poſture, at the appearance of ſome mock Ceremony clothed in a Jewiſh or Pagan garb, which hath unhappily made a rent in the Coat of Chriſt; and pay a more exact reverence to that, which hath no Divine, but only a humane ſtamp upon it, than to the clear and plain word of God, which is perhaps neglected with ſleepy nods, or which is worſe, entertain'd with prophane ſcoffs; this is to prefer the Authority of Man employ'd in trifles, before the Authority of the wiſe Law-giver of the World. Beſides, the ridiculouſneſs of it is as great, as to adore a Glo-worm, and laugh at the Sun; or for a Courtier to be more exact in his cringes and ſtarcht poſtures before a Puppet, than before his Soveraign Prince. In all this we make not the Will and Authority of God our rule, but the Will of Man.

man; Disclaim our dependance on God, to hang upon the uncertain breath of a Creature; in all this God is made less than Man, and Man more than God. God is depos'd, and Man enthron'd, God made a slave, and Man a soveraign above him. To this we may refer the solemn *Addresses* of some for the maintenance *of the Protestant Religion according to Law*, the Law of Man; not so much minding the Law of God; resolving to make the Law, the Church, the State, the Rule of their Religion, and change that, if the Laws be chang'd, steering their Opinions by the compass of the Magistrates Judgment and Interest.

2. *The Dominion of God as a Proprietor, is practically contemned.*

1. *By Envy.* When we are not as flush and gay, as well spread and sparkling as others, this Passion gnaws our Souls; and we become the Executioners to wrack our selves, because God is the Executor of his own pleasure. The foundation of this Passion is a quarrel with God; to envy others the enjoyment of their propriety, is to envy God his right of disposal, and consequently the propriety of his own Goods. 'Tis a mental theft committed against God, we rob him of his right in our will and wish; 'tis a Robbery to make our selves equal with God when it is not our due, which is implied, *Phil.* 2. 6. when Christ is said, *to think it no robbery to be equal with God.* We would wrest the Scepter out of his hand, wish he were not the Conductor of the World, and that he would resign his Soveraignty, and the right of the distribution of his own Goods to the *Caprices* of our humor, and ask our leave to what Subjects he should dispense his Favors. All *Envy*, is either a tacit accusation of God as an *Usurper*, and assuming a right to dispose of that which doth not belong to him, and so it is a denyal of his propriety; or else charges him with a *blind* or *unjust distribution*, and so it is a bespattering his Wisdom and Righteousness. When God doth punish Envy, he vindicates his own Soveraignty, as though this passion chiefly endeavored to blast this perfection, Ezek. 25. 11, 12. *As I live, saith the Lord, I will do according to thy anger, and according to thy envy, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord.* The sin of Envy in the Devils was immediately against the Crown of God, and so was the sin of Envy in the first Man, envying God the sole prerogative in knowledge above himself. This base humor in *Cain* at the preference of *Abels* Sacrifice before his, was the cause that he deprived him of his Life. Denying God first his right of choice, and what he should accept, and then invading Gods right of propriety, in usurping a power over the life and being of his Brother, which solely belong'd to God.

2. The Dominion of God as a Proprietor, is practically contemned *by a violent or surreptitious taking away from any, what God hath given him the possession of.* Since God is the Lord of all, and may give the possession and dominion of things to whom he pleaseth, all Theft and Purloining, all cheating and cousening another of his right, is not only a Crime against the true Possessor, depriving him of what he is intrusted with, but against God as the absolute and universal Proprietor, having a right thereby to confer his own goods upon whom he pleaseth; as well as against God as a Lawgiver forbidding such a violence. The snatching away what is an others, denies man the right of possession, and God the right of donation. The *Israelites* taking the *Egyptians* Jewels had been Theft, had it not been by a Divine License and Order; but cannot be slandered with such a term, after the Proprietor of the whole World had alter'd the Title, and alienated them by his positive Grant from the *Egyptians*, to confer them upon the *Israelites*.

3. The Dominion of God as a Proprietor is practically contemned, *by not using what God hath given us, for those ends for which he gave them to us.* God passeth things over to us with a Condition, to use that for his Glory which he hath bestowed upon us by his bounty. He is Lord of the end for which he gives, as well as Lord of what he gives; the Donors right of propriety is infringed, when the lands and legacies he leaves to a particular use are not employ'd to those ends to which he bequeathed them. The right of the Lord of a Manor is violated,

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when the Copy-hold is not us'd according to the condition of the Conveyance. So it is an invaſion of Gods Soveraignty, not to uſe the Creatures for thoſe ends, for which we are intruſted with them; when we deny our ſelves a due and lawful ſupport for them; hence Covetouſneſs is an invaſion of his right; or when we unneceſſarily waſte them, hence prodigality diſowns his propriety. Or when we beſtow not any thing upon the relief of others; hence uncharitableneſs comes under the ſame title, appropriating that to our ſelves, as if we were the Lords, when we are but the uſufructuaries for our ſelves, and Stewards for others; this is to be *rich to our ſelves, not to God*, Luke 12. 21. for ſo are they who employ not their Wealth for the ſervice and according to the intent of the Donor. Thus the *Iſraelites* did not own God the true proprietor of their Corn, Wine, and Oyl, which God had given them for his Worſhip, when they prepared Offerings for *Baal* out of his Stock, Hoſ. 2. 8. *for ſhe did not know that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, and multiplyed her Gold and Silver, which they prepared for* Baal; as if they had been ſole Proprietors, and not Factors by Commiſsion, to improve the Goods for the true Owner. 'Tis the ſame invaſion of Gods right, to uſe the parts and gifts that God hath given us, either as fuel for our pride, or advancing ſelf, or a witty ſcoffing at God and Religion. When we uſe not Religion for the honor of our Soveraign, but a ſtool to riſe by, and obſerve his precepts outwardly, not out of regard to his Authority, but as a ſtale to our intereſt, and furniſhing ſelf with a little concern and trifle. When Men will wreſt his Word for the favor of their luſts, which God intended for the checking of them, and make interpretations of it according to their humors, and not according to his Will diſcovered in the Scripture, this is to pervert the uſe of the beſt goods and *depoſitum* he hath put into our hands, even Divine Revelations. Thus Hypocriſie makes the Soveraignty of God a nullity.

3. The Dominion of God *as a Governor* is practically contemned.

I. *In Idolatry.* Since Worſhip is an acknowledgment of Gods Soveraignty, to adore any Creature inſtead of God, or to pay to any thing that Homage of truſt and confidence which is due to God, though it be the higheſt Creature in Heaven or Earth, is to acknowledge that Soveraignty to pertain to a Creature, which is challeng'd by God; as to ſet up the greateſt Lord in a Kingdom in the Government inſtead of the lawful Prince, is Rebellion and Uſurpation. And that Woman incurs the Crime of Adultery, who commits it with a perſon of great Port and Honor, as well as with one of a mean codition. While Men create any thing a God, they own themſelves ſupream above the true God, yea and above that, which they account a God: For by the right of Creation, they have a Superiority, as it is a Deity blown up by the breath of their own imagination. The Authority of God is in this ſin, acknowledged to belong to an *Idol*, 'tis call'd *loathing* of God as a Husband; *Ezek.* 16. 45. all the Authority of God as a Husband and Lord over them. So when we make any thing, or any perſon in the World, the chief object and prop of our truſt and confidence, we act the ſame part. Truſt in an *Idol* is the formal part of Idolatry. *Pſal.* 115. 8. *So is every one that truſts in them*; i. e. in *Idols*. Whatſoever thing we make the object of our truſt, we rear as an *Idol*; 'tis not unlawful to have the Image of a Creature, but to beſtow Divine adoration upon it; it was not unlawful for the *Egyptians* to poſſeſs and uſe Oxen, but to dubb them Gods to be ador'd, it was. 'Tis not unlawful to have Wealth and Honor, nor to have gifts and parts, they are the preſents of God; but to love them above God, to fix our relyance upon them more than upon God, is to rob God of his due, who being our Creator, ought to be our confidence. What we want, we are to deſire of him, and expect from him. When we confide in any thing elſe, we deny God the Glory of his Creation, we diſown him to be Lord of the World, imply that our welfare is in the hands of, and depends upon that thing wherein we confide; 'tis not only to equal *it to God* in Soveraign Power, which is his own phraſe, *Iſaiah* 40. 25. but to prefer it before him in a reproach of him. When the *Hoſts of Heaven* ſhall be ſerv'd inſtead of the Lord of thoſe Hoſts; When we ſhall lacquy after the *Stars*, depend barely upon their influences, without looking up to the great Director of

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the Sun, 'tis to pay an adoration unto a Captain in a Regiment, which is due to the General. When we ſhall *make gold our hope, and ſay to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence*, 'tis to deny the Supremacy of that *God that is above*, as well as if we *kiſs our hands* in a way of adoration *to the Sun* in its ſplendor, or *the Moon walking in its brightneſs*; for *Job* couples them together, *Job* 31.25, to 28. 'Tis to preſer the Authority of Earth before that of Heaven, and honor clay above the Soveraign of the World; as if a Souldier ſhould confide more in the rag of an Enſign, or the fragment of a Drum for his ſafety, than in the Orders and Conduct of his General; It were as much as is in his power to uncommiſsion him, and ſnatch from him his Commanders Staff. When we advance the Creature in our love above God, and the Altar of our Soul ſmoaks with more thoughts and affections to a petty intereſt than to God, we lift up that which was given us as a ſervant in the place of the Soveraign, and beſtow that Throne upon it, which is to be kept undefil'd for the rightful Lord, and ſubject the intereſt of God to the demands of the Creature. So much reſpect is due to God, that none ſhould be plac'd in the Throne of our affections equal with him, much leſs any thing to perk above him.

2. *Impatience is a contempt of God as a Governor.* When we meet with rubs in the way of any Deſign, when our Expectations are croſſed, we will break through all Obſtacles to accompliſh our Projects, whither God will or no. When we are too much dejected at ſome unexpected Providence, and murmur at the Inſtruments of it, as if God deveſted himſelf of his Prerogative of conducting Humane Affairs. When a little croſs blows us into a Mutiny, and ſwells us into a ſawcineſs to implead God, or makes us *fret* againſt him (as the expreſsion is, *Iſa.* 8. 21.) wiſhing him out of his Throne; No ſin is ſo Deviliſh as this, there is not any ſtrikes more at all the Attributes of God than this, againſt his Goodneſs, Righteouſneſs, Holineſs, Wiſdom, and doth as little ſpare his Soveraignty as any of the reſt; What can it be elſe but an impious Invaſion of his Dominion, to quarrel with him for what he doth, and to ſay, What reaſon haſt thou to deal thus with me? This Language is in the nature of all Impatience, whereby we queſtion his Soveraignty, and parallel our Dominion with his. When Men have not that confluence of Wealth or Honor they greedily deſir'd, they bark at God, and revile his Government; They are angry God doth not more reſpectfully obſerve them, as though he had nothing to do in their matters, and were wanting in that becoming reverence which they think him bound to pay to ſuch great ones as they are. They would have God obedient to their minds, and act nothing but what he receives a Commiſſion for from their wills. When we murmur, 'tis as if we would command his Will and wear his Crown, a wreſting the Scepter out of his hands to ſway it our ſelves, we deny him the right of Government, diſown his Power over us, and would be our own Soveraigns; You may find the Character of it in the Language of *Jehoram*, (as many underſtand it.) 2 King. 6. 33. *Behold, this evil is of the Lord; what ſhould I wait for the Lord any longer?* This is an evil of ſuch a nature, that it could come from none but the hand of God, why ſhould I attend upon him as my Soveraign, that delights to do me ſo much miſchief, that throws Curſes upon me when I expected Bleſsings? I'll no more obſerve his directions, but follow my own ſentiments, and regard not his Authority in the lips of his doting Prophet. The ſame you find in the Jews, when they were under Gods laſh, Jer. 18. 12. *And they ſaid, there is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart*; We can expect no good from him, and therefore we will be our own Soveraigns, and prefer the Authority of our own Imaginations before that of his Precepts. Men would be their own Carvers, and not ſuffer God to uſe his right; as if a ſtone ſhould order the Maſon in what manner to hew it, and in what part of the building to place it; We are not ordinarily concern'd ſo much at the calamities of our Neighbors, but ſwell againſt Heaven at a light drop upon our ſelves. We are content God ſhould be the Soveraign of others, ſo that he will be a ſervant to us; Let him deal as he will himſelf with others, ſo he will treat us, and what relates

to us, as we will our ſelves. We would have God reſign his Authority to our humors, and our humors ſhould be in the place of a God to him, to direct him what was fit to do in our own cauſe. When things go not according to our vote, our impatience is a wiſh, that God were depos'd from his Throne, that he would ſurrender his ſeat to ſome that would deal more favorably, and be more punctual obſervers of our directions. Let us look to our ſelves in regard of this ſin which is too common, and the root of much miſchief. This ſeems to be the firſt bubbling of *Adam*'s will, he was not content with the condition wherein God had placed him, but affected another, which ended in the ruine of himſelf, and of Mankind.

3. *Limiting God in his way of working to our methods*, is another part of the contempt of his Dominion. When we will preſcribe him methods of acting, that he ſhould deliver us in this or that way, we would not ſuffer him to be the Lord of his own favors, and have the priviledge to be his own director. When we will limit him to ſuch a time wherein to work our deliverance, we would rob him of the power of Times and Seaſons, which are ſolely in his hand. We would regulate his conduct according to our imaginations, and aſſume a power to give Laws to our Soveraign. Thus the *Iſraelites limited the holy One of Iſrael*, Pſal. 78. 41. They would controul his abſolute Dominion, and of a Soveraign make him their ſlave. Man that is God's Vaſſal, would ſet bounds to his Lord, and ceaſe to be a ſervant and commence maſter, when he would give, not take directions from him. When God had given them *Manna*, and their Fancies were weary of that delicious food, they would preſcribe Heaven to rain down ſome other ſort of food for them. When they wanted no ſufficient proviſion in the Wilderneſs, they quarrell'd with God for bringing them out of *Egypt*, and not preſently giving them a place of *Seed*, of *Figs*, *Vines* and *Pomegranates*, Numb. 20. 5. which is call'd a *ſtriving with the Lord*, ver. 13. a contending with him for his Lordſhip. When we tempt God, and require a ſign of him as a mark of his favor, we circumſcribe his Dominion; when we will not uſe the means he hath appointed, but father our lazyneſs upon a truſt in his Providence, as if we expected he ſhould work a Miracle for our relief; when we cenſure him for what he hath done in the courſe of his Providence; when we capitulate with him, and promiſe ſuch a ſervice, if he will do us ſuch a good turn according to our Platform, we would bring down his Soveraign Pleaſure to our will, we invade his Throne, and expect a ſubmiſſive Obedience from him. Man that hath not wit enough to govern himſelf, would be governing God, and thoſe that cannot be their own Soveraigns, affect a Soveraignty over Heaven.

4. *Pride and preſumption*, is another invaſion of his Dominion. When Men will reſolve to go to morrow to ſuch a City, to ſuch a Fair and Market, to traffick and get gain, without thinking of the neceſſity of a Divine Licenſe, as if our ſelves were the Lords of our time, and of our lives, and God were to lacquey after us, *James* 4. 13, 15. *Ye that ſay, to day we will go into ſuch a City, and buy and ſell, whereas ye ought to ſay, If the Lord will we ſhall live*; As if they had a Freehold, and were not Tenants at Will to the Lord of the Manor. When we preſume upon our own ſtrength or wit to get the better of our Adverſaries; As the *Germans* (as *Tacitus* relates) aſſur'd themſelves by the numerouſneſs of their Army, of a Victory againſt the *Romans*, and prepar'd Chains to fetter the Captives before the Conqueſt, which were found in their Camp after their defeat; When we are peremptory in expectations of ſucceſs according to our will; As *Pharaoh*, Exod. 15. 9. *I will purſue, I will overtake, I will divide the ſpoil, my luſt ſhall be ſatisfied upon them, I will draw my ſword, my hand ſhall deſtroy them.* He ſpeaks more like a God than a Man, as if he were the Soveraign Power, and God only his Vicar and Lieutenant; How he ſtruts, without thinking of a Superior Power to curb him! When Men aſcribe to themſelves what is the ſole fruit of Gods Soveraign Pleaſure. As the King of *Aſſyria* ſpeaks a Language, fit only to be ſpoken by God, Iſa. 10. 13, 14. *&c. I have removed the bounds of the people, my*

hand

hand hath found as a neſt, the riches of the people, I have gathered all the Earth; which God declares to be a wrong to his Soveraignty, by the Title wherewith he Prefaceth his Threatning againſt him, *ver.* 16. *Therefore ſhall the Lord, the Lord of Hoſts, ſend among his fat ones leanneſs*, &c. 'Tis indeed a rifling, if not of his Crown, yet of the moſt glittering Jewel of it, his Glory. *He that mocks the poor, reproacheth his Maker*, Prov. 17. 5. He never thinks that God made them poor, and himſelf rich; He owns not his Riches to be drop'd upon him by the Divine Hand. Self is the great Invader of Gods Soveraignty, doth not only ſpurn at it, but uſurp it, and aſſume Divine Honors, payable only to the Univerſal Soveraign. The *Aſſyrian* was not ſo modeſt as the *Chaldean*, who would impute his power and victories *to his Idol*, Hab. 1. 11. whom he thought to be God, though yet robbing the true God of his Authority; and ſo much was ſignified by their names; *Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Merodach, Belſhazzar, Nebo, Merodach, Bel*, being the *Chaldean Idols*, and the names ſignifying Lord of Wealth, giver of Riches, and the like. When we behave our ſelves proudly towards others, and imagine our ſelves greater than our Maker ever meant us; When we would give Laws to others, and expect the moſt ſubmiſſive obſervances from them, as if God had reſign'd his Authority to us, and made us in his ſtead the rightful Monarchs of the World. To diſdain that any Creature ſhould be above us, is to diſdain Gods Soveraign diſpoſition of Men, and conſequently his own Superiority over us. A proud Man would govern all, and would not have God his Soveraign, but his Subject; to over-value our ſelves, is to under-value God.

5. *Slight and careleſs Worſhip of God*, is another contempt of his Soveraignty. A Prince is contemn'd, not only by a neglect of thoſe Reverential Poſtures which are due to him, but in a reproachful and ſcornful way of paying them. To behave our ſelves uncomely or immodeſtly before a Prince, is a diſ-eſteem of Majeſty. Soveraignty requires awe in every Addreſs; where this is wanting, there is a diſ-reſpect of Authority. We contemn Gods Dominion when we give him the ſervice of the Lip, the Hand, the Knee, and deny him that of the Heart; as they in *Ezekiel*, *Ezek.* 33. 31. as though he were the Soveraign only of the Body, and not of the Soul. To have devout figures of the Face, and uncomely poſtures of the Soul, is to exclude his Dominion from our Spirits, while we own it only over our outward Man; we render him an inſignificant Lord, not worthy of any higher Adorations from us, than a ſenſleſs Statue; We demean not our ſelves according to his Majeſtical Authority over us, when we preſent him not with the Cream and Quinteſſence of our Souls. The greatneſs of God, requir'd a great Houſe and a coſtly Palace; 1 *Chron.* 29. 11, 16. *David* ſpeaks it in order to the Building God a *Houſe* and Temple; God being a *great King*, expects a *Male*, the beſt of our Flock, *Mal.* 1. 14. a Maſculine and vigorous Service. When we preſent him with a ſleepy, ſickly, rheumatick Service, we betray our Conceptions of him to be as mean as if he were ſome petty Lord, whoſe Dominion were of no larger extent than a Mole-hill, or ſome inconſiderable Village.

6. *Omiſſion of the Service he hath appointed*, is another Contempt of his Soveraignty. This is a Contempt of his Dominion, whereby he hath a right to appoint what Means and Conditions he pleaſeth, for the enjoyment of his profered and promiſed Benefits. 'Tis an enmity to his Scepter not to accept of his Terms after a long ſeries of Precepts and Invitations, made for the reſtoring us to that Happineſs we had loſt, and providing all means neceſſary thereunto, nothing being wanting but our own concurrence with it, and acceptance of it, by rendring that eaſie Homage he requires. By with-holding from him the Service he enjoyns, we deny that we hold any thing of him; As he that pays not the Quit-rent, though it be never ſo ſmall, diſowns the Soveraignty of the Lord of the Manor; It implies that he is a miſerable poor Lord, having no right, or deſtitute of any Power, to diſpoſe of any thing in the World to our advantage. Job 22. 17. *They ſay unto God, depart from us, what can the Almighty do for them?* They will have no commerce with him in a way of Duty, becauſe they imagine him to have no

Soveraign Power to do any thing for them in way of benefit, as if his Dominion were an empty Title, and as much deſtitute of any Authority to command a favor for them, as any Idol. They think themſelves to have as abſolute a diſpoſal of things, as God himſelf; What can he do for us? What can he confer upon us, that we cannot inveſt our ſelves in? As though they were Soveraigns in an equality with God; Thus Men live *without God in the world*, Eph. 2. 12. as if there were no Supream Being to pay a reſpect to, or none fit to receive any Homage at their hands; with-holding from God the right of his time, and the right of his ſervice, which is the juſt claim of his Soveraignty.

7. *Cenſuring others* is a contempt of his Soveraignty. When we cenſure Mens perſons or actions by a raſh Judgment; when we will be Judges of the good and evil of Mens actions, where the Law of God is utterly ſilent, we uſurp Gods Place, and invade his Right, we claim a ſuperiority over the Law, and judge God defective as the Rector of the World, in his preſcriptions of good and evil; *Jam.* 4. 11, 12. *He that ſpeaks evil of his brother, and judges his brother, ſpeaks evil of the Law, and judgeth the Law; There is one Law-giver who is able to ſave and to deſtroy; Who art thou that judgeſt another?* Do you know what you do in judging another? You take upon you the garb of a Soveraign, as if he were more your ſervant than Gods, and more under your authority than the authority of God; 'tis a ſetting thy ſelf in Gods Tribunal, and aſſuming his rightful power of judging; thy Brother is not to be govern'd by thy fancy, but by Gods Law and his own Conſcience.

2. Information. Hence it follows, *that God doth actually govern the World.* He hath not only a right to rule, but *he rules over all*, ſo ſaith the Text. He is *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*; What, to let them do what they pleaſe, and all that their luſts prompt them to? Hath God an abſolute Dominion? Is it good, and is it wiſe? Is it then a uſeleſs prerogative of the Divine Nature? Shall ſo excellent a power lye idle, as if God were a lifeleſs Image? Shall we fancy God like ſome lazy Monarch, that ſolaceth himſelf in the Gardens of his Palace, or ſteeps himſelf in ſome charming Pleaſures, and leaves his Lieutenants to govern the ſeveral Provinces, which are all Members of his Empire, according to their own humor? Not to exerciſe this Dominion, is all one as not to have it; To what purpoſe is he inveſted with this Soveraignty, if he were careleſs of what were done in the World, and regarded not the Oppreſſions of Men? God keeps no uſeleſs excellency by him; He actually reigns over the Heathen, *Pſal.* 47. 8. and thoſe as bad or worſe than Heathens. It had been a vanity in *David* to call upon the Heavens to be glad, and the Earth to rejoyce under the rule of a *ſleepy Deity*, 1 Chron. 16. 31. No, his Scepter is full of Eyes, as it was painted by the *Egyptians*; He is always waking, and always more than *Abaſuerus*, reading over the Records of Humane actions. Not to exerciſe his Authority, is all one, as not to regard whither he keep the Crown upon his Head, or continue the Scepter in his Hand. If his Soveraignty were exempt from care, it would be deſtitute of Juſtice; God is more Righteous, than to reſign the Enſigns of his Authority to blind and oppreſſive Man; to think that God hath a Power, and doth not uſe it for juſt and righteous Ends, is to imagine him an unrighteous, as well as a careleſs Soveraign, ſuch a thing in a Man renders him a baſe Man, and a worſe Governor; 'Tis a vice that diſturbs the World, and overthrows the ends of Authority, as to have a power, and uſe it well, is the greateſt virtue of an Earthly Soveraign. What an unworthy conception is it of God, to acknowledge him to be poſſeſſed of a greater Authority than the greateſt Monarch, and yet to think that he uſeth it leſs than a petty Lord, that his Crown is of no more value with him than a Feather? This repreſents God impotent, that he cannot, or unrighteous and baſe, that he will not adminiſter the Authority he hath for the nobleſt and juſteſt end. But can we ſay, that he neglects the Government of the World? How come things then to remain in their due order? How comes the Law of Nature yet to be preſerved in every Mans Soul? How comes Conſcience to check, and cite, and judge? If God

did

did not exerciſe his Authority, what Authority could Conſcience have to diſturb Man in unlawful practices, and to make his Sports and Sweetneſs ſo unpleaſant and ſour to him? Hath he not given frequent notices and memorials, that he holds a curb over corrupt Inclinations, puts rubs in the way of malicious Attempters, and often overſets the Diſturbers of the Peace of the World?

3. Information. *God can do no wrong*, ſince he is Abſolute Soveraign. Man may do wrong, Princes may oppreſs and rifle, but it is a Crime in them ſo to do: Becauſe their power is a power of Government, and not of Propriety in the Goods or Lives of their Subjects; but God cannot do any wrong, whatſoever the clamors of Creatures are: Becauſe he can do nothing but what he hath a Soveraign Right to do. If he takes away our Goods, he takes not away any thing that is yours more than his own, ſince though he intruſted you with them, he deveſted not himſelf of the Propriety. When he takes away our Lives, he takes what he gave us by a temporary Donation, to be ſurrendred at his call. We can claim no right in any thing but by his Will. He is no Debtor to us, and ſince he owes us nothing, he can wrong us in nothing that he takes away. His own Soveraignty excuſeth him in all thoſe acts which are moſt diſtaſtful to the Creature. If we crop a Medicinal Plant for our uſe, or a Flower for our pleaſure, or kill a Lamb for our food, we do neither of them any wrong: Becauſe the Original of them was for our uſe, and they had their Life and Nouriſhment, and pleaſing Qualities for our delight and ſupport; and are not we much more made for the pleaſure and uſe of God, than any of thoſe can be for us? *Of him, and to him are all things*, *Rom.* 11.36. Hath not God as much right over any one of us, as over the meaneſt Worm? Though there be a vaſt difference in Nature between the Angels in Heaven, and the Worms on Earth, yet they are all one in regard of ſubjection to God; he is as much the Lord of the one as the other; as much the Proprietor of the one as the other; as much the Governor of the one as the other. Not a cranny in the World is exempt from his Juriſdiction. Not a mite or grain of a Creature exempt from his Propriety.

He is not our Lord by Election; he was a Lord, before we were in being; he had no terms put upon him; who capitulated with him, and ſet him in his Throne by Covenant? What Oath did he take to any Subject at his firſt Inveſtiture in his Authority? His right is as Natural, as Eternal as himſelf. As natural as his Exiſtence, and as neceſſary as his Deity. Hath he any Law but his own Will? What wrong can he do that breaks no Law, that fulfils his Law in every thing he doth, by fulfilling his own Will, which as it is abſolutely Soveraign, ſo it is infinitely Righteous. In whatſoever he takes from us then, he cannot injure us; 'tis no Crime in any Man to ſeize upon his own Goods, to vindicate his own Honor; and ſhall it be thought a wrong in God to do ſuch things? Beſides the occaſion he hath from every Man, and that every day provoking him to do it. He ſeems rather to wrong himſelf by forbearing ſuch a Seizure, than wrong us by executing it.

4. If God have a Soveraignty over the whole World, *then Merit is totally excluded.* His right is ſo abſolute over all Creatures, that he neither is, nor can be a Debtor to any; not to the undefiled Holineſs of the bleſſed Angels, much leſs to poor Earthly Worms; thoſe bleſſed Spirits enjoy their Glory by the title of his Soveraign pleaſure, not by vertue of any Obligation devolving from them upon God. Are not the Faculties whereby they and we perform any act of Obedience, his grant to us? Is not the ſtrength, whereby they and we are enabled to do any thing pleaſing to him, a gift from him? Can a Vaſſal merit of his Lord, or a Slave of his Maſter by uſing his Tools, and employing his ſtrength in his Service, though it was a ſtrength he had Naturally, not by Donation from the Man in whoſe ſervice it is employd? God is Lord of all, all is due to him; how can we oblige him, by giving him what is his own, more his to whom it is preſented, than ours by whom it is offered? * He becomes not a Debtor by receiving any thing from us, but by promiſing ſomething to us. * *Auſtin.*

5. If

5. If God hath a Soveraign Dominion over the whole World, then hence it follows, That *all Magiſtrates are but Soveraigns under God.* He is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, all the Potentates in the World are no other than his Lieutenants, moveable at his pleaſure, and more at his diſpoſal than their Subjects are at theirs. Though they are dignified with the Title of *Gods*, yet ſtill they are at an infinite diſtance from the Supream Lord. Gods under God, not to be above him, not to be againſt him. The want of the due ſence of their ſubordination to God, hath made many in the World act as Soveraigns above him, more than Soveraigns under him. Had they all bore a deep conviction of this upon their ſpirits, ſuch audacious Language had never dropt from the mouth of *Pharaoh*: *Who is the Lord, that I ſhould obey his voice, to let Iſrael go?* Exod. 5.2. Preſuming that there was no Superior to controul him, nor any in Heaven able to be a match for him. *Darius* had never publiſh'd ſuch a doting Edict, as to prohibit any Petition to God. *Nero* had never fir'd *Rome*, and ſung at the ſight of the devouring Flames; nor ever had he ript up his Mothers Belly, to ſee the Womb where he firſt lodg'd and receiv'd a Life ſo hateful to his Country. Nor would *Abner* and *Joab*, the two Generals, have accounted the death of Men but a ſport and interlude. 2 Sam. 2. 14. *Let the young men ariſe, and play before us*; what play it was, the next Verſe acquaints you with, thruſting their Swords into one anothers ſides. They were no more troubled at the death of thouſands, than a man is to kill a fly or a flea. Had a ſence of this but hover'd over their Souls, People in many Countries had not been made their Foot-balls, and uſed worſe than their Dogs? Nor had the Lives of millions, worth more than a World, been expos'd to Fire and Sword, to ſupport ſome ſordid Luſt, or breach of Faith upon an idle Quarrel, and for the depredation of their Neighbors Eſtates; the Flames of Cities had not been ſo bright, nor the Streams of Blood ſo deep, nor the Cries of Innocents ſo loud.

In Particular.

1. If God be Soveraign, *All Under-Soveraigns are not to rule againſt him, but to be obedient to his Orders.* If they *rule by his Authority*, Prov. 8. 15. they are not to rule againſt his Intereſt, they are not to imagine themſelves as abſolute as God, and that their Laws muſt be of as Soveraign Authority againſt his Honor, as the Divine are for it. If they are his Lieutenants on Earth, they ought to act according to his Orders. No man but will account a *Governor* of a *Province* a Rebel, if he diſobeys the Orders ſent him by the Soveraign *Prince* that Commiſſion'd him. Rebellion againſt God is a crime of Princes, as well as Rebellion againſt Princes a Crime of Subjects. *Saul* is charg'd with it by *Samuel* in a high manner for an act of ſimple Diſobedience, though intended for the ſervice of God, and the enriching his Country with the ſpoils of the *Amalekites*, 1 *Sam.* 15. 23. *Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft*, like Witchcraft or Covenanting with the Devil, acting as if he had received his Commiſſion not from God, but from *Sathan*. Magiſtrates, as commiſſion'd by God, ought to act for him. Doth humane Authority ever give a Commiſſion to any, to rebel againſt it ſelf? Did God ever depute any Earthly Soveraignty againſt his Glory, and give them leave to Out-law his Laws, to introduce their own? No, when he gave the Vicarious Dominion to Chriſt, he calls upon the *Kings* of the Earth to be *inſtructed*, and be *wiſe*, and *kiſs the Son*, Pſal. 2. 10. 12. *i. e.* To obſerve his Orders, and pay him Homage as their Governor. What a ſilly doltiſh thing is it, to reſiſt that Supream Authority, to which the Arch-Angels ſubmit themſelves, and regulate their Employments punctually by their Inſtructions? Thoſe excellent Creatures exactly obey him in all the Acts of their ſubordinate Government in the World; thoſe in whoſe hand the greateſt Monarch is no more than a ſilly Fly between the fingers of a Giant. A contradiction to the Intereſt of God hath been fatal to Kings. The *four Monarchies* have had their Wings clipt, and moſt of them have been buried in their own Aſhes; they have all, like the Imitators of *Lucifers* pride, fallen from the Heaven of their Glory, to the depth of their ſhame and miſery. All Governors are bound to be as much obedient to God, as their Subjects are bound

bound to be ſubmiſſive to them. Their Authority over Men is limited, Gods Authority over them is abſolute, and unbounded. Though *every Soul* ought to be *ſubject to the higher Powers*; yet there is a higher Power of all, to which thoſe higher Powers are to ſubject themſelves; they are to be keepers of both the Tables of the Law of God, and are then moſt Soveraigns, when they ſet in their own Practice an example of obedience to God, for their Subjects to write after.

2. *They ought to imitate God in the exerciſe of their Soveraignty in ways of Juſtice and Righteouſneſs.* Though God be an abſolute *Soveraign*, yet his Government is not *Tyrannical*, but managed according to the rules of Righteouſneſs, Wiſdom and Goodneſs. If God that created them as well as their Subjects, doth ſo exerciſe his Government, 'tis a Duty incumbent upon them to do the ſame: Since they are not the Creators of their People, but the conductors. As Gods Government tends to the good of the World, ſo ought theirs to the good of their Countries. God committed not the Government of the World to the Mediator in an unlimited way, but for the good of the Church, in order to the Eternal Salvation of his people, Eph. 1. 12. *He gave him to be head over all things to the Church.* He had power over the Devils, to reſtrain them in their Temptation and Malice; power over the Angels, to order their Miniſtry for the Heirs of Salvation. So power is given to Magiſtrates for the Civil preſervation of the World and of humane Society: They ought therefore to conſider, for what ends they are placed over the reſt of Mankind, and not exerciſe their Authority in a licentious way, but conformable to that Juſtice and Righteouſneſs wherein God doth adminiſter his Government, and for the preſervation of thoſe that are committed to them.

3. *Magiſtrates muſt then be obey'd, when they act according to Gods Order, and within the bounds of the Divine Commiſſion.* They are no Friends to the Soveraignty of God, that are Enemies to Magiſtracy, his Ordinance. *Saul* was a good Governor, though none of the beſt Men, and the deſpiſers of his Goverment after Gods choice, were the Sons of *Belial*, 1 *Sam.* 10. 27. *Chriſt* was no Enemy to *Caſar*. To pull down a faithful Magiſtrate, ſuch an one as *Zerubbabel*, is to pluck a *Signet* from the hand of God: For in that capacity he accounts him, *Hag.* 2. 23. Gods ſervants ſtand or fall to their own Maſter. How doth he check *Aaron* and *Miriam* for ſpeaking againſt *Moſes* his ſervant. *Numb.* 12. 8. *Were you not afraid to ſpeak againſt my ſervant Moſes*; againſt *Moſes*, as related to you in the capacity of a Governor; againſt *Moſes*, as related to me in the capacity of my ſervant. To ſpeak any thing againſt them, as they act by Gods order, is an invaſion of Gods *Soveraign* right, who gave them their Commiſſion. To act againſt Juſt Power, or the Juſtice of an Earthly Power, is to act againſt Gods Ordinance, who ordained them in the World, but not any abuſe or ill uſe of their power.

2. USE. *How dreadful is the conſideration of this Doctrine to all rebels againſt God.* Can any Man that hath brains in his head, imagine it an inconſiderable thing to deſpiſe the *Soveraign* of the World? It was the ſole Crime of diſobedience to that poſitive Law, whereby God would have a viſible memorial of his *Soveraignty* preſerved in the eye of Man, that ſhowered down that deluge of Miſery, under which the World groans to this day. God had given *Adam* a Soul, whereby he might live as a Rational Creature; and then gives him a Law, whereby he might live as a dutiful Subject: For God forbidding him to eat of the Fruit of the Tree of knowledge of Good and Evil, declared his own Supremacy over *Adam*, and his propriety in the pleaſant World he had given him by his Bounty; he let him know hereby, that Man was not his own Lord, nor was to live after his own Sentiments, but the directions of a Superior. * As when a great Lord builds a Magnificent Palace, and brings in another to inhabit it, he reſerves a ſmall duty to himſelf, not of an equal value with the Houſe, but for an acknowledgement of his own right, that the Tenant may know he is not the Lord of it, but hath his grant by the liberality of another. God hereby gave *Adam* matter for a pure Obedi-

* *Chryſoſt.* in Gen. Hom. 16.

ence,

ence, that had no foundation in his own Nature by any implanted Law; he was only in it, to reſpect the Will of his *Soveraign*, and to underſtand that he was to live under the power of a higher than himſelf. There was no more moral evil in the eating of this Fruit, as conſidered diſtinct from the command, than in eating of any other Fruit in the Garden. Had there been no prohibition, he might with as much ſafety have fed upon it as on any other. No Law of Nature was tranſgreſs'd in the act of eating of it, but the *Soveraignty* of God over him was denyed by him; and for this, the death threatned was inflicted on him and his Poſterity: For though Divines take notice of other ſins in the Fall of *Adam*, yet God in his tryal chargeth him with none but this, and doth put upon his queſtion an *Emphaſis* of his own Authority, Gen. 3. 11. *Haſt thou eaten of the Tree whereof I commanded ye, that thou ſhould'ſt not eat?* This I am diſpleaſed with, that thou ſhouldeſt diſown my Dominion over thy ſelf and this Garden. This was the in-let to all other ſins; as the acknowledgement of Gods *Soveraignty* is the firſt ſtep to the practice of all the Duties of a Creature, ſo the diſowning his *Soveraignty*, is the firſt ſpring of all the extravagancies of a Creature. Every ſin againſt the Soveraign Law-giver is worthy of Death. The Tranſgreſsion of this poſitive Command deſerved death, and procured it to ſpread it ſelf over the face of the World. Gods Dominion cannot be deſpis'd, without meriting the greateſt puniſhment.

1. *Puniſhment neceſſarily follows upon the Doctrine of Soveraignty.* 'Tis a faint and feeble Soveraignty that cannot preſerve it ſelf, and vindicate its own wrongs againſt rebellious Subjects; The height of Gods Dominion infers a Vengeance on the contemners of it. If God be an Eternal King, he is an Eternal Judge. Since ſin unlinks the dependance between God the Soveraign, and Man the Subject, if God did not vindicate the Rights of his Soveraignty, and the Authority of his Law, he would ſeem to deſpiſe his own Dominion, be weary of it, and not act the part of a good Governor. But God is tender of his Prerogative, and doth moſt beſtir himſelf when Men exalt themſelves proudly againſt him, Exod. 18. 11. *In the thing wherein they dealt proudly*, he will be *above them*. When *Pharaoh* thought himſelf a Mate for God, and proudly rejected his Commands, as if they had been the Meſſages of ſome petty *Arabian* Lord, God rights his own Authority upon the Life of his Enemy by the miniſtry of the *Red Sea*. He turned a great King into a Beaſt, to make him know, *That the moſt High ruled in the kingdoms of men*, Dan. 4. 16, 17. *The demand is by the word of the Holy Ones, to the intent that the living may know, that the moſt High ruleth in the Kingdoms of men*; And that by the Petitions of the Angels, who cannot endure that the Empire of God ſhould be obſcur'd and diminiſh'd by the pride of Man. Beſides, the tender reſpect he hath to his own Glory, he is conſtantly preſented with the ſollicitations of the Angels, to puniſh the proud ones of the Earth, that darken the Glory of his Majeſty. 'Tis neceſſary for the reſcue of his honor, and neceſſary for the ſatisfaction of his Illuſtrious Attendants, who would think it a ſhame to them, to ſerve a Lord that were always unconcern'd in the Rebellions of his Creatures, and tamely ſuffer their ſpurns at his Throne: and therefore there is a day wherein the *haughtineſs* of Man ſhall be bowed down, the Cedars of *Lebanon* over-thrown, and high Mountains levell'd, that *God may be exalted in that day*, Iſa. 2. 11, 12, *&c.* Pride is a ſin that immediately ſwells againſt Gods Authority, this ſhall be brought down that God may be exalted; not that he ſhould have a real exaltation, as if he were actually depos'd from his Government, but that he ſhall be manifeſted to be the Soveraign of the whole World. 'Tis neceſſary there ſhould be a day to chaſe away thoſe Clouds that are upon his Throne, that the luſtre of his Majeſty may break forth to the confuſion of all the Children of Pride that vaunt againſt him. God hath a Dominion over us as a Law-giver, as we are his Creatures, and a Dominion over us in a way of Juſtice, as we are his Criminals.

2. This puniſhment is *unavoidable.*

1. None can eſcape him. He hath the ſole Authority over Hell and Death, the Keys of both are in his hand; The greateſt *Ceſar* can no more eſcape him than

than the meaneſt Peaſant; *Who art thou, O great Mountain, before Zerubbabel?* Zac. 4. 7. The height of Angels is no match for him, much leſs that of the mortal grandees of the World; they can no more reſiſt him than the meaneſt perſon; But are rather as the higheſt Steeples, the fitteſt marks for his cruſhing thunder. If he ſpeaks the word, *the principalities* of men *come down*, and *the Crown of their Glory*. Jer. 13. 18. He can *take the Mighty away in a moment* and that *without hands*, i. e. without inſtruments. Job 34. 20. The ſtrongeſt are like the feet of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Image, Iron and Clay, Iron to Man, but Clay to God, to be crumbled to nothing.

2. *What comfort can be reapt from a creature, when the Soveraign of the World arms himſelf with terrors, and begins his viſitation?* Iſai. 10. 3. *What will you do in the day of viſitation, to whom will you fly for help, and where will you leave your Glory?* The torments from a Subject may be relieved by the Prince, but where can there be an appeal from the Soveraign of the World? Where is there any above him to controul him, if he will overthrow us; who is there to call him to account, and ſay to him, What doſt thou? He works by an uncontroulable Authority, he needs not ask leave of any. *Iſai.* 43. 13. *He works, and none can let it*; As when he will relieve, none can afflict; ſo when he will wound, none can relieve. If a King appoint the puniſhment of a Rebel, the greateſt Favorite in the Court cannot ſpeak a comfortable word to him. The moſt beloved Angel in Heaven cannot ſweeten and caſe the ſpirit of a man, that the Soveraign power is ſet againſt to make the Butt of his wrath. The Devils lye under his Sentence, and wear their chains as marks of their condemnation, without hope of ever having them filed off, ſince they are laid upon them by the Authority of an unaccountable Soveraign.

3. *By his Soveraign Authority, God can make any creature the inſtrument of his vengeance*; He hath all the creaures at his beck, and can Commiſſion any of them to be a dreadful ſcourge. *Strong winds* and tempeſts *fulfil his word Pſal.* 148. 8. The *Lightnings* anſwer him at his call, and cry aloud *here are we*, Job. 38. 35. By his Soveraign Authority he can render *Locuſts* as miſchievous as *Lions*, forge the meaneſt creatures into Swords and Arrows, and Commiſſion the moſt deſpicable to be his Executioners; He can cut off joy from our ſpirits, and make our own Hearts be our tormentors, our moſt confident friends our perſecutors, our neareſt relations to be his avengers; They are more his, who is their Soveraign, than ours, who place a vain confidence in them. Rather than *Abraham* ſhall want Children, he can raiſe up ſtones, and adopt them into his Family; And rather than not execute his vengeance, he can array the ſtones in the ſtreets, and make them his armed ſubjects againſt us. If he ſpeak the word, a hair ſhall drop from our heads to choak us, or a vapour, congeal'd into Rheum in our heads, ſhall drop down, and putrify our Vitals. He can never want weapons, who is Soveraign over the Thunders of Heaven, and ſtones of the Earth, over every creature, and can by a Soveraign word turn our greateſt comforts into curſes.

4. *This puniſhment muſt be terrible.* How doth *David*, a great King, ſound in his Body, proſperous in his Crown, and ſucceſsful in his Conqueſts, ſetled in all his Royal conveniencies, groan under the wrathful touch of a greater King than himſelf, *Pſal.* 6. *Pſal.* 38. and his other Pœnitential Pſalms; Not being able to give himſelf a Writ of Eaſe, by all the delights of his Palace and Kingdom. *If the wrath of a King be as the roaring of a Lion* to a poor ſubject, *Prov.* 19. 10. how great is the wrath of the King of Kings, that cannot be ſet forth by the terror of all the amazing vollies of Thunder, that have been ſince the Creation, if the noiſe of all were gather'd into one ſingle crack? As there is an unconceivable ground of joy in the ſpecial favour of ſo mighty a King, ſo is there of terror in his ſevere diſpleaſure. *Pſal.* 76. 12. He is *terrible to the Kings of the Earth, with God is terrible Majeſty*. What a folly is it then to rebel againſt ſo mighty a Soveraign?

III. USE of *Comfort*. The Throne of God drops Honey and Sweetneſs, as well as dread and terror; All his other Attributes afford little relief, without this of his Dominion, and Univerſal Command; When therefore he ſpeaks of his being the God of his people, he doth often preface it, with *the Lord thy God*; His Soveraignty as a Lord being the ground of all the comfort we can take in his federal relation as our God; Thy God, but ſuperior to thee; thy God, not as thy Cattle and Goods are thine, in a way of ſole propriety, but a Lord too in a way of Soveraignty, not only over thee, but over all things elſe for thee. As the end of God's ſetling Earthly Governments, was for the good of the communities over which the Governours preſide; So God exerciſeth his Government for the good of the World, and more particularly for the good of the Church, over which he is a peculiar Governour.

1. *His love to his People is as great as his Soveraignty over them.* He ſtands not upon his Dominion with his people ſo much, as upon his affection to them; He would not be call'd *Baali, my Lord*, i. e. he would not be known only by the name of *Soveraignty*, but *Iſhi, my Husband*, a name of Authority and *Sweetneſs* together; *Hoſ.* 2. 16. 19, *&c.* He ſignifies, that he is not only the Lord of our Spirits and Bodies, but a Husband by a Marriage knot, admitting us to a nearneſs to him, and communion of goods with him. Though he Majeſtically ſits upon a high Throne, yet it is a Throne *encircled with a Rainbow*; *Ezek.* 1. 28. To ſhew, that his Government of his people, is not only in a way of abſolute Dominion, but alſo in a way of federal relation. He ſeems to own himſelf their Subject, rather than their Soveraign, when he gives them a Charter to Command him in the affairs of his Church; *Iſaiah* 45. 11. *Ask of things to come concerning my Sons, and concerning the work of my hands command you me.* Some read it by way of queſtion, as a corrective of a ſawcyneſs; Do you ask of me things to come, and ſeem to command me concerning the works of my hands, as if you were more careful of my intereſt among my people, than I am, who have form'd them? But if this were the ſenſe, it would ſeem to diſcourage an importunity of Prayer for publick deliverance; and therefore to take it according to our Tranſlation, 'tis an exhortation to Prayer, and a mighty encouragement in the management and exerciſe of it. Urge me with my promiſe, in a way of humble importunity, and you ſhall find me as willing to perform my word, and gratify your deſires, as if I were rather under your Authority, than you under mine; As much as to ſay, if I be not as good as my word, to ſatisfie thoſe deſires that are according to my promiſe, implead me at my own Throne, and if I be failing in it, I will give Judgment againſt my ſelf. Almoſt like Princes Charters, and gracious Grants, *we grant ſuch a thing againſt us, and our Heirs*, giving the Subject power to implead them, if they be not punctually obſerv'd by them. How is the love of God ſeen in his condeſcenſion below the Majeſty of Earthly Governours! He that might command by the abſoluteneſs of his Authority, doth not only do that, but intreats in the quality of a ſubject, as if he had not a fulneſs to ſupply us, but needed ſomething from us for a ſupply of himſelf, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. *As though God did beſeech you by us.* And when he may challenge as a due by the right of his propriety, what we beſtow upon his poor, which are his Subjects as well as ours, he reckons it as *a loan to him*, as if what we had were more our own than his. *Prov.* 19. 17. He ſtands not upon his Dominion ſo much with us, when he finds us Conſcientious in paying the duty we owe to him. He rules as a Father by Love, as well as by Authority; He enters into a peculiar Communion with poor Earthly Worms; plants his gracious Tabernacle among the Troops of Sinners, inſtructs us by his word, invites us by his benefits, admits us into his preſence, is more deſirous to beſtow his ſmiles, than we to receive them; and acts in ſuch a manner, as if he were willing to reſign his Scepter into the hands of any that were poſſeſſed with more love and kindneſs to us than himſelf. This is the comfort of Believers.

2. *In his being Soveraign, his pardons carry in them a full ſecurity.* He that hath the Keys of Hell and Death, pardons the crime, and wipes off the guilt. Who can

can repeal the act of the chief Governour? What tribunal can null the decrees of an absolute Throne? *Isai.* 43. 25. *I, even I am he, that blots out thy transgressions for my names sake.* His *Soveraign* Dominion renders his mercy comfortable. The clemency of a Subject though never so great, cannot pardon; people may pity a criminal, while the Executioner tortures him, and strips him of his Life; but the clemency of the Supream Prince establisheth a pardon. Since we are under the Dominion of God, if he pardons who can reverse it? If he doth not, what will the pardons of Men profit us in regard of an Eternal state? If God be a King for ever, then he whom God forgives, he in whom God reigns, shall live for ever. Else he would want Subjects on Earth, and have none of his lower Creatures, which he form'd upon the Earth, to reign over the dissolution of the World; if his pardons did not stand secure, he would after this Life, have no voluntary Subjects that had formerly a Being upon the Earth; he would be a King only over the damn'd Creatures.

3. *Corruptions will certainly be subdued in his voluntary subjects.* The Covenant, *I will be your God*, implies protection, government, and relief, which are all grounded upon Soveraignty: That therefore which is our greatest burden, will be remov'd by his Soveraign power. *Micah* 7. 19. *He will subdue our iniquities.* If the outward enemies of the Church shall not bear up against his Dominion, and perpetuate their Rebellions unpunisht, those within his people shall as little bear up against his Throne, without being destroy'd by him. The billows of our own hearts, and the raging waves within us, are as much at his beck as those without us. And his Soveraignty is more eminent in quelling the corruptions of the heart, than the commotions of the World; in reigning over Mens Spirits, by changing them, or curbing them, more than over Mens Bodies, by pinching and punishing them. The remainders of *Satans* Empire will moulder away before him, since he that is *in us*, is a greater Soveraign, *than he that is in the World*, 1 *John* 4. 4. His enemies will be laid at his feet, and so never shall prevail against him, when his Kingdom shall come. He could not be Lord of any man as a happy creature, if he did not by his power make them happy; and he could not make them happy, unless by his Grace he made them holy. He could not be praised as a Lord of Glory, if he did not make some creatures glorious, to praise him; And an Earthly Creature could not praise him perfectly, unless he had every grain of enmity to his Glory taken out of his Heart. Since God is the only Soveraign, he only can still the commotions in our Spirits, and pull down all the Ensigns of the Devils' Royalty; he can wast him by the powerful word of his Lips.

4. Hence is a *strong encouragement for Prayer.* *My King* was the strong compellation *David* us'd in Prayer, as an argument of comfort and confidence, as well as that of *My God.* *Psal.* 5. 2. *Hearken to the voice of my cry, my King, and my God.* To be a *King*, is to have an Office of Government and Protection. He gives us liberty to approach to him as the *Judge of all*, *Heb*, 12. 23. i. e. As the Governour of the World; we pray to one that hath the whole Globe of Heaven and Earth in his hand, and can do whatsoever he will. Though he be higher than the *Cherubims*, and transcendently above all in Majesty, yet we may soar up to him with the wings of our Soul, Faith, and Love, and lay open our cause, and find him as gracious, as if he were the meanest subject on Earth, rather than the most *Soveraign* God in Heaven.

He hath as much of tenderness, as he hath of Authority, and is pleased with Prayer, which is an acknowledgment of his Dominion, an honouring of that which he delights to honour: For Prayer, in the notion of it, imports thus much, that God is the Rector of the World, that he takes notice of humane affairs, that he is a careful, just, wise Governour, a store-house of Blessing, a fountain of Goodness to the indigent, and a relief to the oppressed. What have we reason to fear, when the *Soveraign* of the World gives us liberty to approach to him, and lay open our case? That God who is King of the whole Earth, not only of a few Villages, or Cities in the Earth, but the whole Earth; and not only King

of this dreggy place of our droſs, but of Heaven having prepar'd, or eſtabliſhed his Throne in the moſt glorious place of the Creation.

5. Here is *comfort in afflictions.* As a *Soveraign*, he is the Author of Afflictions, as a *Soveraign* he can be the remover of them; he can command the waters of affliction to go ſo far and no farther. If he ſpeaks the Word, a diſeaſe ſhall depart, as ſoon as a ſervant ſhall from your preſence with a Nod. If we are baniſht from one place, he can command a ſhelter for us in another. If he orders *Moab*, a Nation that had no great kindneſs for his people, to let *his outcaſts dwell with them*, they ſhall entertain them, and afford them Sanctuary, *Iſaiah* 16. 4. Again God chaſteneth as a *Soveraign*, but teacheth as a *Father*. *Pſal.* 99. 12. The exerciſe of his Authority is not without an exerciſe of his Goodneſs. He doth not correct for his own pleaſure, or the Creature's torment, but for the Creature's inſtruction; though the rod be in the hand of a *Soveraign*, yet it is tinctur'd with the kindneſs of Divine Bowels. He can order them as a *Soveraign* to mortifie our Fleſh, and try our Faith. In the ſevereſt tempeſt, the Lord that rais'd the wind againſt us, which ſhatter'd the Ship, and tore its Rigging, can change that contrary Wind for a more happy one, to drive us into the Port.

6. 'Tis a *comfort againſt the projects of the Churches adverſaries in times of publick commotions.* The conſideration of the Divine *Soveraignty* may arm us againſt the threatnings of mighty ones, and the menaces of perſecutors. God hath Authority above the Crowns of Men, and a Wiſdom ſuperior to the cabals of Men. None can move a ſtep without him, he hath a negative voice upon their Counſels, a negative hand upon their motions; their politick reſolves muſt ſtop at the point he hath preſcrib'd them. Their formidable ſtrength cannot exceed the limits he hath ſet them, their over-reaching wiſdom expires at the breath of God, *There is no Wiſdom, nor Underſtanding, nor Counſel againſt the Lord*, Prov. 21. 30. Not a Bullet can be diſcharg'd, nor a Sword drawn, a Wall battered, nor a perſon diſpatcht out of the World without the leave of God, by the mightieſt in the World. The inſtruments of *Satan* are no more free from his *Soveraign* reſtraint than their inſpirer; they cannot pull the hook out of their noſtrils, nor caſt the bridle out of their mouths. This *Soveraign* can ſhake the Earth, rend the Heavens, overthrow Mountains, the moſt Mountainous oppoſer of his intereſt. Though the Nations ruſh in againſt his people like the ruſhing of many waters, *God ſhall rebuke them, they ſhall be chaced as the chaff of the Mountains before the Wind, and like a rolling thing before the Whirlwind*, Iſaiah 17. 13. So doth he often burſt in pieces the moſt miſchievous deſigns, and conducts the oppreſſed to a happy Port. He often turns the ſevereſt tempeſts into a calm, as well as the moſt peaceful calm into a horrible ſtorm. How often hath a well-rigg'd Ship, that ſeemed to ſpurn the Sea under her feet, and beat the Waves before her to a foam, been ſwallowed up into the bowels of that Element, over whoſe back ſhe rode a little before. God never comes to deliver his Church as a Governor, but in a wrathful poſture, Ezek. 20. 33. *Surely ſaith the Lord with a mighty hand, and with an out-ſtretched arm, and with fury pour'd out will I rule over you*; not with fury poured out upon the Church, but fury pour'd out upon her Enemies, as the words following evidence. The Church he would bring out from the Countries where ſhe was ſcattered, and bring the people into the bond of the Covenant. He ſometimes *cuts off the Spirits of Princes*, *Pſal.* 76, 12. i. e. cuts off their deſigns, as Men do the Pipes of a Water-courſe. The hearts of all are as open to him, as the Riches of Heaven where he reſides. He can ſlip an inclination into the heart of the mighty, which they dream'd not of before; and if he doth not change their projects, he can make them abortive, and way-lay them in their attempts. *Laban* marched with fury, but God put a padlock upon his paſſion againſt *Jacob*. *Gen.* 31. 24. 29. The *Devils* which ravage mens minds, muſt be ſtill, when he gives out his *Soveraign* Orders. This *Soveraign* can make his people *find favour* in the eyes of the cruel *Egyptians*, which had ſo long oppreſt them. *Exod.* 11. 3. And ſpeak a good word in the heart of *Nebuchadnezzar* for the Prophet *Jeremy*,

that

that he ſhould order his Captain to take him into his ſpecial protection; when he took *Zedekiah* away priſoner *in chains*, and *put out his eyes*, *Jerim.* 39. 11. His people cannot want deliverance from him, who hath all the World at his command, when he is pleaſed to beſtow it: he hath as many inſtruments of deliverance, as he hath Creatures at his beck in Heaven or Earth from the meaneſt to the higheſt. As he is the *Lord of Hoſts*, the Church hath not only an intereſt in the ſtrength he himſelf is poſſeſſed with, but in the ſtrength of all the Creatures that are under his command, in the Elements below and Angels above; in thoſe Armies of Heaven, and in the Inhabitants of the Earth, he doth *what he will*, *Dan.* 4. 35. They are all in order, and array at his command. There are Angels to employ in a fatal ſtroke, Lice and Frogs to quell the ſtubborn hearts of his Enemies. He can range his Thunders and Lightnings, the Cannon and Granado's of Heaven, and the Worms of the Earth in his ſervice. He can muzzle Lions, calm the fury of the Fire, turn his Enemies Swords into their own bowels, and their Artillery on their own Breaſts; ſet the Wind in their Teeth, and make their Chariot-wheels languiſh, make the Sea enter a quarrel with them, and wrap them in its waves, till it hath ſtifled them in its lap. The Angels have *Storms*, *and Tempeſts*, *and Wars* in their hands, but at the diſpoſal of God; when they ſhall caſt them out againſt the Empire of Antichriſt, *Rev.* 7. 1, 2. then ſhall *Satan* be diſcharg'd from his Throne, and no more ſeduce the Nations; the everlaſting Goſpel ſhall be preached, and God ſhall Reign Glorioufly in *Sion*. Let us therefore ſhelter our ſelves in the Divine *Soveraignty*, regard God as the *moſt High* in our Dangers, and in our Petitions. This was *David*'s reſolution, *Pſal.* 57. 1, 2. *I will cry unto God moſt high.* This *Dominion of God* is the true *Tower of David*, *wherein there are a thouſand Shields*, for defence and encouragement. *Cant.* 4. 4.

IV. USE. If God hath an extenſive Dominion over the whole World, *this ought to be often meditated on, and acknowledged by us.* This is the univerſal duty of Mankind; if he be the *Soveraign* of all, we ſhould frequently think of our great Prince, and acknowledge our ſelves his Subjects, and him our Lord. God will be acknowledg'd the Lord of the whole Earth, the neglect of this is the cauſe of the Judgments which are ſent upon the World. All the *Prodigies* were to this end, that they might know, or acknowledge that *God was the Lord*, *Exod.* 10. 2. As God was proprietor, he demanded the *Firſt-born* of every *Jew*, and the Firſt-born of every *Beaſt*, the one was to be Redeemed, and the other Sacrificed; this was the Quit-Rent they were to pay to him for their fruitful Land. The Firſt Fruits of the Earth were ordered to be paid to him, as a homage due to the Landlord, and an acknowledgment they held all in chief of him. The practice of offering Firſt-Fruits for an acknowledgment of Gods *Soveraignty* was among many of the *Heathens*, and very antient; hence they dedicated ſome of the chief of their ſpoils, owning thereby the Dominion and Goodneſs of God, whereby they had gained the Victory. *Cain* own'd this in offering the Fruits of the Earth, and it was his ſin, he own'd no more, *viz.* His being a ſinner, and meriting the Juſtice of God, as his Brother *Abel* did in his bloody Sacrifice. God was a *Soveraign* Proprietor and Governour, while Man was in a ſtate of Innocence, but when Man proved a Rebel, the Soveraignty of God bore another relation towards him, that of a Judge, added to the other. The Firſt-Fruits might have been offered to God in a ſtate of innocence, as a homage to him as Lord of the Mannor of the World; the deſign of them was to own God's propriety in all things, and Mens dependance on him for the influences of Heaven in producing the fruits of the Earth, which he had ordered for their uſe. The deſign of Sacrifices and placing Beaſts inſtead of the Criminal, was to acknowledge their own guilt, and God as a ſoveraign Judge; *Cain* own'd the *Firſt*, but not the *Second*, he acknowledged his dependance on God as a proprietor, but not his obnoxiouſneſs to God as a Judge, which may be probably gathered from his own ſpeech, when God came to examine him, and ask him for his Brother. *Gen.* 4. 9. *Am I my Brothers keeper?* Why do you ask me; though I own thee as the Lord of my Land, and Goods, yet I do not

not think my ſelf accountable to thee for all my actions. This Soveraignty of God ought to be acknowledged in all the parts of it, in all the manifeſtations of it to the creature. We ſhould bear a ſence of this always upon our Spirits, and be often in the thoughts of it in our retirements. We ſhould fancy that we ſaw God upon his Throne in his Royal Garb, and great attendants about him, and take a view of it, to imprint an awe upon our Spirits.

The meditation on this would,

1. *Fix us on him as an object of truſt.* 'Tis upon his Soveraign Dominion as much as upon any thing, that ſafe and ſecure confidence is built; for if he had any ſuperior above him, to controul him in his deſigns and promiſes, his veracity and power would be of little efficacy, to form our ſouls to a cloſe adherency to him. It were not fit to make him the object of our truſt, that can be gainſaid by a higher than himſelf, and had not a full Authority to anſwer our expectations; If we were poſſeſſed with this notion fully and believingly, that *God* were *high above all*, that *his Kingdom rules over all*, we ſhould not catch at every broken reed, and ſtand gaping for comforts from a pebble ſtone. He that underſtands the Authority of a King, would not wave a relyance on his promiſe, to depend upon the breath of a changeling Favorite. None but an ignorant Man would change the ſecurity he may have upon the height of a Rock, to expect it from the dwarfiſhneſs of a Mole-hill. To put confidence in any inferior Lord, more than in the Prince, is a folly in civil converſe, but a rebellion in Divine; God only being above all, can only rule all, can command things to help us, and check other things which we depend on, and make them fall ſhort of our expectations. The due conſideration of this Doctrine would make us pierce through *ſecond* cauſes to the *firſt*, and look further than to the ſmaller ſort of Sailers, that climb the Ropes, and dreſs the Sails, to the Pilot that ſits at the Helm, the Maſter, that by an indiſputable Authority orders all their motions. We ſhould not depend upon *ſecond cauſes* for our ſupport, but look beyond them to the Authority of the Deity, and the dominion he hath over all the works of his hands. *Zach.* 10. 10. 1 *Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain*; When the ſeaſons of the year conſpire for the producing ſuch an effect, when the uſual time of rain is wheel'd about in the year, ſtop not your thoughts at the point of the Heavens, whence you expect it, but pierce the Heavens, and ſollicite God, who muſt give order for it, before it comes. The due meditation of all things depending on the Divine Dominion, would ſtrik off our hands from all other holds, ſo that no creature would engroſs the dependance and truſt which is due to the firſt cauſe; As we do not thank the Heavens when they pour out Rain, ſo we are not to depend upon them when we want it; God is to be ſought to when the Womb of Second Cauſes is open'd to relieve us, as well as when the Womb of Second Cauſes is barren, and brings not forth its wonted progeny.

2. It would make us *diligent in worſhip*. The conſideration of God as the ſupream Lord, is the foundation of all Religion; *Our Father which art in Heaven*, prefaceth the Lord's Prayer; *Father* is a name of *Authority*; in *Heaven*, the place where he hath fixed his Throne, notes his *Government*; not *my* Father, but *our* Father, notes the *extent* of this Authority. In all worſhip we acknowledge the *object* of our worſhip, *our Lord*, and our ſelves his Vaſſals; If we bear a ſenſe that he is our Soveraign King, it would draw us to him in every exigence, and keep us with him in a reverential poſture, in every addreſs; When we come we ſhould be careful not to violate his Right, but render him the homage due to his Royalty. We ſhould not appear before him with empty ſouls, but fill'd with Holy thoughts. We ſhould bring him the beſt of our Flock, and preſent him with the prime of our ſtrength; Were we ſenſible we hold all of him, we ſhould not with-hold any thing from him, which is more worthy than another. Our hearts would be fram'd into an awful regard of him, when we conſider that glorious and *fearful name, the Lord our God, Deut.* 28. 58. We ſhould *look to our feet*, when we enter into his houſe, if we conſidered him in *Heaven* upon his Throne, and our

ſelves

ſelves on *Earth* at his Footſtool, *Eccleſ.* 5. 2. lower before him than a worm before an Angel; It would hinder gariſhneſs and lightneſs. The *Jews*, ſaith *Capel*, on the 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. repeat this expreſſion, מלך העולמים *King of Worlds*, or Eternal King; Probable the firſt original of it might be, to ſtake them down from wandring. When we conſider the Majeſty of God cloathed with a Robe of light, ſitting upon his high Throne, adorn'd with his Royal Enſigns, we ſhould not enter into the preſence of ſo great a Majeſty with the Sacrifice of fools, with light motions and fooliſh thoughts, as if he were one of our companions to be droll'd with. We ſhould not hear his Word, as if it were the voice of ſome ordinary Peaſant. The conſideration of Majeſty, would engender reverence in our ſervice; It would alſo make us ſpeak of God with honour and Reſpect, as of a great and glorious King, and not uſe defaming expreſſions of him, as if he were an infamous Being. And were he conſider'd as a terrible Majeſty, he would not be frequently ſollicited by ſome, to pronounce a damnation upon them, upon every occaſion.

3. It would make us *charitable to others.* Since he is our Lord, the great Proprietor of the World, 'tis fit he ſhould have a part of our Goods, as well as our Time; he being the Lord both of our Goods and Time. The Lord is to be honour'd with our *Subſtance*, *Prov.* 3. 9. Kings were not to be approached to without a Preſent; Tribute is due to Kings: but becauſe he hath no need of any from us to bear up his ſtate, maintain the charge of his Wars, or pay his Military Officers and Hoſt, 'tis a debt due to him, to acknowledge him in his poor, to ſuſtain thoſe that are a part of his ſubſtance; Though he ſtands in no need of it himſelf, yet the poor, that we have always *with us*, do; As a *7th part* of our weekly time, ſo ſome part of our weekly gains are due to him. There was to be a weekly laying by in ſtore *ſomewhat* of what God had *proſper'd them*, for the relief of others. 1 *Cor.* 16. 1, 2. the quantity is not determin'd, that is left to every Man's Conſcience, *according as God hath proſper'd him* that week. If we did conſider God as the donor and proprietor, we ſhould diſpoſe of his gifts according to the deſign of the true owner, and act in our places as Stewards intruſted by him, and not purſe up his part as well as our own in our Coffers. We ſhould not deny him a ſmall quit Rent, as an acknowledgment that we have a greater income from him; We ſhould be ready to give the inconſiderable pittance he doth require of us, as an acknowledgment of his propriety, as well as liberality.

4. It would *make us watchful, and arm us againſt all temptations.* Had *Eve* ſtuck to her firſt Argument againſt the Serpent, ſhe had not been inſtrumental to that deſtruction, which Mankind yet feel the ſmart of. *Gen.* 3. 3. *God hath ſaid, ye ſhall not eat of it*; The great Governour of the World hath laid his Soveraign Command upon us in this point. The temptation gain'd no ground, till her heart let go the ſenſe of this for the pleaſure of her Eye and Palate. The repetition of this, the great Lord of the World hath ſaid, or order'd, had both unargumented and diſarm'd the Tempter. A ſenſe of God's Dominion over us would diſcourage a Temptation, and put it out of countenance; It would bring us with a vigorous ſtrength to beat it back to a retreat; If this were as ſtrongly urg'd as temptation, it would make the heart of the Tempted ſtrong, and the motion of the tempter feeble.

5. *It would make us entertain afflictions, as they ought to be entertain'd*, viz. *with a reſpect to God.* When Men make light of any affliction from God, 'tis a contempt of his Soveraignty, as to contemn the frown, diſpleaſure and check of a Prince, is an affront to Majeſty: 'Tis, as if they did not care a ſtraw what God did with them, but dare him to do his worſt. There is a *deſpiſing the chaſtning of the Almighty*, *Job* 5. 17. To be unhumbled under his hand, is as much or more affront to him, than to be impatient under it. Afflictions muſt be entertain'd as a check from Heaven, as a frown from the great Monarch of the World; Under the feeling of every ſtroke, we are to acknowledge his Soveraignty and Bounty,

Bounty; to deſpiſe it, is to make light of his Authority over us; As to deſpiſe his favours, is to make light of his kindneſs to us. A ſenſe of God's Dominion would make us obſerve every check from him, and not diminiſh his Authority, by caſting off a due ſenſe of his correction.

6. This Dominion of God would make us *reſign up our ſelves to God in every thing*. He that conſiders himſelf a thing made by God, a vaſſal under his Authority, would not expoſtulate with him, and call him to an account why he hath dealt ſo, or ſo with him. It would ſtab the vitals of all pleas againſt him. We ſhould not then conteſt with him, but humbly lay our cauſe at his feet, and ſay with *Eli*, 1 *Sam.* 3. 18. *'Tis the Lord, let him do what ſeems good.* We ſhould not commence a ſuit againſt God, when he doth not anſwer our Prayers preſently, and ſend the mercy we want upon the wings of the wind; He is the Lord, the Soveraign: The conſideration of this would put an end to our quarrels with God; Should I expect that the Monarch of the World ſhould wait upon me, or I a poor worm wait upon him? Muſt I take ſtate upon me before the Throne of Heaven, and expect the King of Kings ſhould lay by his Scepter, to gratify my humour? Surely *Jonah* thought God no more than his fellow, or his Vaſſal, at that time when he told him to his face, he did well to be angry, as though God might not do what he pleaſed with ſo ſmall a thing as a Gourd; He ſpeaks as if he would have ſealed a Leaſe of Ejectment, to exclude him from any propriety in any thing in the World.

7. This Dominion of God would *ſtop our vain curioſity*. When *Peter* was deſirous to know the fate of *John* the Beloved Diſciple, Chriſt anſwereth no more than this, *Joh.* 21. 22. *If I will, that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.* Conſider your duty, and lay aſide your curioſity, ſince it is my pleaſure not to reveal it. The ſenſe of God's abſolute Dominion would ſilence many vain diſputes in the World; What if God will not reveal this or that? The manner and method of his reſolves ſhould humble the Creature under intruding enquiries.

V. USE of *Exhortation.*

1. The Doctrine of the Dominion of God, *may teach us Humility.* We are never truly abas'd, but by the conſideration of the Eminence and Excellency of the Deity. *Job* never thought himſelf ſo *pitiful* a thing, ſo deſpicable a creature, as after God's magnificent declamation upon the Theme of his own Soveraignty. *Job* 42. 5, 6. When God's name is regarded as the moſt excellent and Soveraign name in all the Eearth, then is the Soul in the fitteſt temper to lye low, and cry out, What is Man, that ſo great a Majeſty ſhould be mindful of him? When *Abraham* conſiders God as the Supream Judge of all the Earth, he then owns *himſelf but duſt and aſhes.* *Gen.* 18. 25, 27. Indeed, how can vile and duſty Man vaunt before God when the Angels, far more excellent creatures cannot ſtand before him, but with a vail on their faces? How little a thing is Man in regard of all the Earth? How mean a thing is the Earth in regard of the vaſter Heavens? How poor a thing is the whole World in compariſon of God? How pitiful a thing is man, if compar'd with ſo excellent a Majeſty? There is as great a diſtance between God and man, as between Being and not being, and the more man conſiders the Divine Royalty, the more diſ-eſteem he will have of himſelf, it would make him ſtoop and diſrobe himſelf, and fall low before the throne of the King of Kings, throwing down before his Throne, *any Crown* he gloried in. *Rev.* 4. 10.

1. *In regard of Authority.* How unreaſonable is pride in the preſence of Majeſty? How fooliſh is it for a Countrey Juſtice of Peace, to think himſelf as great as his Prince that Commiſſion'd him? How unreaſonable is pride in the preſence of the greateſt Soveraignty? What is humane greatneſs before Divine? The Stars diſcover no light when the Sun appears, but in an humble poſture withdraw in their leſſer Beams, to give the ſole Glory of enlightning the World to the Sun, who is as it were the Soveraign of thoſe Stars, and imparts a light unto them. The greateſt Prince is infinitely leſs, if compar'd with God, than the meaneſt Scullion in his

his Kitchin can be before him. As the Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Holineſs of Man is a meer mote, compared to the Goodneſs and Holineſs of God, ſo is the Authority of man a meer trifle in regard of the Soveraignty of God. And who but a ſimple Child would be proud of a mote, or trifle? Let man be as great as he can, and command others, he is ſtill a ſubject to one greater than himſelf. Pride would then vaniſh like ſmoak at the ſerious conſideration of this Soveraignty.

One of the Kings of this Countrey did very handſomely ſhame the flattery of his Courtiers that cried him up as Lord of Sea and Land, by ordering his Chair to be ſet on the Sand of the Sea-ſhore, when the Tide was coming in, and commanding the Waters not to touch his Feet, which when they did without any regard to his Authority, he took occaſion therby to put his flatterers out of countenance, and inſtruct himſelf in a leſſon of Humility; *See*, ſaith he, *how I rule all things, when ſo mean a thing as the water will not obey me.* 'Tis a ridiculous pride that the *Turk* and *Perſian* diſcover in their ſwelling Titles. What poor Soveraigns are they, that cannot command a Cloud, give out an effectual order for a drop of Rain, in a time of drought, or cauſe the bottles of Heaven, to turn their mouth another way in a time of too much moiſture. Yet their own Prerogatives are ſo much in their minds, that they juſtle out all thoughts of the ſupream Prerogative of God, and give thereby occaſion to frequent Rebellions againſt him.

2. In regard of *Propriety*. And this Doctrine is no leſs an abatement of pride in the higheſt, as well as in the meaneſt, it lowers pride in point of *Propriety*, as well as in point of *Authority*. * Is any proud of his poſſeſſions, how many Lords of thoſe poſſeſſions have gone before you? How many are to follow you? Your Dominion laſts but for a ſhort time, too ſhort, to be a cauſe of any pride and glory in it. God by a Soveraign Power can take you from them, or them from you, when he pleaſeth. The Traveller refreſheth himſelf in the heat of Summer under a ſhady Tree; how many have done ſo before him the ſame day, he knows not, and how many will have the benefit after, before night comes, he is as much ignorant of; he and the others that went before him, and follow after him, uſe it for their refreſhment, but none of them can ſay, they are the Lords of it. The property is inveſted in ſome other perſon, whom perhaps they know not; the propriety of all you have, is in God, not truly in your ſelves. Doth not that Man deſerve ſcorn from you, who will play the proud fool in gay Cloaths and Attire, which are known to be none of his own, but borrowed Is it not the ſame caſe with every proud man, though he hath a property in his Goods by the Law of the Land? Is any thing you have your own truly? Is it not lent you by the great Lord? Is it not the ſame vanity in any of you, to be proud of what you have as Gods loan to you, as for ſuch a one to be proud of what he hath borrowed of Man. And do you not make your ſelves as ridiculons to Angels, and good Men, who know, that though it is yours in oppoſition to Man, yet it is *not yours* in oppoſition to God, they are granted you only for your uſe, as the *Collar of Eſſes and Sword*, and other Enſigns of the chief Magiſtrate in the City, paſs through many hands in regard of the uſe of them, but the propriety remains in the Community and body of the City. Or as the Silver plate of a perſon that invites you to a Feaſt, is for your uſe during the time of the invitation. What ground is there, to be proud of thoſe things, you are not the abſolute Lords and Proprietors of, but only have the uſe of them granted to you, during the pleaſure of the Soveraign of the World?

Reynard de Deo. p. 766.

2. *Praiſe and Thankfulneſs reſults from this Doctrine of the Soveraignty of God.*

1. *He is to be praiſed for his Royalty*, Pſal. 145. 1. *I will extoll thee my God, Oh King.* The *Pſalmiſt* calls upon men five *times*, to ſing praiſe to him as the King of all the Earth. *Pſal.* 47. 6, 7. *Sing praiſes to God, ſing praiſes, ſing praiſes to our King, ſing praiſes: For God is the King of all the Earth, ſing ye praiſes with underſtanding.* All Creatures even the inanimate ones are called upon to praiſe him, becauſe of the excellency of his Name and the ſupremacy of his Glory in the 148*th.*

Pſal. throughout, and *ver.* 13. That *Soveraign* power that gave us hearts and tongues, deſerves to have them employ'd in his praiſes, eſpecially ſince he hath by the ſame hand, given us ſo great matter for it. As he is a *Soveraign* we owe him thankfulneſs, he doth not deal with us in a way of abſolute Dominion, he might then have annihilated us: Since he hath as full a Dominion to reduce us to nothing, as to bring us out of nothing. Conſider the abſoluteneſs of his *Soveraignty* in it ſelf, and you muſt needs acknowledge, that he might have multiply'd precepts, enjoyned us the obſervance of more than he hath done, he might have made our tedder much ſhorter, he might exact obedience, and promiſe no reward for it; he might daſh us againſt the Walls, as a Potter doth his Veſſel, and no man have any juſt reaſon to ſay, What doſt thou? Or why doſt thou uſe me ſo? A greater Right is in him to uſe us in ſuch a manner, as we do ſenſible, as well as inſenſible things. And if you conſider his Dominion, as it is capable to be exerciſed in a way of unqueſtionable Juſtice, and ſubmitted to the reaſon and judgments of Creatures, he might have dealt with us in a ſmarter way, than he hath hitherto done; inſtead of *one* affliction we might have had a *thouſand*. He might have ſhut his own hands from pouring out any good upon us, and ordered innumerable ſcourges to be prepared for us; but he deals not with us according to the rights of his Dominion. He doth not oppreſs us by the greatneſs of his Majeſty; he enters into Covenant with us, and allures us by the Cords of a Man, and ſhews himſelf as much a merciful as an abſolute *Soveraign*.

2. *As he is a Proprietor we owe him thankfulneſs.* He is at his own choice, whither he will beſtow upon us any Bleſſings or no, the more value therefore his benefits deſerve from us, and the Donor the more ſincere returns. If we have any thing from the Creature to ſerve our turn, 'tis by the order of the chief Proprietor. He is the Spring of Honour, and the Fountain of Supplies; all Creatures are but as the Conduit-pipes in a great City, which ſerve ſeveral houſes with water, but from the great ſpring. All things are conveyed originally from his own hand, and are diſpenſed from his Exchequer. If this great *Soveraign* did not order them, you would have no more ſupplies from a Creature, than you could have nouriſhment from a chip. 'Tis the Divine Will in every thing that doth us good; every favour from Creatures is but a ſmile from God, an evidenc of his Royalty to move us to pay a reſpect to him as the great Lord. Some *Heathens* had ſo much reſpect for God, as to conclude that his Will and not their own prudence, was the chief conductor of their affairs. His Goodneſs to us calls for our thankfulneſs, but his Soveraignty calls for a higher elevation of it; a ſmile from a Prince is more valued, and thought worthy of more gratitude, than a preſent from a Peaſant. A ſmall gift from a great Perſon is more gratefully to be received, than a larger from an inferior Perſon. The condeſcenſion of Royalty magnifies the Gift. What is *man*, that *thou* ſo great a Majeſty, *art mindful of him*, to beſtow this or that favour upon him, is but a due reflection upon every bleſſing we receive? Upon every freſh bleſſing we ſhould acknowledge the donor, and true proprietor, and give him the honor of his Dominion. His property ought to be thankfully own'd in every thing we are capable of conſecrating to him. As *David* after the liberal collection he had made for the building of the Temple, owns in his dedication of it to that uſe the propriety of God. 1 *Chron.* 29. 14. *Who am I? and what is my people, that we ſhould be able to offer ſo willingly after this ſort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.* It was but a return of God's own to him, as the waters of the River are no other than the return to the Sea, of what was taken from it.

Praiſe and Thankfulneſs is a Rent due from all mankind, and from every Creature to the great Landlord, ſince all are Tenants, and hold by him at his Will. *Every Creature in Heaven and Earth, under the Earth, and in the Sea*, were heard by *John* to aſcribe *bleſſing, honour, glory, and power to him that ſits on the Throne*, Rev. 5. 13. We are as much bound to the Soveraignty of God for his preſervation of us; as for his creation of us. We are no leſs oblig'd to him, that preſerves our beings, when expoſed to dangers, than we are for beſtowing a being upon us, when

when we were not capable of danger. Thankfulneſs is due to this Soveraign for publick concerns; Hath he not preſerved the *Ship* of his Church in the midſt of whiſtling winds, and roaring waves, in the midſt of the combats of Men and Devils, and reſcued it often, when it hath been near Ship-wrackt?

3. How ſhould we be induc'd from hence *to promote the honour of this Soveraign?* We ſhould advance him as Supream, and all our actions ſhould concur in his honour. We ſhould return to his Glory, what we have receiv'd from his Soveraignty, and enjoy by his mercy: He that is the Superior of all, ought to be the end of all. This is the harmony of the Creation, that which is of an inferiour nature, is order'd to the ſervice of that which is of a more excellent nature; thus Water and Earth, that have a lower Being, are employ'd for the honour and beauty of the plants of the Earth, who are more excellent in having a principle of a growing life; Theſe plants are again ſubſervient to the Beaſts and Birds, which exceed them in a principle of Senſe, which the others want; Thoſe Beaſts and Birds are order'd for the good of Man, who is ſuperior to them in a Principle of Reaſon, and is inveſted with a Dominion over them; Man having God for his ſuperior, ought as much to ſerve the Glory of God, as other things are deſign'd to be uſeful to Man. Other Governments are intended for the good of the Community, the chief end is not the good of the Governours themſelves; But God being every way Soveraign, the Soveraign Being, giving Being to all things, the Soveraign Ruler, giving order and preſervation to all things, is alſo the end of all things, to whoſe Glory and Honour all things, all creatures are to be ſubſervient. *Rom.* 11. 36. *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Of* him as the efficient cauſe, *through* him as the preſerving cauſe, *to* him as the final cauſe; All our actions and thoughts ought to be addreſt to his Glory, our whole Beings ought to be conſecrated to his honour, though we ſhould have no reward, but the honour of having been ſubſervient to the end of our Creation; So much doth the Excellency and Majeſty of God, infinitely elevated above us, challenge of us. Subjects uſe to value the Safety, Honour, and Satisfaction of a good Prince above their own; *David* is accounted worth 10000 of the People, and ſome of his Courtiers thought themſelves oblig'd to venture their lives for his ſatisfaction in ſo mean a thing, as a little Water from the Well of *Bethlehem.* Doth not ſo great, ſo good a Soveraign as God, deſerve the ſame affection from us? *Do we ſwear,* ſaith a *Heathen,* * *to prefer none before Cæſar, and have we not greater reaſon, to prefer none before God?* 'Tis a Juſtice due from us to God, to maintain his Glory, as it is a Juſtice to preſerve the Right and Property of another. As God would lay aſide his Deity, if he did deny himſelf, ſo a creature acts irregularly, and out of the rank of a creature, if it doth not deny it ſelf for God. He that makes himſelf his own end, makes himſelf his own Soveraign. To napkin up a gift he hath beſtow'd upon us, or to employ what we poſſeſs, ſolely to our own Glory, to uſe any thing barely for our ſelves, without reſpect to God, is to apply it to a wrong uſe, and to injure God in his propriety, and the end of his donation. What we have, ought to be us'd for the honour of God; He retains the Dominion and Lordſhip, though he grants us the uſe; We are but Stewards, not Proprietors, in regard of God who expects an account from us, how we have employ'd his Goods to his honour. The Kingdom of God is to be advanced by us, we are to pray that his *Kingdom may come,* we are to endeavour that his Kingdom may come, that is, that God may be known to be the chief Soveraign, that his Dominion, which was obſcur'd by *Adam*'s fall, may be more manifeſted, that his Subjects which are ſuppreſt in the World, may be ſupported, his Laws which are violated by the rebellions of Men, may be more obeyed, and his enemies be fully ſubdued by his final judgment, the laſt evidence of his Dominion in this State of the World, that the Empire of Sin and the Devil may be aboliſh'd, and the Kingdom of God be perfected, that none may rule but the great and rightful Soveraign. Thus while we endeavour to advance the honour of his Throne, we ſhall not want an honour to our ſelves. He is too gracious a Soveraign to neglect them that are mindful of his Glory; *thoſe that honour him, he will honour,* 1 Sam. 2. 30.

* *Arrian* in Epictet.

4. *Fear and reverence of God in himſelf, and in his actions*, is a duty incumbent on us from this Doctrine. *Jer.* 10.7. *Who would not fear thee, O King of Nations!* The ingratitude of the World is taxt, in not reverencing God as a great King, who had given ſo many marks of his Royal Government among them. The *Prophet* wonders, there was no fear of ſo great a King in the World; Since *among all the wiſe Men of the Nations, and among all their Kings, there is none like unto this*; No more reverence of him, ſince none ruled ſo wiſely, nor any ruled ſo Graciouſly. The Dominion of God is one of the firſt ſparks that gives fire to Religion and Worſhip, conſider'd with the goodneſs of this Soveraign. *Pſal.* 22. 27, 28. *All the Nations ſhall worſhip before thee, for the Kingdom is the Lords, and he is Governour among the Nations. Epicurus*, who thought God careleſs of humane Affairs, leaving them at hap-hazard to the conduct of Mens Wiſdom, and mutability of Fortune, yet acknowledged that God ought to be worſhipped by Man for the excellency of his Nature, and greatneſs of his Majeſty. How ſhould we reverence that God, that hath a Throne encompaſt with ſuch Glorious Creatures as Angels, whoſe faces we are not able to behold, though ſhadow'd in aſſum'd bodies! How ſhould we fear the Lord of Hoſts, that hath ſo many Armies at his command in the Heavens above, and in the Earth below, whom he can diſpoſe to the exact obedience of his Will! how ſhould Men be afraid to cenſure any of his actions, to ſit Judge of their Judge, and call him to an account to their Bar! How ſhould ſuch an Earth-worm, a mean animal as Man, be afraid to ſpeak irreverently of ſo great a King among his pots and Strumpets! Not to fear him, not to reverence him, is to pull his Throne from under him, and make him of a lower Authority than our ſelves, or any creature that we can reverence more.

5. *Prayer to God, and truſt in him* is inferr'd from his Soveraignty. If he be the Supream Soveraign, holding Heaven and Earth in his hand, diſpoſing all things here below, not committing every thing to the influence of the Stars, or the humours of Men: we ought then to apply our ſelves to him in every caſe, implore the exerciſe of his Authority, we hereby own his peculiar Right over all things and perſons. He only is the ſupream head in all Cauſes, and over all Perſons; *Thine is the Kingdom* concludes the Lord's Prayers both as a motive to pray, *Mat.* 6. 13. and a ground to expect what we want. He that believes not God's Government, will think it needleſs to call upon him, will expect no refuge under him in a ſtrait, but make ſome creature-reed his ſupport. If we do not ſeek to him, but rely upon the Dominion we have over our own poſſeſſions, or upon the Authority of any thing elſe, we diſown his Supremacy and Dominion over all things, we have as good an opinion of our ſelves, or of ſome creature, as we ought to have of God. We think our ſelves, or ſome natural cauſe we ſeek to, or depend upon, as much Soveraigns as he, and that all things which concern us are as much at the diſpoſe of an inferior, as of the great Lord. 'Tis indeed to make a God of our ſelves, or of the Creature: When we ſeek to him upon all occaſions, we own this Divine eminency, we acknowledge that it is by him mens Hearts are order'd, the World govern'd, all things diſpos'd; And God that is jealous of his Glory, is beſt pleaſed with any duty in the creature, that doth acknowledge and deſire the glorification of it, which Prayer and dependance on him doth in a ſpecial manner; Deſiring the exerciſe of his Authority, and the preſervation of it in ordering the affairs of the World.

6. *Obedience* naturally reſults from this Doctrine, As his juſtice requires fear, his goodneſs thankfulneſs, his faithfulneſs truſt, his truth belief, ſo his Soveraignty in the nature of it demands Obedience. As it is moſt fit he ſhould rule in regard of his excellency: ſo it is moſt fit we ſhould obey him in regard of his Authority. He is our Lord, and we his Subjects, he is our Maſter, and we his Servants; 'tis righteous we ſhould obſerve him, and conform to his Will. He is every thing, that ſpeaks an Authority to command us, and that can challenge an humility in us to obey. As that is the trueſt Doctrine, that ſubjects us moſt to God, ſo he is the trueſt Chriſtian, that doth in his practice moſt acknowledge this ſubjection.

jection. And as Soveraignty is the first notion a Creature can have of God, so obedience is the first and chief thing Conscience reflects upon the Creature. Man holds all of God: and therefore owes all the operations capable to be produced by those Faculties to that Soverign Power that endowed him with them. Man had no Being but from him, he hath no motion without him; he should therefore have no Being but for him, and no motion but according to him. To call him Lord, and not to act in subjection to him, is to mock, and put a scorn upon him. *Luk.* 6. 46. *Why call you me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?* 'Tis like the Crucifying Christ under the Title of a King. 'Tis not by professions, but by observance of the Laws of a Prince, that we manifest a due respect to him. By that we reverence that Authority, that enacted them, and the prudence that fram'd them.

This doctrine affords us *motives* to obey, and directs us to the *manner* of Obedience.

1. *Motives to obey,*

1. *'Tis Comely and Orderly.* Is it not a more becoming thing to be ruled by the Will of our Soveraign, than by that of our Lusts? To observe a wise and gracious Authority, than to set up inordinate Appetites in the room of his Law? Would not all men account it a disorder to be abominated, to see a slave or vassal controul the just orders of his Lord, and endeavour to subject his Masters Will to his own? Much more to expect, God should serve our humour, rather than we be regulated by his Will? 'Tis more orderly that Subjects should obey their Governours, than Governours their Subjects; that Passion should obey Reason, than Reason obey Passion. When good Governours are to conform to Sudjects, and Reason vail to Passion, 'tis monstrous; the one disturbs the order of a community, and the other defaceth the beauty of the Soul. Is it a comely thing for God to stoop to our meanness, or for us to stoop to his greatness?

2: In regard of the Divine Soveraignty, *'tis both honourable and advantagious to obey God.* Tis indeed the glory of a Superior, to be obey'd by his Inferior; but where the Soveraign is of transcendent excellency and dignity, 'tis an honour to a mean person, to be under his immediate commands, and enrolled in his service. 'Tis more honour to be God's Subject, than to be the greatest worldly Monarch; his *very service is an Empire*, and disobedience to him is a slavery. * 'Tis a part of his Soveraignty to reward any service done to him. Other Lords may be willing to recompence the service of their Subjects, but are often rendred unable; but nothing can stand in the way of God to hinder your reward, if nothing stand n your way to hinder your Obedience. *Levit.* 18. 5. *If you keep my Statutes, you shall live in them, I am the Lord.* Is there any thing in the World can recompence you for rebellion against God, and obedience to a Lust? *Saul* cools the hearts of his Servants from running after *David*, by *David's* inability to give them Fields and Vineyards. 1 *Sam.* 22. 7. *Will the Son of Jesse give every one of you Fields, and Vineyards, and make you Captains of thousands, and Captains of hundreds, that you have conspired against me?* But God hath a Dominion to requite, as well as an Authority to command your obedience. He is a great *Soveraign*, to bear you out in your observance of his Precepts against all reproaches and violences of Men, and at last to crown you with Eternal honour. If he should neglect vindicating one time or other your Loyalty to him, he will neglect the maintaining and vindicating his own Soveraignty and Greatness.

* *Servire Deo regnare est.*

3. *God in all his dispensations to Man was careful to preserve the rights of his Soveraignty, in exacting obedience of his Creature.* The *second* thing he manifested his Soveraignty in, was that of a Law-giver to *Adam*, after that of a *Proprietor* in giving him the possession of the Garden; one follow'd immediately the other. *Gen.* 2. 15, 16. *The Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of* Eden, *to dress it, and the Lord God commanded the Man, saying, of every Tree of the Garden*

den thou mayſt freely eat, but of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou ſhalt not eat of it, &c. Nothing was to be enjoyed by Man but upon the condition of Obedience to his Lord; and it is obſerv'd that in the deſcription of the Creation, God is not call'd *Lord* till the finiſhing of the Creation, and particularly in the forming of Man, *Gen.* 2. 7. *And the Lord God form'd Man.* Though he was Lord of all Creatures, yet it was in Man he would have his Soveraignty particularly manifeſted, and by Man have his Authority ſpecially acknowedged. The Law is prefac'd with this Title, *I am the Lord thy God*, *Exod.* 20. 2. Authority in *Lord*, ſweetneſs in God, the one to enjoyn, the other to allure obedience; and God enforceth ſeveral of the commands with the ſame Title. And as he begins many precepts with it, ſo he concludes them with the ſame Title, *I am the Lord*, *Levit.* 19. 37. and in other places.

In all his communtications of his Goodneſs to man in ways of bleſſing them, he ſtands upon the preſervation of the Rights of his Soveraignty, and manifeſts his Graciouſneſs in favour of his Authority. *I am the Lord your God*, your God in all my perfections for your advantage, but yet your Soveraign for your obedience. In all his condeſcenſions he will have the Rights of this untoucht and unviolated by us. When Chriſt would give the moſt pregnant inſtance of his condeſcending, and humble kindneſs, he urgeth his Authority, to ballaſt their Spirits from any preſumptuous eruptions becauſe of his humility. *John* 13. 13. *Ye call me Maſter and Lord, and you ſay well, for ſo I am.* He aſſerts his Authority, and preſſeth them to their duty, when he had ſeem'd to lay it for the demeanour of a Servant, and had below the dignity of a Maſter put on the humility of a mean underling, to waſh the *Diſciples* feet; all which was to oblige them to perform the command he then gave them. *Ver.* 14. in Obedience to his Authority, and imitation of his *Example*.

4. *All Creatures obey him.* All Creatures punctually obſerve the Law he hath imprinted on their nature, and in their ſeveral capacities acknowledge him their Soveraign, they move according to the inclinations he imprinted on them. The Sea contains its ſelf in its bounds, and the Sun ſteps not out of his Sphear, the Stars march in their Order, *they continue this day according to thy Ordinance, for all are thy Servants*, *Pſal.* 119. 91. If he orders things contrary to their primitive nature, they obey him. When he ſpeaks the word, the devouring fire becomes gentle, and toucheth not a hair of the Children, he will preſerve. The hunger-ſtarv'd Lions ſuſpend their ravenous nature, when ſo good a morſel as *Daniel* is ſet before them. And the Sun which had been in perpetual motion ſince its Creation, obeys the Writ of eaſe God ſent it in *Joſhua*'s time, and ſtands ſtill. Shall inſenſible and ſenſible Creatures be punctual to his Orders, paſſively acknowledge his Authority? Shall Lions and Serpents obey God in their places, and ſhall not man, who can by reaſon argue out the Soveraignty of God, and underſtand the ſence and goodneſs of his Laws, and actively obey God with that Will he hath enricht him with above other Creatures? Yet the truth is, every ſenſitive, yea every ſenſleſs Creature obeys God more than his rational, more than his Gracious Creatures in this World. The rational Creatures ſince the fall have a prevailing principle of corruption. Let the Obedience of other Creatures incite us more to imitate them, and ſhame our remiſsneſs in not acknowledging the Dominion of God, in the juſt way he preſcribes us to walk in.

Well then, Let us not pretend to own God as our Lord, and yet act the part of Rebels. Let us give him the reverence, and pay him that obedience, which of right belongs to ſo great a King. Whatſoever he ſpeaks as a true God, ought to be believ'd, whatſoever he orders as a Soveraign God, ought to be obey'd. Let not God have leſs than Man, nor Man have more than God. 'Tis a common Principle writ upon the Reaſon of all Men, that Reſpect and Obſervance is due to the Majeſty of a Man, much more to the Majeſty of God as a Law-giver.

2. As this Doctrine preſents us motives, ſo it *directs us to the manner and kind of our Obedience to God.*

1. *It*

1. *It muſt be with a reſpect to his Authority.* As the veracity of God is the formal object of faith, and the reaſon why we believe the things he hath reveal'd; ſo the Authority of God is the formal object of our obedience, or the reaſon why we obſerve the things he hath commanded. There muſt be a reſpect to his Will as the rule, as well as to his Glory as the end. 'Tis not formally obedience that is not done with a regard to the order of God, though it may be materially obedience, as it anſwers the matter of the Precept. As when Men will abſtain from exceſs and rioting, becauſe it is ruinous to their health, not becauſe it is forbidden by the great Law-giver; This is to pay a reſpect to our own conveniency and intereſt, not a conſcientious obſervance to God; a regard to our health, not to our Soveraign, a kindneſs to our ſelves, not a juſtice due to the Rights of God. There muſt not only be a conſideration of the matter of the Precept as convenient, but a conſideration of the Authority of the Law-giver as Obligatory. *Thus ſaith the Lord,* Uſhers in every order of his, directing our eye to the Authority enacting it. *Jeroboam* did God's Will of Propheſie in taking the Kingdom of *Iſrael*; and the Devils may be ſubſervient in God's Will or Providence; but neither of them are put upon the account of obedience, becauſe not done intentionally with any Conſcience of the Soveraignty of God. God will have this owned by a regular reſpect to it; So much he inſiſts upon the honour of it, that the Sacrifice of Chriſt, God-man was moſt agreeable to him, not only as it was great and admirable in it ſelf, but alſo for that raviſhing obedience to his Will, which was the Life and Glory of his Sacrifice, whereby the juſtice of God was not only owned in the Offering, but the Soveraignty of God owned in the Obedience. *Phil.* 2. 8. *He became obedient unto death; Wherefore God highly exalted him.*

2. It muſt be *the beſt and moſt exact Obedience.* The moſt Soveraign Authority calls for the exacteſt and loweſt obſervance, the higheſt Lord for the deepeſt homage: being he is a *great King,* he muſt have the *beſt in our flock. Mal.* 1. Obedience is due to God, as King, and the choiceſt Obedience is due to him, as he is the moſt excellent King. The more majeſtick and noble any man is, the more careful we are in our manner of ſervice to him. We are bound to obey God, not only under the title of a Lord in regard of juriſdiction and political ſubjection, but under the title of a true Lord and Maſter in regard of propriety: ſince we are not only his ſubjects but ſervants, the exacteſt obedience is due to God *Jure ſervitutis,* Luke 17. 10. *When you have done all, ſay you are unprofitable ſervants,* becauſe we can do nothing which we owe not to God.

3. *Sincere and inward Obedience.* As it is a part of his Soveraignty to preſcribe Laws not only to Man in his outward State, but to his Conſcience, ſo it is a part of our ſubjection to receive his Laws into our Will and Heart. The Authority of his Laws exceeds Human Laws in the extent and riches of them, and our acknowledgment of his Soveraignty cannot be right, but by ſubjecting the faculties of our Soul to the Law-giver of our Souls; We elſe acknowledge his Authority to be as limited, as the Empire of Man. When his Will not only ſways the outward action, but the inward motion; 'tis a giving him the honour of his high Throne above the Throne of mortals. The Right of God ought to be preſerved undamaged in affection, as well as action.

4. It muſt be *ſole Obedience.* We are order'd to ſerve him only, *Matt.* 4. 10. *Him only ſhalt thou ſerve;* as the only ſupream Lord, as being the higheſt Soveraign, it is fit he ſhould have the higheſt obedience before all Earthly Soveraigns, and as being unparallell'd by any among all the Nations, ſo none muſt have an obedience equal to him. When God commands, if the higheſt power on earth countermands it, the Precept of God muſt be preferred before the countermand of the creature. *Acts* 4. 18, 19. *Whither it be right in the ſight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* We muſt never give place to the Authority of all the Monarchs in the World, to the prejudice of that obedience we owe to the Supream Monarch of Heaven and Earth: this would be, to place the Throne

Throne of God at the foot-ſtool of man, and debaſe him below the rank of a Creature. Loyalty to Man can never recompence for the miſchief accruing from diſloyalty to God. All the obedience we are to give to man, is to be paid in obedience to God, and with an eye to his Precept: therefore what ſervants do for their Maſters, they muſt do *as to the Lord*, *Col.* 3. 23. and Children are to obey their Parents *in the Lord*, *Eph.* 6. 1. The Authority of God is to be eyed in all the ſervices payable to man; Proper and true obedience hath God ſolely for its principal and primary object; all obedience to man that interferes with that, and would juſtle out obedience to God, is to be refus'd. What obedience is due to man, is but render'd as a part of obedience to God, and a ſtooping of his Authority.

5. It muſt be *Univerſal Obedience*. The Laws of man are not to be Univerſally obey'd; ſome may be oppreſſing and unjuſt; No man hath Authority to make an unjuſt Law, and no ſubject is bound to obey an unrighteous Law; but God being a Righteous Soveraign, there is not one of his Laws but doth neceſſarily oblige us to Obedience. Whatſoever this ſupream power declares to be his Will, it muſt be our care to obſerve; Man being his creature, is bound to be ſubject to whatſoever Laws he doth impoſe, to the meaneſt as well as to the greateſt: they having equally a ſtamp of Divine Authority upon them. We are not to pick and chooſe among his Precepts: this is to pare away part of his Authority, and render him a half-Soveraign.

It muſt be Univerſal in all places. An *Engliſh-man* in *Spain* is bound to obey the Laws of that Countrey, wherein he reſides; and ſo not reſponſible there for the breach of the Laws of his native Countrey. In the ſame condition is a *Spaniard* in *England*. But the Laws of God are to be obeyed in every part of the World; whereſoever Divine providence doth caſt us, it caſts us not out of the places where he commands, nor out of the compaſs of his own Empire. He is Lord of the World, and his Laws oblige in every part of the World, they were order'd for a World, and not for a particular Climate and Territory.

6. It muſt be *indiſputable Obedience*. All Authority requires readineſs in the Subject; the *Centurion* had it from his *Soldiers*, they *went* when he order'd them, and *came* when he beckned to them. *Matt.* 8. 9 'Tis more fit God ſhould have the ſame promptneſs from his Subjects. We are to obey his Orders, though our purblind underſtanding may not apprehend the reaſon of every one of them. 'Tis without diſpute that he is Soveraign, and therefore 'tis without diſpute, that we are bound to obey him, without controuling his conduct. A Maſter will not bear it from his ſlave, why ſhould God from his Creature? Though God admits his creatures ſometimes to treat with him about the equality of his Juſtice, and alſo about the reaſon of ſome commands, yet ſometimes he gives no other reaſon, but his own Soveraignty, *Thus ſaith the Lord*, to correct the malepertneſs of men, and exact from them an intire obedience to this unlimited and abſolute Authority. When *Abraham* was commanded *to offer Iſaac*, God acquaints him not with the reaſon of his demand till after, *Gen.* 22. 2. 12. nor did *Abraham* enter any demurr to the order, or expoſtulate with God, either from his own natural affection to *Iſaac*, the hardneſs of the command, it being as it were a ripping up his own Bowels, nor the quickneſs of it after he had been a Child of the promiſe, and a Divine donation above the courſe of nature. Nor did *Paul* conferr with fleſh and blood, and ſtudy arguments from Nature and Intereſt, to oppoſe the Divine Command, when he was ſent upon his *Apoſtolical* employment. *Galatians* 1. 16. The more indiſputable his Right is to command, the ſtronger is our obligation to obey, without queſtioning the reaſon of his Orders.

7. It

7. It must be *joyful Obedience.* Men are commonly more cheerful in their obedience to a great Prince, than to a mean Peasant: because the Quality of the Master renders the Service more honorable. Tis a discredit to a Princes Government, when his Subjects obey him with discontent and dejectedness, as though he were a hard Master, and his Laws Tyrannical and Unrighteous. When we pay Obedience but with a dull and feeble pace, and a sour and sad temper, we blemish our great Soveraign, imply his Commands to be grievous, void of that peace and pleasure he Proclaims to be in them: That he deserves no respect from us, if we obey him because we must, and not because we will. Involuntary Obedience deserves not the Title; 'tis rather submission than obedience, an act of the Body, not of the Mind; a mite of Obedience with chearfulness, is better than a talent without it. In the little *Paul* did, he comforts himself in this, that with the *mind he serv'd the Law of God*, Rom. 7. 25. *The Testimonies of God were Davids delight*, Psal. 119. 24. Our Understandings must take pleasure in knowing him, our Wills delightfully embrace him, and our Actions be chearfully squar'd to him. This credits the Soveraignty of God in the World, makes others believe him to be a gracious Lord, and move them to have some Veneration for his Authority.

8. It must be *perpetual Obedience.* As Man is a Subject as soon as he is a Creature, so he is a Subject as long as he is a Creature. Gods Soveraignty is of perpetual duration, as long as he is God; Mans Obedience must be perpetual, while he is a Man. God cannot part with his Soveraignty, and a Creature cannot be exempted from subjection; We must not only *serve* him, but *cleave to him.* Deut. 13. 4. Obedience is continued in Heaven, his Throne is established in Heaven, it must be bow'd to in Heaven, as well as in Earth. The Angels continually fulfil his pleasure.

7. Exhortation; *Patience is a duty flowing from this Doctrine.* In all strokes upon our selves, or thick showers upon the Church; *The Lord reigns,* is a consideration to prevent muttering against him, and make us quietly wait to see what the Issue of his Divine Pleasure will be. 'Tis too great an insolence against the Divine Majesty, to censure what he acts, or quarrel with him for what he inflicts. Proud Clay doth very unbecomingly swell against an Infinite Superior. If God be our Soveraign, we ought to subscribe to his afflicting will without debates, as well as to his liberal will with affectionate applauses. We should be as full of patience under his sharper, as of praise under his more grateful Dispensations, and be without reluctancy against his penal, as well as his preceptive pleasure. 'Tis Gods part to inflict, and the Creatures part to submit.

This Doctrine affords us *Motives,* and shews us the *nature of Patience.*

1. *Motives to it.*

1. *God being Soveraign, hath an absolute right to dispose of all things.* His Title to our Persons and Possessions is upon this account stronger than our own can be; We have as much reason to be angry with our selves, when we assert our worldly right against others, as to be angry with God for asserting the right of his Dominion over us. Why should we enter a charge against him, because he hath not temper'd us so strong in our Bodies, drawn us with as fair Colours, embellish'd our Spirits with as rich Gifts as others? Is he not the Soveraign of his own Goods, to impart what, and in what measure he pleaseth? Would you be content your Servant should check your pleasure, in dispensing your own Favors? 'Tis an unreasonable thing, not to leave God to the exercise of his own Dominion. Though *Job* were a pattern of Patience, yet he had deep Tinctures of Impatience, he often complains of Gods usage of him, as too hard, and stands much upon his own Integrity; But when God comes in the latter *Chapters* of that Book, to justifie his carriage towards him, he chargeth him not as a Criminal, but

conſiders him only as his Vaſſal. He might have found flaws enough in *Job*'s carriage, and corruption enough in *Job*'s nature, to clear the equity of his proceeding as a Judge, but he uſeth no other *medium* to convince him, but the greatneſs of his Majeſty, the unlimitedneſs of his Soveraignty, which ſo appales the good Man, that he puts his finger on his mouth, and ſtands mute with a *ſelf-abhorrency* before him as a Soveraign, rather than as a Judge. When he doth pinch us, and deprive us of what we moſt affect, his right to do it ſhould ſilence our Lips, and calm our Hearts from any boyſterous uproars againſt him.

2. *The property of all ſtill remains in God, ſince he is Soveraign.* He did not deveſt himſelf of the Property, when he granted us the Uſe. The Earth is his, not ours, the *fulneſs of the Earth* is his, 'tis not ours, the fulneſs any of us have, as well as the fulneſs others have. After he had given the *Iſraelites* Corn, Wine and Oyl, he calls them all *His*, and emphatically adds *My* to every one of them, *Hoſ.* 2.9. His Right is univerſal over every Mite we have, and perpetual too. He may therefore take from us what he pleaſe. He did but depoſite in our hands for a while the benefits we enjoy, either Children, Friends, Eſtate or Lives; he did not make a total conveyance of them, and alienate his own property, when he put them into our hands; we can ſhew no Patent for them, wherein the full right is paſt over to us, to hold them againſt his will and pleaſure, and implead him if he offer to reaſſume them. He reſerved a power to diſpoſſeſs us upon a forfeiture, as he is the Lord and Governor. Did any of us yet anſwer the condition of his grant? It was his Indulgence to allow them ſo long. There is reaſon to ſubmit to him, when he reaſſumes what he lent us, and rather to thank him, that he lent it ſo long, and did not ſeize upon it ſooner.

3. *Other things have more reaſon to complain of our Soveraignty over them, than we of Gods exerciſe of his Soveraignty over us.* Do we not exerciſe an Authority over our Beaſts, as to ſtrike them when we pleaſe, and meerly for our pleaſure; and think we merit no reproof for it, becauſe they are our own, and of a nature inferior to ours? And ſhall not God, who is Abſolute, do as much with us, who are more below him, than the meaneſt Creatures are below us? They are Creatures as well as we, and we no more Creatures than they, they were fram'd by Omnipotence as well as we; there is no more difference between them and us in the notion of Creatures.

As there is no difference between the greateſt Monarch on Earth, and the meaneſt Beggar on the Dung-hill in the notion of a Man: The Beggar is a Man as well as the Monarch, and as much a Man; the difference conſiſts in the ſpecial Endowments we have above them by the bounty of their and our common Creator. We are leſs, if compared with God, than the worſt, meaneſt, moſt ſordid Creature can be, if compared with us. Hath not a Bird or a Hare, (if they had a capacity) more reaſon to complain of Mens perſecuting them by their Hawks and their Dogs? but would their complaints appear reaſonable, ſince both were made for the uſe of Man, and Man doth but uſe the nature of the one, to attain a benefit by the other? Have we any reaſon to complain of God, if he lets looſe other Creatures, the devouring Hounds of the World, to bite and afflict us? We muſt not open our lips againſt him, nor let our heart ſwell againſt his ſcourge, ſince both they and we were made for his uſe, as well as other Creatures for ours. This is a reaſon to ſtifle all complaints againſt God, but not to make us careleſs of preventing Afflictions, or emerging out of them by all juſt ways. The Hare hath a nature to ſhift for it ſelf by its winding and turning, and the Bird by its flight, and neither of them could be blam'd, if they were able, ſhould the one ſcratch out the Eyes of the Hounds, and the other ſacrifice the Hawk to its own fury.

4. *'Tis a folly not to ſubmit to him.* Why ſhould we *ſtrive againſt him*, ſince he is an unaccountable *Soverdign*, and *gives no account of any of his matters*, Job 33. 13. Who can diſannul the judgment God gives? There is no appeal from the Supream

pream Court; a higher Court can repeal, or null the ſentence of an Inferior Court, but the Sentence of the Higheſt ſtands *irreverſible*, but by it ſelf and its own Authority. 'Tis better to lower our Sails, than to grapple with one that can ſhoot us under Water. To ſubmit to that Soveraign whom we cannot ſubdue.

2. *It ſhews us the true nature of Patience in regard of God.* 'Tis a ſubmiſsion to Gods Soveraignty. As the formal object of Obedience is the Authority of God enacting the Law, ſo the formal object of Patience is the Authority of God inflicting the puniſhment. As his right of Commanding is to be eyed in the one, ſo his right of Puniſhing is to be conſidered in the other. This was *Eli*'s condition when he had receiv'd a Meſſage, that might put Fleſh and Blood into a mutiny, the rending the *Prieſt-hood* from his Family, and the ruine of his Houſe, yet this conſideration, *'Tis the Lord*, calms him into ſubmiſsion, and a willing compliance with the Divine pleaſure, 1 Sam. 3.18. *'Tis the Lord, let him do what ſeems good in his ſight. Job* was of the ſame ſtrain. Job 1.21. *The Lord gives, and the Lord hath taken away, Bleſſed be the Name of the Lord.* He conſiders God as a Soveraign, who was not to be reproached, or have any thing uncomely uttered of him for what he had done. To be patient, becauſe we cannot avoid it, or reſiſt it, is a violent, not a *Loyal Patience*, but to ſubmit becauſe it is the Will of God to inflict: To be ſilent, becauſe the Soveraignty of God doth order it, is a Patience of a true Complexion. The other kind of Patience is no other than that of an Enemy, that will free himſelf as ſoon as he can, and by any way, though never ſo violent that offers it ſelf. This ſort of Patience is that of a Subject acknowledging the Supream Authority over him, and that he ought to be ordered by the Will, and to the Glory of God, more than by his own Will, and for his own eaſe. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth*, Pſal. 39.10. Not becauſe I could not help it: But *becauſe thou didſt it*, thou who art my Soveraign Lord. The greatneſs of God claims an awful and inviolable reſpect from his Creatures, in what way ſoever he doth diſpoſe of them; this is due to him, ſince his Kingdom ruleth over all, his Kingdom ſhould be acknowledged by all, and his Royal Authority ſubmitted to in all that he doth.

A DISCOURSE UPON GODS Patience.

NAHUM. I. Verſe 3.

The Lord is ſlow to Anger, and great in Power, and will not at all acquit the Wicked: The Lord hath his way in the Whirl-wind, and in the Storm, and the Clouds are the duſt of his Feet.

THE Subject of this Propheſie, is Gods ſentence againſt *Nineveh*, the Head and Metropolis of the *Aſſyrian* Empire. A City famous for its ſtrength and thickneſs of its Walls, and the multitude of its Towers for defence againſt an Enemy. The Forces of this Empire did God uſe as a ſcourge againſt the *Iſraelites*, and by their hands ruin'd *Samaria* the chief City of the ten Tribes, and tranſplanted them as Captives into another Country, 2 *Kings* 17. 5, 6. about ſix years after *Hezekiah* came to the Crown of *Judah*, 2 *Kings* 18. *compared with the* 17 *chap.* v. 6. In whoſe time, or (as ſome think) later, *Nahum* utter'd this Propheſie. The name *Nahum*, ſignifies Comforter, though the matter of his Propheſie be dreadful to *Nineveh*, it was comfortable to the people of God: For a promiſe is made, *ver.* 7. *The Lord is good, a ſtrong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that truſt in him.* And an encouragement to *Judah* to keep their ſolemn Feaſts, *ver.* 15. And alſo in *chap.* 2. 3. with a Declaration of the miſery of *Nineveh*, and the deſtruction of it.

Obſerve.

I. *In all the fears of Gods people, God will have a Comforter for them.* *Judah* might well be dejected with the calamity of their Brethren, not knowing but it might be their own turn ſhortly after. They knew not where the ambition of the *Aſſyrian* would ſtop, but God by his Prophets calms their fears of their furious Neighbor, by predicting to them the ruine of their fear'd Adverſary.

II. *The deſtruction of the Churches Enemies is the comfort of the Church.* By that God is glorifyed in his Juſtice, and the Church ſecur'd in its Worſhip.

III. *The Victories of Perſecutors, ſecure them not from being the triumphs of others.* The *Aſſyrians*, that conquered and captiv'd *Iſrael*, were themſelves to be conquered and captiv'd by the *Medes*. The whole oppreſſing Empire is threatned with deſtruction in the ruine of their chief City; accordingly it was accompliſh'd,

pliſh'd, and the Empire extinguiſh'd by a greater power. God burns the Rod when it hath done the work he appointed it for; and the wiſp of Straw wherewith the veſſels are ſcour'd is flung into the Fire, or upon the Dunghil.

Nahum begins his Propheſie majeſtically, with a deſcription of the wrath and fury of God, ver. 2. *God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth, the Lord revengeth, and is furious, the Lord will take vengeance on his adverſaries, and reſerveth wrath for his Enemies*: And therefore the whole of it is called, ver. 1. *The burden of Niniveh*, as thoſe Propheſies are which are compoſed of Threatnings of Judgments, which lie as a mighty weight upon the heads and backs of ſinners.

God is jealous.] Jealous of his Glory and Worſhip, and jealous for his People and their Security. He cannot long bear the Oppreſſions of his People, and the Boaſts of his Enemies. He is jealous for himſelf, and is jealous for you of *Judah*, who retain his Worſhip. He is not forgetful of thoſe that remember him, nor of the danger of thoſe that are deſirous to maintain his Honor in the World. In this firſt Expreſſion, the Prophet uſes the Covenant Name, *God*; the Covenant runs, *I am your God*, or *The Lord your God*, moſtly God without Lord, never *Lord* without God: And therefore his jealouſie here is meant of the care of his People, and the relation that his actions againſt his Enemies have to his Servants. He is a lover of his own, and a revenger on his Enemies.

The Lord revengeth, and is furious.] He now deſcribes God by a Name of *Soveraignty* and *Power*, when he deſcribes him in his Wrath and Fury, *and is Furious. Heb.* בַּעַל חֵמָה *Lord of hot anger.* God will vindicate his own Glory, and have his right on his Enemies in a way of puniſhment, if they will not give it him in a way of Obedience. * 'Tis *three* times repeated, to ſhew the certainty of the Judgment. And the name of *Lord* added to every one, to intimate the Power wherewith the Judgment ſhould be executed. 'Tis not a Fatherly correction of Children in a way of Mercy, but an offended Soveraigns deſtruction of his Enemies in a way of vengeance. There is an anger of God with his own People, which hath more of Mercy than Wrath; in this his Rod is guided by his Bowels. There is a fury of God againſt his Enemies, where there is ſole Wrath without any tincture of Mercy; when his Sword is all edge, without any Balſom-drops upon it. Such a fury as *David* deprecates, Pſal. 6. 1. *O Lord rebuke me not in thy anger, nor chaſten me in thy ſore diſpleaſure*; with a fury untempered with Grace, and inſupportable Wrath.

* *Ribera* in loc.

He reſerves wrath for his Enemies.] He lays it up in his Treaſury, to be brought out, and expended in a due ſeaſon. *Wrath* is ſupplied by our Tranſlators, and is not in the *Hebrew*. He reſerves, what? that which is too ſharp to be expreſt, too great to be conceiv'd. A vengeance it is. And וְנוֹטֵר הוּא *He reſerves it.* He that hath an infinite Wrath, he reſerves it, that hath a ſtrength and power to execute it.

VERSE 3.

The Lord is ſlow to anger.] *Heb.* אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם *Of broad noſtrils.* The anger of God is expreſt by this word, which ſignifies *Noſtrils*. As *Job* 9. 13. *If God will not withdraw his anger*, Heb. *his noſtril.* And the anger whereby the wicked are conſum'd, is called the breath of Noſtrils, *Job* 4. 9. and when he is angry, ſmoak and fire are ſaid to go out of his noſtrils, 2 *Sam.* 2. 9. and in the 74th. *Pſalm* 1. *Why doth thy anger ſmoak*, Heb. *Why do thy noſtrils ſmoak.* So the rage of a Horſe when he is provok'd in battle, is call'd the Glory of his noſtrils, *Job* 39. 20. He breaths quick fumes, and neighs with fury.

And ſlowneſs to anger is here expreſt by the phraſe of *long* or *wide Noſtrils*: Becauſe in a vehement anger the blood boyling about the heart, exhales mens Spirits, which fume up, and break out in dilated Noſtrils. But where the paſ-

ſages

ſages as ſtraiter, the Spirits have not ſo quick a vent; and therefore raiſe more motions within. Or becauſe the wider the Noſtrils are, the more cool Air is drawn in to temper the heat of the heart, where the angry ſpirits are gather'd. And ſo the paſſion is allay'd and ſooner calm'd. God ſpeaks of himſelf in Scripture often after the rate of Men: *Jeremy* prays, *Jer.* 15. 15. That God would not take him away in his *long-ſuffering*, Heb. *in the length of his noſtrils*, i. e. Be not ſlow and backward in thy anger againſt my Perſecutors, as to give them time and opportunity to deſtroy me. The Noſtrils, as well as other Members of a humane Body, are aſcribed to God. He is ſlow to anger, he hath anger in his Nature, but is not always in the execution of it.

And great in Power.] This may refer to his *Patience* as the cauſe of it, or as a bar to the abuſe of it.

1. *He is ſlow to anger, and great in power*, i. e. his Power moderates his Anger; he is not ſo impotent, as to be at the command of his Paſſions, as Men are. He can reſtrain his Anger under juſt provocations to exerciſe it. His Power over himſelf is the cauſe of his ſlowneſs to wrath. As Numb. 14. 17. *Let the power of my Lord be great*, ſaith *Moſes*, when he pleads for the *Iſraelites* pardon. Men that are great in the World, are quick in Paſſions, and are not ſo ready to forgive an Injury, or bear with an Offender as one of a meaner Rank. 'Tis a want of a power over a Mans ſelf, that makes him do unbecoming things upon a provocation. A Prince that can bridle his Paſſion, is a King over himſelf, as well as over his Subjects. *God is ſlow to anger*, becauſe *great in power*. He hath no leſs power over himſelf, than over his Creatures. He can ſuſtain great Injuries without an immediate and quick Revenge. He hath a power of Patience, as well as a power of Juſtice.

2. Or thus, he is *ſlow to anger, and great in power*. He is ſlow to Anger, but not for want of Power to revenge himſelf; his power is as great to puniſh, as his Patience to ſpare. It ſeems thus, that ſlowneſs to Anger is brought in as an Objection againſt the revenge proclaimed. What do you tell us of Vengeance, Vengeance, nothing but ſuch repetitions of Vengeance? As though we were ignorant, that God is ſlow to Anger? 'Tis true, ſaith the Prophet, I acknowledge it as much as you, that *God is ſlow to Anger*; but withal *great in power*. His Anger certainly ſucceeds his abus'd Patience; he will not always bridle in his Wrath, but one time or other let it march out in Fury againſt his Adverſaries. The *Aſſyrians* who had captiv'd the ten Tribes, and been Victorious a little againſt the Jews, might think that the God of *Iſrael* had been Conquered by their Gods, as well as the People profeſsing him had been ſubdued by their arms. That God had loſt all his Power, and the Jews might argue from Gods Patience to his Enemies, againſt the credit of the Prophets denouncing Revenge. The Prophet anſwers to the terror of the one, and the comfort of the other. That this Indulgence to his Enemies, and not accounting with them for their Crimes, proceeded from the greatneſs of his Patience, and not from any debility in his Power. As it refers to the *Aſſyrian*, it may be rendered thus: You *Ninivites*, upon your Repentance after *Jonah*'s thundring of Judgments, are Witneſſes of the ſlowneſs of God to Anger, and had your Puniſhments deferr'd. But falling to your old ſins, you ſhall find a real Puniſhment, and that he hath as much Power to execute his ancient threatnings, as he had then compaſsion to recal them. His Patience to you then, was not for want of Power to ruine you, but was the effect of his goodneſs toward you. As it refers to the *Jews*, it may be thus Paraphraſed: Do not deſpiſe this Threatning againſt your Enemies, becauſe of the greatneſs of their Might, the ſeeming ſtability of their Empire, and the terror they poſſeſs all the Nations with round about them. It may be long before it comes: but aſſure your ſelves, the Threatning I denounce ſhall certainly be executed, though he hath patience to endure them a hundred thirty five Years, (for ſo long it was before *Niniveh* was deſtroy'd after this threatning, as* *Ribera in loc.* computes from the years of the Reign of the Kings of *Judah*) yet he hath alſo

*P. 359. col. 1.

alſo power to verifie his Word, and accompliſh his Will: aſſure your ſelves, he will not at all acquit the wicked.

He will not acquit the wicked.] He will not always account the Criminal an Innocent, as he ſeems to do by a preſent ſparing of them, and dealing with them as if they were deſtitute of any provoking carriage towards him, and he void of any reſentment of it. He will *not acquit the wicked*: How is this, who then can be ſaved? Is there no place for remiſsion? *He will not acquit the wicked, i. e.* He will not acquit obſtinate ſinners. As he hath *Patience* for the Wicked, ſo he hath *Mercy* for the Penitent. The Wicked are the ſubjects of his long-ſuffering, but not of his acquitting Grace. He doth not preſently puniſh their ſins, becauſe he is ſlow to anger; But without their Repentance he will not blot out their ſins, becauſe he is righteous in Judgment. If God ſhould acquit them without Repentance for their Crimes, he muſt himſelf repent of his own Law, and Righteous Sanction of it.

He will not acquit, i.e. he will not go back from the thing he hath ſpoken, and forbear, at long run, the puniſhment he hath threatned.

The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind,] The way of God ſignifies ſometimes the Law of God, ſometimes the Providential Operations of God, *Ezek.* 18. 25. *Is not my way equal?* It ſeems there to take in both.

And in the Storm, and the Clouds are the duſt of his feet.] * The Prophet deſcribes here the fight of God with the *Aſſyrians*, as if he ruſht upon them with a mighty noiſe of an Army, raiſing the duſt with the feet of their Horſes, and motion of their Chariots. Symbollically, it ſignifies the multitude of the *Chaldean* and *Median* Forces, invading, beſieging, and ſtorming the City.

* *Tirinus* in loc.

It ſignifies,

1. *The Rule of Providence.* The way of God is in every motion of the Creature; He rules all things, Whirl-wind, Storms, Clouds, his way is in all their walks, in the whirlings and bluſtrings of the one, in the raiſing and diſſolving the other. He blows up the Winds, and compacts the Clouds, to make them ſerviceable to his deſigns.

2. The *management of wars* by God. *His way is in the ſtorm*; As he was the Captain of the *Aſſyrians* againſt *Samaria*, ſo he will be the Captain of the *Medes* againſt *Nineveh*. As *Iſrael* was not ſo much waſted by the *Aſſyrians*, as by the Lord, who levied and arm'd their Forces; So *Nineveh* ſhall be ſubverted, rather by God than by the Arms of the *Medes*. Their force is deſcrib'd not to be ſo much from Humane Power as Divine; God is Preſident in all the commotions of the World, his way is in every Whirl-wind.

3. *The eaſineſs of executing the judgment.* He is of ſo great power, that he can excite Tempeſts in the Air, and overthrow them with the Clouds, which are the duſt of his feet. He can blind his Enemies, and avenge himſelf on them: he is Lord of Clouds, and can fill their womb with Hail, Lightnings and Thunders, to burſt out upon thoſe he kindles his anger againſt. He is of ſo great force, that he needs not uſe the ſtrength of his Arm, but the duſt of his Feet, to effect his deſtroying purpoſe.

4. *The ſuddenneſs of the judgment.* Whirlwinds come ſuddenly without any Harbingers to give notice of their approach; Clouds are ſwift in their motion. *Iſa.* 60. 8. *Who are thoſe that fly as a cloud,* i.e. with a mighty nimbleneſs; What God doth, he ſhall do on the ſudden, come upon them before they are aware, be too quick for them in his motion to over-run and over-reach them. The Winds are deſcrib'd with Wings, in regard of the quickneſs of their motion.

5. *The*

5. *The terror of Judgments. The Lord hath his way in the Whirl-wind*, i. e. in great diſpleaſure. The anger of the Lord is often compar'd to a ſtorm; He ſhall bring Clouds of Judgments upon them, many and thick, as terrible as when a day is turn'd into night, by the muſtering of the darkeſt clouds that interpoſe between the Sun and the Earth. *Clouds and darkneſs are round about him, and a fire goes before him*, when he *burns up his enmies*, Pſal. 97. 2, 3. The Judgments ſhall have terror without mercy, as Clouds obſcure the Light, and are dark masks before the face and glory of the Sun, and cut off its refreſhing Beams from the Earth. Clouds note multitude and obſcurity; God could cruſh them without a Whirl-wind, beat them to powder with one touch, but he will bring his Judgments in the moſt ſurprizing and amazing manner to Fleſh and Blood, ſo that all their Glory ſhall be changed into nothing but terror, by the noiſe of the bellowing Winds, and the Clouds like Ink blacking the Heavens.

6. *The confuſion of the Offenders upon God's proceeding.* A Whirl-wind is not only a boiſterous wind, that hurls and rouls every thing out of his place, but by its Circular Motion, by its winding to all Points of the Compaſs, it confounds things, and jumbles them together. It keeps not one Point, but by a Circumgyration toucheth upon all. Clouds like duſt ſhall be blown in their Face, and gum up their Eyes. They ſhall be in a poſture of Confuſion, not know what Counſels to take, what Motions to reſolve upon; Let them look to every Point of Heaven and Earth, they ſhall meet with a Whirl-wind to confound them, and cloudy duſt to blind them.

7. *The irreſiſtableneſs of the Judgment.* Winds have more than a Gyant-like force, a torrent of compacted Air, that with an invincible wilfulneſs bears all before it, diſplaceth the firmeſt Trees, and levels the talleſt Towers, and pulls up Bodies from their natural place. Clouds alſo are over our heads, and above our reach; When God places them upon his People for defence, they are an invincible ſecurity, *Iſ.* 4. 5. And when he moves them as his Chariot againſt a People, they end in an irreſiſtible Deſtruction; Thus the ruine of the wicked is deſcrib'd, *Prov.* 10. 25. *As the Whirl-wind paſſes, ſo is the wicked no more.* It blows them down, ſweeps them away, they irrecoverably fall before the force of it. *What heart can endure, and what hands can be ſtrong, in the days* wherein God doth *deal with them?* Ezek. 22. 14. Thus is the judgment againſt *Nineveh* deſcrib'd; God hath his way in the Whirl-wind to thunder down their ſtrongeſt Walls, which were ſo thick, that Chariots could march a-breaſt upon them, and batter down their mighty Towers, which that City had in multitudes upon their Walls.

They are the firſt words I intend to inſiſt upon, to treat of the Patience of God, deſcrib'd in thoſe words; *The Lord is ſlow to anger.*

Doct. *Slowneſs to anger, or admirable Patience, is the property of the Divine Nature.* As *Patience* ſignifies *ſuffering*, ſo it is not in God. The Divine Nature is impaſſible, uncapable of any impair, it cannot be touched by the violences of men, nor the eſſential Glory of it be diminiſh'd by the injuries of men; But as it ſignifies *a willingneſs to defer*, and an *unwillingneſs to pour forth his wrath* upon ſinful Creatures; He moderates his provoked Juſtice, and forbears to revenge the injuries he daily meets with in the World. He ſuffers no grief by men's wronging him, but he reſtrains his arm from puniſhing them according to their merits; and thus there is *Patience* in every croſs a man meets with in the world: becauſe though it be a puniſhment, 'tis leſs than is merited by the unrighteous Rebel, and leſs than may be inflicted by a righteous and powerful God.

This *Patience* is ſeen in his providential Works in the World; *He ſuffered the Nations to walk in their own way*, and the witneſs of his Providence to them was his *giving them Rain, and fruitful Seaſons, filling their heart with food and gladneſs*, Acts 16. 17. The Heathens took notice of it, and ſignified it, by feigning their God *Saturn*, to be bound a whole year in a ſoft cord, a cord of Wool, and expreſt

expreſt it by this Proverb; *The Mills of the Gods grind ſlowly*; i. e. God doth not uſe men with that ſeverity that they deſerve: The Mills being uſually turn'd by criminals, condemn'd to that work. *This in Scripture is frequently expreſt by a *ſlowneſs* to anger, *Pſal.* 103. 8. ſometimes by *long ſuffering*, which is a patience with duration; *Pſal.* 145. 8. and *Joel* 2. 13. He is ſlow to anger, he takes not the firſt occaſions of a provocation; He is long ſuffering, *Rom.* 9. 22. and *Pſal.* 86. 15. he forbears puniſhment upon many occaſions offer'd him. 'Tis long before he conſents to give fire to his wrath, and ſhoot out his Thunderbolts; Sin hath a loud cry, but God ſeems to ſtop his ears, not to hear the clamor it raiſes, and the charge it preſents. He keeps his Sword a long time in the ſheath; One calls the *Patience* of God, the ſheath of his Sword, upon thoſe words, *Ezek.* 21. 3. *I will draw forth my Sword out of his ſheath.* This is one remarkable Letter in the name of God, he himſelf proclaims it; *Exod.* 34. 6. *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful, gracious and long ſuffering.* And *Moſes* pleads it in the behalf of the people, *Numb.* 14. 18. where he placeth it in the firſt rank; The Lord is *long ſuffering, and of great mercy*: 'Tis the firſt ſpark of mercy, and uſhers it to its exerciſes in the World. In the Lord's Proclamation, 'tis put in the middle link, *Mercy and Truth* together; Mercy could have no room to act, if *Patience* did not prepare the way; And his truth and goodneſs in his promiſe of the Redeemer would not have been manifeſt to the world, if he had ſhot his Arrows as ſoon as Men committed their ſins, and deſerved his puniſhment. This perfection is expreſt by other phraſes, as keeping ſilence; *Pſal.* 50. 21. *Theſe things haſt thou done, and I kept ſilence,* אלה עשית והחר שתי it ſignifies to behave ones ſelf as a deaf or dumb Man. I did not fly in thy face, as ſome do with a great noiſe, upon a light provocation, as if their Life, Honour, Eſtates were at the ſtake. I did not preſently call thee to the bar, and pronounce judicial ſentence upon thee according to the Law, but demean'd my ſelf, as if I had been ignorant of thy crimes, and had not been inveſted with the power of judging thee for them, *Chald. I waited for thy Converſion.* God's *Patience* is the ſilence of his Juſtice, and the firſt whiſper of his Mercy.

'Tis alſo expreſt by *not laying folly* to Men. *Job* 24. 12. Men groan under the oppreſſions of others, yet God *layes not folly to* them, *i. e.* to the oppreſſors, God ſuffers them to go on with impunity. He doth not deliver his people becauſe he would try them, and takes not revenge upon the unrighteous, becauſe in *Patience* he doth bear with them. *Patience* is the Life of his Providence in this World. He chargeth not Men with their crimes here, but reſerves them upon impenitency for another tryal. This *attribute* is ſo great a one, that it is ſignally called by the name of Perfection, *Matt.* 5. 45, 48. He had been ſpeaking of Divine Goodneſs, and *Patience* to evil Men, and he concludes, *be you perfect*, &c. Implying it to be an amazing perfection in the Divine nature, and worthy of imitation,

In the proſecution of this,

1. Let us conſider the *nature* of this *Patience.*
2. *Wherein 'tis manifeſted.*
3. *Why God doth exerciſe ſo much Patience.*
4. *The* USE.

1. *The nature of this Patience.*

1. *'Tis part of the Divine Goodneſs and Mercy, yet differs from both.* God being the greateſt Goodneſs, hath the greateſt Mildneſs; Mildneſs is always the companion of true Goodneſs, and the greater the Goodneſs, the greater the Mildneſs. Who ſo Holy as Chriſt, and who ſo Meek? God's ſlowneſs to anger is a branch, or ſlip from his Mercy *Pſal.* 145. 8. *The Lord is full of compaſſion, ſlow to anger.* It differs from Mercy in the formal conſideration of the object; *Mercy* reſpects the Creature as miſerable, *Patience* reſpects the Creature as criminal: Mercy pities him in his miſery, and *Patience* bears with the ſin, which engender'd that Miſery, and is giving birth to more.

* *Rhodigi. l. 6. c. 14.*

* Δῆλον δὲ ὅτι ἐγχειρίδιον τῶν πυωλείαν κρατῶν, κελεύει δὲ τοῦτο τῶν θύραν τῆς ἐγχειρίδιε μακροθυμίαν ἐνοικοδομεῖν. *Theodoret* in loc.

Again, *Mercy* is one end of *Patience*, his long-ſuffering is partly to glorify his Grace, ſo it was in *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 16. As ſlowneſs to anger ſprings from Goodneſs, ſo it makes Mercy the Butt, and Mark of its Operations; *Iſai.* 30. 18. *He waits that he may be gracious*; Goodneſs ſets God upon the exerciſe of *Patience*, and *Patience* ſets many a ſinner on running into the arms of Mercy. That Mercy which makes God ready to embrace returning ſinners, makes him willing to bear with them in their ſins, and wait their return.

It differs alſo from Goodneſs, in regard of the *Object*. The object of Goodneſs is every Creature, Angels, Men, all inferior Creatures, to the loweſt worm that crawls upon the ground. The *Object of Patience* is primarily Man, and ſecondarily, thoſe creatures that reſpect Mens ſupport, conveniency and delight; But they are not the *Objects of Patience*, as conſider'd in themſelves, but in relation to Man, for whoſe uſe they were created, and therefore *God's Patience* to them is properly his Patience with Man. The lower Creatures do not injure God, and therefore are not the *objects of his Patience*, but as they are forfeited by Man, and Man deſerves to be depriv'd of them; As Man in this regard falls under the *Patience* of God, ſo do thoſe Creatures which are deſign'd for Man's good. That *Patience* which ſpares Man, ſpares other Creatures for him, which were all forfeited by Man's ſin, as well as his own life, and are rather the teſtimonies of God's *Patience*, than the proper objects of it. The object of God's Goodneſs then is the whole Creation; not a Devil in Hell, but as a Creature is a mark of his Goodneſs, but not of his Patience. There is a kind of ſparing exercis'd to the Devils, in deferring their compleat puniſhment, and hitherto keeping off the day, wherein their final Sentence is to be pronounced, yet the Scripture never mentions this by the name of ſlowneſs to anger, or long-ſuffering. It can no more be call'd *Patience*, than a Princes keeping a Malefactor in chains, and not pronouncing a condemning ſentence, or not executing a ſentence already pronounced, can be call'd a *Patience* with him, when it is not out of kindneſs to the Offender, but for ſome reaſons of State. God's ſparing the Devils from their total puniſhment, (which they have not yet, but are *reſerved in chains, under darkneſs for it*, *Jude* 6.) is not in order to Repentance, or attended with any invitations from God, or hopes in them: and therefore cannot come under the ſame Title as God's ſparing Man; Where there is no propoſal of Mercy, there is no exerciſe of *Patience*. The fall'n Angels had no Mercy reſerv'd for them, nor any Sacrifice prepar'd for them, God *ſpared not the Angels*, 2 Pet. 2. 4. *but delivered them into chains of darkneſs, to be reſerved unto judgment*; i. e. he had no *Patience* for them: For *Patience* is properly a temporary ſparing a perſon, with a waiting for his relenting, and a change of his injurious demeanour; the object of Goodneſs is more extenſive than that of *Patience*; Nor do they both conſider the object under the ſame relation. Goodneſs reſpects things in a capacity, or in a ſtate of Creation, and brings them forth into Creation, and nurſeth, and ſupports them as Creatures. *Patience* conſiders them already Created, and fall'n ſhort of the duty of Creatures; It conſiders them as ſinners, or in relation to ſinners. Had not ſin entred, *Patience* had never been exerciſed; but Goodneſs had been exerciſed, had the Creature ſtood firm in its created State without any tranſgreſſion; Nay, Creation could not have been without Goodneſs; becauſe it was goodneſs to Create: But *Patience* had never been known without an object, which could not have been without an injury. Where there is no wrong, no ſuffering, nor like to be any, *Patience* hath no proſpect of any operation. So then Goodneſs reſpects perſons as Creatures, *Patience* as tranſgreſſors; Mercy eyes Men as miſerable and obnoxious to puniſhment: *Patience* conſiders Men as ſinful, and provoking to puniſhment.

2. Since 'tis a part of Goodneſs and Mercy, *'tis not an inſenſible Patience*. What is the fruit of pure Goodneſs, cannot be from a weakneſs of reſentment; he is *ſlow to anger*; The Prophet doth not ſay, he is uncapable of anger, or cannot diſcern what is a real object of anger; It implies, that he doth conſider every provocation, but he is *not haſty* to diſcharge his Arrows upon the Offenders; He ſees all, while he bears with them: his Omniſcience excludes any ignorance; He cannot but ſee every

every wrong; every aggravation in that wrong, every ſtep and motion from the beginning to the compleating it: For he knows all our thoughts; he ſees the ſin, and the ſinner at the ſame time, the ſin with an eye of abhorrency, and the ſinner with an eye of pity. His eye is upon their Iniquities, and his hatred edged againſt them; while he ſtands with arms open, waiting a penitent return. When he publiſheth his patience in his keeping ſilence, he publiſheth alſo his reſolution, to ſet ſin in order before their Eyes, Pſal. 50. 21. *I will reprove thee, and ſet them in order before thy Eyes.* Think me not ſuch a piece of phlegm, and ſo dull, as not to reſent your Inſolencies; you ſhall ſee in my final charge, when I come to judge, that not a wry look eſcap'd my knowledge, that I had an eye to behold, and a heart to loath every one of your Tranſgreſsions. The Church was ready to think, that Gods ſlowneſs to deliver her, and his bearing with her Oppreſſors, was not from any *Patience* in his nature, but a drowſie careleſsneſs, a ſenſeleſs Lethargy, Pſal. 44. 23. *Awake, why ſleepeſt thou, Oh Lord?* We muſt conclude him an inapprehenſive God, before we can conclude him an inſenſible God. As his delaying his promiſe, is *not ſlackneſs* to his People, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. So his deferring of puniſhment, is not from a ſtupidity under the affronts offered him.

3. Since 'tis a part of his Mercy and Goodneſs, 'tis *not a conſtrained or faint-hearted Patience.* 'Tis not a ſlowneſs to anger, ariſing from a deſpondency of his own power to revenge. He hath as much power to puniſh, as he hath to forbear puniſhment. He that Created a World in ſix days, and that by a Word, wants not a ſtrength to cruſh all Mankind in one minute; and with as much eaſe as a Word imports, can give ſatisfaction to his Juſtice in the blood of the offender. *Patience* in Man is many times interpreted, and truly too, a cowardiſe, a feebleneſs of Spirit and a want of ſtrength. But it is not from the ſhortneſs of the Divine Arm, that he cannot reach us, nor from the feebleneſs of his hand, that he cannot ſtrike us. 'Tis not becauſe he cannot level us with the duſt, daſh us in pieces like a Potters Veſſel, or conſume us a Moth. He can make the mightieſt to fall before him, and lay the ſtrongeſt at his feet the firſt moment of their Crime. He that did not want a powerful Word, to Create a World, cannot want a powerful Word, to diſſolve the whole frame of it, and raze it out of being. 'Tis not therefore out of a diſtruſt of his own Power, that he hath ſupported a ſinful World for ſo many Ages, and patiently born the Blaſphemies of ſome, the neglects of others, and the ingratitude of all, without inflicting that ſevere Juſtice which righteouſly he might have done; he wants no thunder to cruſh the whole Generation of Men, nor Waters to drown them, nor Earth to ſwallow them up. How eaſie is it for him to ſingle out this or that particular perſon, to be the object of his *Wrath*, and not of his *Patience?* What he hath done to one, he may to another; any ſignal judgment he hath ſent upon one, is an evidence, that he wants not power to inflict it upon all. Could he not make the motes in the Air to choak us at every breath, Rain Thunderbolts inſtead of drops of Water, fill the Clouds with a conſuming Lightning, take off the reverence and fear of Man, which he hath Imprinted upon the Creature, Spirit our domeſtick Beaſts to be our Executioners, unlooſe the Tiles from the Houſe-top to brain us, or make the fall of a Houſe to cruſh us? 'Tis but taking out the pins, and giving a blaſt, and the work is done. And doth he want a power to do any of thoſe things? 'Tis not then a faint-hearted, or *feeble Patience,* that he exerciſeth towards Man.

4. Since 'tis not for want of power over the Creature, 'tis from *a fulneſs of power over himſelf.* This is in the *Text*; *The Lord is ſlow to Anger, and great in Power*; 'tis a part of his Dominion over himſelf, whereby he can moderate, and rule his own Affections, according to the holineſs of his own Will. As it is the effect of his Power, ſo it is an argument of his power; the greatneſs of the effect demonſtrates the fulneſs and ſufficiency of the Cauſe. The more feeble any Man is in reaſon, the leſs command he hath over his Paſsions; and he is the more heady

to revenge. Revenge is a ſign of a Childiſh mind; the ſtronger any Man is in Reaſon, the more command he hath over himſelf. Prov. 16. 32. *He that is ſlow to anger, is better than the mighty: and he that rules his own ſpirit, than he that takes a city.* He that can reſtrain his Anger, is ſtronger than the *Ceſars* and *Alexanders* of the World, that have fill'd the Earth with ſlain Carcaſſes, and ruin'd Cities. By the ſame reaſon, Gods ſlowneſs to Anger, is a greater argument of his Power than the Creating a World, or the power of diſſolving it by a Word. In this he hath a Dominion over Creatures, in the other over himſelf. This is the reaſon he will not return to deſtroy; becauſe *I am God, and not Man.* *Hoſea* 11. 9. I am not ſo weak and impotent as Man, that cannot reſtrain his Anger. This is a ſtrength poſſeſſed only by a God, wherein a Creature is no more able to parallel him, than in any other. So that he may be ſaid to be the Lord of himſelf; as it is in the Verſe before the Text, that he is *the Lord of Anger*, in the *Hebrew* inſtead of *furious*, as we Tranſlate it, ſo he is the Lord of Patience. The end why God is *Patient*, is to ſhew his Power, *Rom.* 9.22. *What, if God willing to ſhew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-ſuffering, the veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction?* To ſhew his Wrath upon Sinners, and his power over Himſelf, in bearing ſuch Indignities, and forbearing Puniſhment ſo long, when Men were Veſſels of Wrath fitted for deſtruction, of whom there was no hopes of amendment. Had he immediately broken in pieces thoſe Veſſels, his power had not ſo eminently appear'd, as it hath done, in tolerating them ſo long, that had provoked him to take them off ſo often. There is indeed the power of his Anger, and there is the power of his *Patience*; and his power is more ſeen in his *Patience*, than in his Wrath. 'Tis no wonder that he that is above all, is able to cruſh all. But it is a wonder, that he that is provok'd by all, doth not upon the firſt provocation, rid his hands of all. This is the reaſon, why he did bear ſuch a weight of provocations from Veſſels of Wrath, prepar'd for ruine, that he might γνωρίσαι τὸ δυνατὸν αὐτῦ, ſhew what he was able to do, the Lordſhip and Royalty he had over himſelf. The power of God is more manifeſt in his *Patience* to a multitude of Sinners, than it could be in Creating Millions of Worlds out of nothing; this was the δυνατὸν αὐτῦ, a power over himſelf.

5. This *Patience* being a Branch of Mercy, the exerciſe of it is *founded in the death of Chriſt*. Without the conſideration of this, we can give no account why Divine *Patience* ſhould extend it ſelf to us, and not to the fallen Angels. The threatning extends it ſelf to us, as well as to the fallen Angels. The threatning muſt neceſſarily have ſunk Man, as well as thoſe glorious Creatures, had not Chriſt ſtept into our relief. * Had not Chriſt interpoſed to ſatisfie the Juſtice of God, man upon his Sin had been actually bound over to puniſhment, as well as the fall'n Angels were upon theirs, and been fettered in Chains as ſtrong as thoſe Spirits feel. The reaſon why Man was not hurl'd into the ſame deplorable condition upon his ſin, as they were, is Chriſts promiſe of taking our Nature, and not theirs. Had God deſign'd Chriſts taking their nature, the ſame Patience had been exerciſed towards them, and the ſame offers would have been made to them, as are made to us. In regard of theſe Fruits of this Patience, Chriſt is ſaid to buy the wickedſt Apoſtates from him, 1 Pet. 2. 1. *Denying the Lord that bought them*; ſuch were bought by him, as *bring upon themſelves juſt deſtruction, and whoſe damnation ſlumbers not*, ver. 3. he purchaſed the continuance of their lives, and the ſtay of their execution, that offers of Grace might be made to them. This Patience muſt be either upon the account of the Law, or the Goſpel; for there are no other rules whereby God governs the World; a fruit of the Law it was not, that ſpake nothing but Curſes after Diſobedience, not a letter of Mercy was writ upon that: And therefore nothing of Patience.

* *Teſtard.* de natur. & Grat. Th. ſ. 119.

Death and Wrath was denounced, no ſlowneſs to anger intimated. It muſt be therefore upon the account of the Goſpel, and a fruit of the *Covenant of Grace*, whereof *Chriſt* was Mediator. Beſides, this Perfection being Gods *waiting that he might be gracious*, Iſaiah 30. 18. that which made way for Gods Grace, made way

way for his waiting to manifeſt it. God diſcovered not his Grace, but in Chriſt: And therefore diſcovered not his Patience but in Chriſt; 'tis in him he met with the ſatisfaction of his Juſtice, that he might have a ground for the manifeſtation of his Patience. And the Sacrifices of the Law, wherein the life of a Beaſt was accepted for the Sin of a Man, diſcovered the ground of his forbearance of them, to be the expectation of the *great Sacrifice*, whereby ſin was to be compleatly expiated, *Gen.* 8. 21. The publication of his Patience to the end of the World is preſently after the *ſweet ſavor he found in Noah's ſacrifice*. The promiſed and deſign'd coming of Chriſt, was the cauſe of that Patience God exerciſed before in the World. And his gathering the Elect together, is the reaſon of his Patience ſince his death.

6. The naturalneſs of his *Veracity* and *Holineſs*, and the *ſtrictneſs of his Juſtice*, *are no bars to the exerciſe of his patience.*

1. *His varacity.* In thoſe Threatnings where the puniſhment is expreſt, but not the time of inflicting it prefix'd and determined in the Threatning, his *veracity* ſuffers no damage by the delaying Execution; ſo it be once done, though a a long time after, the credit of his *Truth* ſtands unſhaken: As when God promiſes a thing without fixing the time, he is at liberty to pitch upon what time he pleaſes for the performance of it, without ſtaining his faithfulneſs to his Word, by not giving the thing promiſed preſently. Why ſhould the deferring of Juſtice upon an Offender, be any more againſt his *veracity*, than his delaying an anſwer to the Petitions of a Suppliant? But the difference will lie in the threatning, Gen. 2. 17. *In the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt die the death.* The time was there ſetled, *In that day thou ſhalt die*; ſome refer day to eating, not to dying; and render the ſentence thus, I do not prohibit thee the eating this Fruit for a day or two, but continually. In whatſoever day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt dye; but not underſtanding his dying that very day he ſhould eat of it. Referring [*day*] to the extenſiveneſs of the prohibition, as to time. But to leave this as uncertain, it may be anſwered; that as in ſome threatnings, a condition is implyed, though not expreſt; as in that poſitive denouncing of the deſtruction of *Niniveh*. Jonah. 3. 4. *Yet forty days, and Niniveh ſhall be deſtroy'd*; the Condition is imply'd, Unleſs they humble themſelves, and repent, for upon their repentance the ſentence was deferred. So here, *In the day thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt dye the death*, or *certainly dye*, unleſs there be a way found for the expiation of thy Crime, and the righting my honor; This *condition*, in regard of the event, may as well be aſſerted to be implyed in this Threatning, as that of Repentance was in the other. Or rather, *thou ſhalt dye*, thou ſhalt dye ſpiritually, thou ſhalt loſe that Image of mine in thy Nature, that Righteouſneſs which is as much the life of thy Soul, as thy Soul is the life of thy Body; that Righteouſneſs whereby thou art enabled to live to me, and thy own happineſs. What the Soul is to the Body, a quickning Soul, that the Image of God is to the Soul, a quickning Image. Or *thou ſhalt die the death*, or certainly dye, thou ſhalt be liable to death. * And ſo it is to be underſtood, not of an actual death of the Body, but the merit of death, and the neceſſity of death; thou wilt be obnoxious to death, which will be avoided, if thou doſt forbear to eat of the forbidden Fruit; thou ſhalt be a guilty perſon, and ſo under a ſentence of death, that I may when I pleaſe inflict it on thee. Death did come upon *Adam* that day, becauſe his nature was vitiated. He was then alſo under an expectation of death, he was obnoxious to it, though that day it was not poured out upon him in the full bitterneſs and gall of it. As when the Apoſtle ſaith, Rom. 8. 10. *The Body is dead becauſe of ſin*, he ſpeaks to the Living, and yet tells them, the body was dead becauſe of ſin; he means no more than that it was under a ſentence, and ſo a neceſsity of dying though not actually dead. So thou ſhalt be under the ſentence of death that day, as certainly as if that day thou ſhouldſt ſink into the duſt. And as by his *Patience* towards man, not ſending forth death upon him in all the bitter ingredients of it, his Juſtice afterwards was more eminent upon mans ſurety, than it would have been, if it had been then employ'd in all its ſevere Operations upon Man. So was his *Veracity*

* *Percr.* in loc.

eminent

eminent alſo in making good this threatning, in inflicting the puniſhment included in it upon our nature aſſum'd by a mighty Perſon, and upon that Perſon in our Nature, who was infinitely higher than our Nature.

2. *His Juſtice and Righteouſneſs are not prejudiced by his patience.* There is a hatred of the Sin in his Holineſs, and a ſentence paſt againſt the ſin in his Juſtice, though the execution of that ſentence be ſuſpended, and the Perſon reprieved by *patience*, which is implyed, Eccleſ. 8. 11. *Becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not executed ſpeedily: therefore the heart of the ſons of men is fully ſet in them to do evil*; Sentence is paſt, but a ſpeedy execution is ſtopt.

Some of the Heathens, who would not imagine God unjuſt, and yet ſeeing the Villanies and Oppreſſions of Men in the World remain unpuniſh'd, and frequently beholding proſperous wickedneſs, to free him from the charge of *injuſtice*, denyed his Providence, and actual Government of the World: for if he did take notice of humane Affairs, and concern himſelf in what was done upon the Earth, they could not think an Infinite Goodneſs and *Juſtice* could be ſo ſlow to puniſh Oppreſſors, and relieve the Miſerable, and leave the World in that diſorder under the Injuſtice of Men. They judged ſuch a *patience* as was exerciſed by him, if he did govern the World, was drawn out beyond the Line of fit and juſt. Is it not a preſumption in Men to preſcribe a rule of *Righteouſneſs* and conveniency to their Creator? It might be demanded of ſuch, whether they never injur'd any in their lives? and when certainly they have one way or other; would they not think it a very unworthy, if not unjuſt thing, that a Perſon ſo injur'd by them ſhould take a ſpeedy and ſevere revenge on them? And if every Man ſhould do the like, would there not be a ſpeedy diſpatch made of Mankind? Would not the World be a ſhambles, and Men ruſh forwards to one anothers deſtruction, for the wrongs they have mutually receiv'd? If it be accounted a Virtue in Man, and no unrighteouſneſs, not preſently to be all on fire againſt an Offence; by what right ſhould any queſtion the conſiſtency of Gods *Patience* with his *Juſtice*? Do we praiſe the lenity of Parents to Children, and ſhall we diſparage the *long ſuffering* of God to Men? We do not cenſure the righteouſneſs of Phyſicians and Chirurgeons, becauſe they cut not off a corrupt Member this day as well as to morrow? And is it juſt to aſperſe God, becauſe he doth defer his Vengeance, which Man aſſumes to himſelf a right to do? We never account him a bad Governor that defers the tryal, and conſequently the condemnation and execution of a notorious Offender, for important Reaſons, and beneficial to the Publick, either to make the Nature of his Crime more evident, or to find out the reſt of his Complices by his diſcovery. A Governor indeed were unjuſt, if he commanded that which were Unrighteous, and forbad that which were Worthy and Commendable; But if he delays the Execution of a convict Offender, for weighty Reaſons, either for the benefit of the State whereof he is the Ruler, or for ſome advantage to the Offender himſelf, to make him have a ſence of, and a regret for his Offence, we account him not unjuſt for this. God doth not by his *Patience* diſpenſe with the Holineſs of his Law, nor cut off any thing from its due Authority. If Men do ſtrengthen themſelves by his long ſuffering againſt his Law, 'tis their fault, not any unrighteouſneſs in him. He will take a time to vindicate the *Righteouſneſs* of his own Commands, if Men will wholly neglect the time of his *patience*, in forbearing to pay a dutiful obſervance to his Precept. If Juſtice be natural to him, and he cannot but puniſh Sin, yet he is not neceſſitated to conſume Sinners, as the Fire doth ſtubble put into it, which hath no command over its own Qualities, to reſtrain them from acting; But God is a free Agent, and may chooſe his own time, for the diſtribution of that puniſhment his Nature leads him to. Though he be naturally Juſt, yet it is not ſo natural to him, as to deprive him of a Dominion over his own Acts, and a freedom in the exerting them what time he judgeth moſt convenient in his Wiſdom. God is neceſſarily Holy, and is neceſſarily angry with Sin, his Nature can never like it, and cannot but be diſpleaſed with it; yet he hath a liberty to reſtrain the effects of this anger for a time, without diſgracing his Holineſs, or being interpreted to act Unrighteouſly; As well

well as a *Prince* or *State* may ſuſpend the execution of a Law, which they will never break, only for a time, and for a publick benefit.

If God ſhould preſently execute his *Juſtice*, this perfection of *Patience* which is a part of his Goodneſs, would never have an opportunity of diſcovery. Part of his Glory, for which he created the World, would lye in obſcurity from the knowledge of his Creature. His *Juſtice* would be ſignal in the deſtruction of ſinners, but this ſtream of his Goodneſs would be ſtopt up from any motion. One perfection muſt not cloud another, God hath his ſeaſons to diſcover all, one after another. *The times and ſeaſons are in his own power*, *Acts* 1. 7. The ſeaſons of manifeſting his own perfections as well as other things; Succeſſion of them in their diſtinct appearance makes no invaſion upon the Rights of any. If Juſtice ſhould complain of an injury from *Patience*, becauſe it is delaid, *Patience* hath more reaſon to complain of an injury from *Juſtice*, that by ſuch a Plea it would be wholly obſcur'd and unactive. For this perfection hath the ſhorteſt time to act its part of any, it hath no ſtage but this World to move in; Mercy hath a Heaven, and Juſtice a Hell, to diſplay it ſelf to Eternity, but *long-ſuffering* hath only a ſhort-liv'd Earth for the compaſs of its operation.

Again, *Juſtice* is ſo far from being wrong'd by *Patience*, that it rather is made more illuſtrious, and hath the fuller ſcope to exercife it ſelf; 'Tis the more righted for being deferred, and will have ſtronger grounds than before for its activity. The equity of it will be more apparent to every reaſon, the objections more fully anſwered againſt it when the way of dealing with ſinners by *Patience* hath been ſlighted. When this dam of long-ſuffering is remov'd, the floods of fiery juſtice will ruſh down with more force and violence; *Juſtice* will be fully recompenc'd for the delay, when after *Patience* is abuſed, it can ſpread it ſelf over the offender with a more unqueſtionable Authority, it will have more arguments to hit the ſinner in the teeth with, and ſilence him. There will be a ſharper edge for every ſtroke, the ſinner muſt not only pay for the ſcore of his former ſins, but the ſcore of abus'd *Patience*; ſo that *Juſtice* hath no reaſon to commence a ſuit againſt God's ſlowneſs to anger. What it ſhall want by the fulneſs of Mercy upon the truly penitent, it will gain by the contempt of *Patience* on the impenitent abuſers. When Men by ſuch a carriage are ripen'd for the ſtroke of *Juſtice*, *Juſtice* may ſtrike without any regret in it ſelf, or pull-back from Mercy. The contempt of *long-ſuffering* will ſilence the pleas of the one, and ſpirit the ſeverity of the other. To conclude, ſince God hath glorified his *Juſtice* on Chriſt, as a ſurety for ſinners, his *Patience* is ſo far from interfering with the rights of his juſtice, that it promotes it; 'Tis diſpenſed to this end, that God might pardon with honour, both upon the ſcore of purchaſed Mercy, and contented Juſtice; that by a penitent ſinners return, his Mercy might be acknowledged free, and the ſatisfaction of his *Juſtice* by Chriſt be glorified in believing: for he is long-ſuffering from an unwillingneſs, *that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to Repentance*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. i. e. All to whom the promiſe is made, for to ſuch the Apoſtle ſpeaks, and calls it *long-ſuffering to us-ward*; And Repentance being an acknowledgment of the demerit of ſin, and a breaking off unrighteouſneſs, gives a particular Glory to the freeneſs of Mercy, and the equity of *Juſtice*.

II. *The Second thing*; *How this patience or ſlowneſs to anger is manifeſted.*

1. To our *Firſt Parents*. His *ſlowneſs to anger was evidenced* in not directing his Artillery againſt them, when they firſt attempted to rebel. He might have ſtruck them dead, when they began to bite at the temptation, and were inclinable to a ſurrender; for it was a degree of ſinning, and a breach of Loyalty, as well, though not ſo much as the conſummating Act. God might have given way to the floods of his wrath at the firſt ſpring of Man's aſpiring thoughts, when the monſtrous motion of being as God began to be curdled in his Heart; But he took no notice of any of their *Embryo* ſins, till they came to a ripeneſs, and ſtarted out of the womb of their minds, into the open Air; And after he had brought his ſin to perfection, God did not preſently ſend that death upon him, which

which he had merited, but continued his Life to the ſpace of 930 *years*, *Gen.* 5. 5. The Sun and Stars were not arreſted, from doing their Office for him. Creatures were continued for his uſe, the earth did not ſwallow him up, nor a Thunderbolt from Heaven raze out the memory of him. Though he had deſerved to be treated with ſuch a ſeverity for his ungrateful demeanour to his Creator and Benefactor, and affecting an equality with him, yet God continued him with a ſufficiency for his content, after he turned Rebel, though not with ſuch a liberality as when he remain'd a Loyal Subject; and though he foreſaw, that he would not make an end of ſinning, but with an end of living, he uſed him not in the ſame manner, as he had uſed the Devils. He added days and years to him, after he had deſerved death, and hath for this 5000 *years* continued the propagation of Mankind, and derived from his Loins an innumerable poſterity, and hath crown'd multitudes of them with hoary heads; He might have extinguiſht humane race at the firſt, but ſince he hath preſerved it till this day, it muſt be interpreted nothing elſe, but the effect of an admirable Patience.

2. *His ſlowneſs to anger is manifeſt to the Gentiles.* What they are, we need no other witneſs than the Apoſtle *Paul*, who ſums up many of their crimes. *Rom.* 1. 29, 30, 31, 32. He doth preface the Catalogue with a comprehenſive expreſſion, *being fill'd with all unrighteouſneſs*; And concludes it with a dreadful aggravation; *They not only do the ſame, but have pleaſure in them that do them.* They were ſo ſoak'd and naturaliz'd in wickedneſs, that they had no delight and found no ſweetneſs in any thing elſe, but what was in it ſelf abominable; All of them were plung'd in Idolatry and Superſtition: none of them but either ſet up their great Men, or Creatures beneficial to the World, and ſome the damned Spirits in his ſtead, and paid an adoration to inſenſible Creatures or Devils, which was due to God. Some were ſo deprav'd in their lives and actions, that it ſeem'd to be the intereſt of the reſt of the World, that they ſhould have been extinguiſht for the inſtruction of their contemporaries and poſterity. The beſt of them had turned all Religion into a Fable, coyn'n a World of Rites, ſome unnatural in themſelves, and moſt of them unbecoming a rational Creature to offer, and a Deity to accept; yet he did not preſently arm himſelf againſt them with Fire and Sword, nor ſtopt the courſe of their Generations, nor tare out all thoſe reliques of natural Light, which were left in their minds. He did not do what he might have done, but he winkt at the *times of that ignorance*, *Act.* 17. 30. their ignorant Idolatry: for that it refers to, *ver.* 29. *They thought the God-head was like to Gold or Silver*, or *Stone graven by Art, and Mens device*; ὑπεριδὼν, over-looking them; He demean'd himſelf ſo, as if he did not take notice of them. He winkt as if he did not ſee them, and would not deal ſo ſeverely with them: the eye of his Juſtice ſeem'd to wink, in not calling them to an account for their ſin.

3. *His ſlowneſs to anger is manifeſt to the Iſraelites.* You know how often they are call'd a *ſtiff-necked People*; they are ſaid to do evil *from their youth*, i. e. from the time wherein they were erected a Nation and Common-wealth; and that *the City had been a provocation of his anger, and of his fury, from the day that they built it, even to this day*, i. e. the day of *Jeremiah*'s Propheſie, *that he ſhould remove it from before his face*, *Jer.* 32. 31. From the days of *Solomon*, ſay ſome, which is too much a curtailing of the *Text*, as though their provocations had taken date no higher than from the time of *Solomon*'s rearing the Temple, and beautifying the City, whereby it ſeem'd to be a new Building. They began more early, they ſcarce diſcontinued their revolting from God, they were a *grief to him 40 years together in the wilderneſs*, Pſal. 95. 10. *Yet he ſuffer'd their manners*, Act. 13. 18. He bore with their ill behaviour, and ſaucyneſs towards him; And no ſooner was *Joſhua*'s head laid, and the Elders that were their conductors, gathered to their Fathers, but the next Generation forſook God, and ſmutted themſelves with the *Idolatry* of the Nations; *Judg.* 2. 7, 10, 11. And when he puniſhed them by proſpering the Arms of their enemies againſt them, they were no ſooner delivered upon their cry and humiliation, but they began a new Scene of Idolatry

latry. And though he brought upon them the power of the *Babylonian Empire*, and laid chains upon them, to bring them to their right mind. And at 70 *years* end he ſtruck off their chains, by altering the whole poſture of affairs in that part of the World for their ſakes; Overturning one Empire, and ſetling another for their Reſtoration to their antient City. And though they did not after diſown him for their God, and ſet up *Baal in his Throne*, yet they multiplyed fooliſh Traditions, whereby they impaired the Authority of the Law; yet he ſuſtained them with a wonderful *Patience*, and preferred them before all other people in the firſt offers of the Goſpel; And after they had outrag'd not only his ſervants the Prophets, but his Son the Redeemer, yet he did not forſake them, but employed his Apoſtles to ſollicit them, and publiſh among them the Doctrine of Salvation. So that his treating this people, might well be call'd *much long ſuffering*, it being, above 1500 *years*, wherein he bore with them, or mildly puniſhed them; far leſs than their deſerts. Their coming out of *Egypt* being about the year of the World 2450, and their final deſtruction as a Common-wealth, not till about 40 *years* after the death of Chriſt; And all this while his *Patience* did ſometimes wholly reſtrain his Juſtice, and ſometimes let it fall upon them in ſome few drops; but made no total devaſtation of their Countrey, nor wrote his revenge in extraordinary bloody Characters, till the Roman Conqueſt, wherein he put a period to them, both as a Church and State.

In *particular this Patience is manifeſt.*

1. In his *giving warning of Judgments, before he orders them to go forth.* He doth not puniſh in a paſſion, and haſtily; He ſpeaks before he ſtrikes, and ſpeaks that he may not ſtrike. Wrath is publiſht, before it is executed, and that a long time; *An* 120 *years Advertiſement* was given to a debauch'd World, before the Heavens were open'd, to ſpout down a deluge upon them. He will not be accuſed of coming unawares upon a People; He inflicts nothing, but what he foretold either immediately to the people that provoke him, or antiently to them that have been their fore-runners in the ſame provocation. *Hoſ.* 7. 12, *I will chaſtiſe them as their Congregation hath heard.* Many of the leaves of the Old Teſtament are full of thoſe Preſages and *Warnings* of approaching judgment. Theſe make up a great part of the Volume of it in various Editions, according to the State of the ſeveral provoking times. *Warnings* are given to thoſe people that are moſt abominable in his ſight; *Zeph.* 2. 1, 2. *Gather your ſelves together, yea gather together Oh Nation, not deſired*; 'tis a *Meioſis*, Oh Nation abhorr'd, *before the decree bring forth.* He ſends his Heralds before he ſends his Armies; He *ſummons* them by the voice of his Prophets, before he confounds them by the voice of his Thunders. When a parley is beaten, a White Flag of Peace is hung out, before a black Flag of Fury is ſet up. He ſeldom cuts down men by his Judgments, before he hath *hewed them by his Prophets*, *Hoſ.* 6. 5. Not a remarkable judgment but was *foretold*: The Floud to the Old World by *Noah*: The Famine to *Egypt* by *Joſeph*; The Earthquake by *Amos*. *Amos* 1. 1. The Storm from *Chaldea* by *Jeremy*; The Captivity of the *Ten Tribes* by *Hoſea*; The total Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the Temple by *Chriſt himſelf*; He hath choſen the beſt perſons in the World to give thoſe intimations; *Noah*, the moſt Righteous perſon on the Earth for the Old World; and his *Son* the moſt beloved perſon in Heaven for the Jews in the later time. And in other parts of the World, and in the later times where he hath not *warned* by Prophets, he hath ſupplied it by Prodigies in the Air and Earth; Hiſtories are full of ſuch *Items* from Heaven. Leſſer Judgments are fore-warners of greater, as Lightnings before Thunder, are Meſſengers to tell us of a ſucceeding clap.

1. He doth *often give warning of Judgments.* He comes not to extremity, till he hath often ſhaken the Rod over Men; He thunders often, before he cruſheth them with his Thunder-bolt; He doth not till after the *Firſt and Second admonition* puniſh a Rebel, as he would have us reject a Heretick. *He ſpeaks once, yea twice, Job* 33. 14. *and man perceives it not*; He ſends *one Meſſage* after *another*, and

waits the ſucceſs of many meſſages, before he ſtrikes. *Eight Prophets* were order'd to acquaint the Old World with approaching Judgment: 2 *Pet.* 2. 5. He ſaved *Noah the 8th perſon, a preacher of Righteouſneſs bringing in the Flood upon the World of the ungodly*, called the 8*th.* in reſpect of his Preaching, not in regard of his Preſervation; He was *the* 8*th.* Preacher, in order from the beginning of the World, that endeavoured to reſtore the World to the way of Righteouſneſs. Moſt indeed conſider him here, as the 8*th. perſon* ſaved, ſo do our Tranſlators: and therefore add *Perſon*, which is not in the *Greek*. Some others conſider him here as the 8*th. Preacher* of Righteouſneſs, reckoning *Enoch* the Son of *Seth* the *Firſt*: grounding it upon *Gen.* 4. 26. *Then began men to call on the Name of the Lord*, Heb. *Then it was began to call in the Name of the Lord*; τότε ἤρξαντο ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ. Sept. *He began to call in the Name of the Lord*, which others render he began *to Preach*, or call upon Men in the Name of the Lord. The word קרא ſignifies to Preach, or to call upon Men by Preaching, *Prov.* 1. 21. *Wiſdom cryeth*, or *Preaches*; And if this be ſo, as it is very probable, 'tis eaſy to reckon him the 8*th. Preacher*, by numbring the ſucceſſive heads of the Generations; *Gen.* 5. Beginning at *Enoſh* the *firſt Preacher* of Righteouſneſs. * So many there were before God choakt the Old World with water, and ſwept them away; 'Tis clear he often did admoniſh by his Prophets, the *Jews* of their ſin, and the wrath which ſhould come upon them. One Prophet, *Hoſea* Propheſied 70 *years*; for he Propheſied in the days of Four Kings of *Judah*, and *one of Iſrael*, *Jeroboam* the Son of *Joaſh*, *Hoſ.* 1. 1. or *Jeroboam the Second* of that name. *Uzziah* King of *Judah*, in whoſe Reign *Hoſea* Propheſied, lived 38 *years* after the death of *Jeroboam*. The *Second Jotham*, *Uzziah*'s Succeſſor, Reigned 16 *years*, *Ahaz* 16, *Hezekiah* 29 *years*; Now take nothing of *Hezekiah*'s time, and Date the beginning of his Propheſiy from the laſt year of *Jeroboam*'s Reign, and the time of *Hoſea*'s Propheſie, will be 70 *years* compleat; Wherein God warned thoſe people, and waited the return particularly of *Iſrael*; * and not leſs than *Five of thoſe* we call the *leſſer Prophets*, were ſent to foretell the deſtruction of the *Ten Tribes*, and to call them to Repentance: *Hoſea*, *Joel*, *Amos*, *Micah*, *Jonah*; And though we have nothing of *Jonah*'s Propheſie in this concern of *Iſrael*, yet that he lived in the time of the ſame *Jeroboam*, and Propheſied things, which are not upon record in the Book of *Jonah*, is clear; 2 *King.* 14. 15. And beſides thoſe, *Iſaiah* Propheſied alſo in the Reign of the ſame Kings, as *Hoſea* did; *Iſai.* 1. 1. And it is God's uſual method, to ſend forth his Servants, and when their admonitions are ſlighted, he Commiſſions others, before he ſends out his deſtroying Armies. *Mat.* 22. 3, 4, 7.

* Vid. *Gells* ἁγιολογία.

* *Sanctius.* Prolegom. in Hoſea. Prolog. *the* 3

2. He doth *often give warning of Judgments, that he might not pour out his wrath.* He ſummons them to a ſurrender of themſelves, and a return from their Rebellion, that they might not feel the force of his Arms. He offers peace before he ſhakes off the duſt of his feet, that his deſpiſed peace might not return in vain to him, to ſollicite a revenge from his anger. He hath a right to puniſh upon the *firſt* Commiſſion of a crime, but he *warns* men of what they have deſerved, of what his Juſtice moves him to inflict, that by having recourſe to his mercy, he might not exerciſe the rights of his Juſtice. God ſought to kill *Moſes* for not circumciſing his Son, *Exod.* 4. 24. Could God that ſought it, miſs of a way to do it? Could a creature lurch or fly from him? God put on the garb of an enemy, that *Moſes* might be diſcouraged from being an inſtrument of his own ruine. God manifeſted an anger againſt *Moſes* for his neglect, as if he would then have deſtroyed him, that *Moſes* might *prevent* it, by caſting off his careleſneſs, and doing his duty. He ſought to kill him by ſome evident ſign, that *Moſes* might eſcape the judgment by his obedience. He threatens *Nineveh* by the Prophet with deſtruction, that *Nineveh*'s Repentance might make void the Propheſie. He fights with men by the Sword of his mouth, that he might not pierce them by the Sword of his wrath. He threatens, that men might prevent the execution of his threatning; He terrifies, that he might not deſtroy, but that men by humiliation may lye proſtrate before him, and move the bowels of his mercy to a louder ſound,

ſound, than the voice of his Anger. He takes time to whet his Sword, that Men may turn themſelves from the edge of it. He roars like a Lion, that Men, by hearing his voice, may ſhelter themſelves from being torn by his Wrath. There is patience in the ſharpeſt threatning, that we may avoid the ſcourge. Who can charge God with an eagerneſs to revenge, that ſends ſo many *Heralds*, and ſo *often* before he ſtrikes, that he might be prevented from ſtriking? His threatnings have not ſo much of a black Flag, as of an Olive branch. He lifts up his hand, before he ſtrikes, that men might *See* and avert the ſtroke, *Iſaiah*, 26. 11.

2. *His Patience is manifeſt, in long delaying his threatned Judgments, though he finds no Repentance in the Rebels.* He doth ſometimes delay his lighter puniſhments, becauſe he doth not delight in torturing his Creatures; but he doth *longer delay* his deſtroying puniſhments, ſuch as put an end to mens happineſs, and remit them to their final and unchangeable ſtate; becauſe he *doth not delight in the death of a Sinner.* While he is preparing his Arrows, he is waiting for an occaſion to lay them aſide, and dull their points, that he may with honour march back again, and disband his Armies. He brings lighter ſmarts ſooner, that men might not think him aſleep, but he ſuſpends the more terrible judgments, that men might be led to Repentance. He ſcatters not his conſuming fires at the firſt, but brings on ruining vengeance with a *ſlow pace*; *ſentence againſt an evil work is not ſpeedily executed. Eccleſ.* 8. 11. The *Jews therefore* ſay, that *Michael*, the Miniſter of Juſtice, flies with one wing, but *Gabriel* the Miniſter of Mercy with two. *An.* 120 *years* did God wait upon the old World, and delay their puniſhment, all the time the *Ark was preparing*, 1 *Pet.* 3. 20. Wherein that wicked Generation did not enjoy only a *bare patience*, but a *ſtriving patience. Gen.* 6. 3. *My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with Man, yet his days ſhall be one hundred and twenty years*, the days wherein I will ſtrive with him; that his Long ſuffering might not loſe all its fruit, and remit the objects of it into the hands of conſuming Juſtice. It was the *Tenth Generation of the World from* Adam, when the deluge overflow'd it, ſo long did God bear with them. And the *Tenth Generation from* Noah wherein *Sodom* was conſumed. God did not come to keep his Aſſizes in *Sodom*, till *the cry of their ſins was very ſtrong*, that it had been a wrong to his Juſtice to have reſtrain'd it any longer. The cry was ſo loud, that he could not be at quiet, as it were, on his Throne of Glory for the diſturbing noiſe. *Gen.* 18. 20, 21. Sin tranſgreſſeth the Law, the Law being violated, ſolicites Juſtice, Juſtice being urg'd pleads for puniſhment; the cry of their ſins did as it were force him from Heaven to come down, and examine what cauſe there was for that clamour. Sin cries *loud and long*, before he takes his Sword in hand, *Four hundred years* he kept off deſerved deſtruction from the *Amorites*, and deferr'd making good his promiſe to *Abraham*, of giving *Canaan* to his Poſterity out of his Long-ſuffering to the *Amorites. Gen.* 15. 16. In the *Fourth Generation* they ſhall come hither again, *for the iniquity of the* Amorites *is not yet full.* Their meaſure was filling then, but not ſo full as to put a ſtop to any further *patience* till *Four hundred years after.* The uſual time in ſucceeding Generations from the denouncing of Judgments to the execution, is *Forty years*, this ſome ground upon *Ezek.* 4. 6. *thou ſhalt bear the iniquity of the Houſe of* Judah *Forty days*, taking each day for a year. Though *Hoſea* lived *Seventy years*, yet from the beginning of his prophecying Judgments againſt *Iſrael*, to the pouring them out upon that Idolatrous People, it was *Forty years. Hoſea* as was mentioned before, propheſied againſt them in the days of *Jeroboam the Second*, in whoſe time God did wonderfully deliver *Iſrael*, 2 *Kings* 14. 26, 27. From that time till the total deſtruction of the *Ten Tribes* it was *Forty years*, as may eaſily be computed from the Story, 2 *Kings* 15, 16, 17 *chap.* by the Reign of the ſucceeding Kings. So *Forty years* after the moſt horrid villany that ever was committed in the face of the Sun, *viz.* The *Crucifying the Son of God*, was *Jeruſalem* deſtroyed, and the Inhabitants captiv'd; ſo long did God delay a viſible puniſhment for ſuch an outrage. Sometimes he *prolongs* ſending a threatned judgment upon a meer ſhadow of humiliation; ſo he did that denounced againſt *Ahab.* He turn'd it over to his poſterity, and adjourn'd it to another ſeaſon. 1 *Kings* 21. 29. He doth not iſſue out an Arreſt

upon one Tranſgreſſion you often find him not commencing a ſuit againſt Men, till *three and four Tranſgreſſions*. The Firſt of *Amos*, all along that Chapter, and the Second Chapter; for *three and four*, i. e. *Seven*. A certain number for an uncertain. He gives not orders to his judgments to march, till men be obſtinate, and refuſe any commerce with him. He ſtops them, till *there be no remedy*, 2 *Chron.* 36. 16. It muſt be a *great wickedneſs* that gives vent to them, *Hoſ.* 10. 15. Heb. *your wickedneſs of wickedneſs*. He is ſo *ſlow to anger*, and ſtays the puniſhment his enemies deſerve, that he may ſeem to have forgot his kindneſs to his Friends. *Pſal.* 44. 24. *Wherefore hideſt thou thy face and forgetteſt our affliction, and oppreſſion?* He lets his people groan under the yoak of their enemies, as if he were made up of kindneſs to his Enemies, and anger againſt his Friends. This delaying of puniſhment to evil men, is viſible in his ſuſpending the terrifying acts of Conſcience, and ſupporting it only, in its checking, admoniſhing, and controuling acts. The *patience* of a Governour is ſeen in the patient mildneſs of his Deputy. *Davids* Conſcience did not terrify him, till *nine months* after his ſin of Murder. Should God ſet open the Mouth of this power within us, not only the Earth, but our own Bodies, and Spirits, would be a burden to us. 'Tis long before God puts Scorpions into the hands of mens Conſciences, to ſcourge them. He holds back the rod, waiting for the hour of our return, as if that would be a recompence for our offences, and his forbearance.

III. *His Patience is manifeſt in his unwillingneſs to execute his Judgments, when he can delay no longer. He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men.* Lamen. 3. 33. Heb. *He doth not afflict from his heart.* He takes no pleaſure in it, as he is Creator. The heighth of mens provocations, and the neceſſity of the preſerving his Rights, and vindicating his Laws, obligeth him to it, as he is the Governour of the World. As a Judge may willingly condemn a Malefactor to death out of affection to the Laws, and deſire to preſerve the order of Government, but unwillingly, out of Compaſſion to the offender himſelf. When he reſolved upon the deſtruction of the Old World, he ſpake it, as a God grieved with an occaſion of puniſhment, *Gen.* 6. 6, 7. *compared together.* When he came to reckon with *Adam*, *he walked*, he did not run with his Sword in his hand upon him, as a mighty man with an eagerneſs to deſtroy him, *Gen.* 3. 8. And that *in the cool of the day*, a time when men tired in the day, are unwilling to engage in a hard employment. His exerciſing Judgment, is a *coming out of his place*, *Iſaiah* 26. 21. *Micah* 1. 3. He comes out of his ſtation, to exerciſe judgment; a Throne is more his place than a Tribunal. Every prophecy loaded with threatnings, is call'd the *Burden of the Lord*, a burden to him to execute it, as well as to men to ſuffer it. Though *three Angels* came to *Abraham* about the puniſhment of *Sodom* whereof one *Abraham* ſpeaks to as to God, yet but *two* appear'd at the deſtruction of *Sodom*; as if the Governour of the world were unwilling to be preſent at ſuch dreadful work. *Gen.* 19. 1. And when the Man that had the Inkhorn by his ſide, that was appointed, to mark thoſe that were to be preſerved in the common deſtruction, return'd to give an account of the performing his Commiſſion, *Ezek.* 9. 10. We read not of the return of thoſe that were to kill, as if God delighted only to hear again of his works of Mercy, and had no mind to hear again of his ſevere proceedings. * The *Jews* to ſhew Gods unwillingneſs to puniſh, imagine that Hell was created the Second day: Becauſe that days work is not pronounced good by God, as all the other days works are, *Gen.* 1. 8.

* *Mercer in Gen.* 1. 5.

1. *When God doth puniſh he doth it with ſome regret.* * When he hurls down his thunders, he ſeems to do it with a backward hand: Becauſe with an unwilling heart. He created, ſaith *Chryſoſtom*, the World in Six days, but was Seven *days* in deſtroying one City *Jericho*, which he had before devoted to be razed to the ground. What is the reaſon, ſaith he, that God is ſo quick to build up, but ſlow to pull down? His Goodneſs excites his power to the One, but is not earneſt to perſwade him to the Other. When he comes to ſtrike, he doth it with a ſigh or groan. *Iſaiah* 1. 24. *Ah I will eaſe me of my adverſaries, and avenge me on my Enemies.* אה *Ah*, a note of grief. So *Hoſ.* 6. 4. *Oh Ephraim what*

**Creſſol. Decad* 2. *p.* 163.

what shall I do unto thee? Oh Judah, what shall I do unto thee? 'Tis an *Addubitatio* a Figure in Rhetorick as if God were troubled, that he must deal so sharply with them, and give them up to their Enemies. I have tried all means to reclaim you, I have used all ways of kindness, and nothing prevails. What shall I do? my Mercy invites me to spare them, and their ingratitude provokes me to ruine them. God had born with that people of *Israel* almost *Three hundred years*, from the setting up of the Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*; sent many a Prophet to warn them, and spent many a rod to reform them. And when he comes to execute his threatnings, he doth it with a conflict in himself. *Hosea* 11. 8. *How shall I give thee up Oh Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel?* As if there were a pull-back in his own Bowels, he solemnizeth their approaching funeral with a hearty groan; and takes his farewel of the dying Malefactor with a pang in himself. How often in former times when he had sign'd a warrant for their Execution, did he call it back? *Psal.* 78. 38. *Many a time turn'd he his anger away.* Many a time he recall'd, or order'd his anger, to *return again* as the word signifies, as if he were irresolute what to do. He recall'd it, as a man doth his Servant several times, when he is sending him upon an unwelcome message; or as a tender hearted Prince wavers, and trembles, when he is to sign a Writ for the death of a Rebel, that hath been before his Favorite, as if when he had sign'd the Writ, he blotted out his name again, and flung away the Pen. And his method is remarkable, when he came to punish *Sodom*; though the cry of their sin had been fierce in his ears, yet when he comes to make inquisition, he declares his intention to *Abraham*, as if he were desirous that *Abraham* should have helped him to some arguments, to stop the out-goings of his judgment. He gave liberty to the best person in the World, to stand in the gap, and enter into a Treaty with him, to shew (saith one *) how willingly his mercy would have compounded with his justice for their Redemption. And *Abraham* interceded so long, till he was ashamed for pleading the cause of *Patience* and Mercy, to the wrong of the rights of Divine Justice. Perhaps had *Abraham* had the courage to ask, God would have had the compassion to grant a Reprieve just at the time of Execution.

* *Pierce* sinner impleaded, *Pag.* 227.

2. His *Patience is manifest, in that when he begins to send out his judgments, he doth it by degrees.* His Judgments are *as the Morning Light*, which goes forth by *degrees* in the Hemisphere. *Hos.* 6. 5. He doth not shoot all his Thunders at once, and bring his sharpest judgments in array at one time, but gradually, that a people may have time to turn to him. *Joel* 1. 4. First the *Palmer-worm*, then the *Locust*, then the *Canker-worm*, then the *Caterpillar*; What one left, the other was to eat, if there were not a timely return. A Jewish Writer, * saith, these judgments came not all in one year, but *one year after another.* The Palmer-worm and Locust might have eaten all, but Divine Patience set bounds to the devouring Creatures. God had been first as a *Moth to Israel*; Hos. 5. 12. *Therefore will I be to the house of Ephraim as a Moth*; *Rivet* translates it, *I have been*, in the Hebr. 'tis I without adding, I have been, or I will be, and more probably I have been; I was as a Moth, which makes little holes in a garment, and consumes it not all at once; And as *rottenness to the house of Judah*, or a worm that eats into wood by degrees. Indeed this people had consum'd insensibly, partly by civil combustions, change of Governors, Foreign Invasions, yet they were as obstinate in their Idolatry as ever; At last God would be no longer to them as a Moth, but as a *Lion*, tear, and go away; *ver.* 14. So, *Hos.* 2. God had disowned *Israel* for his Spouse, *ver.* 2. *She is not my Wife, neither am I her Husband*, yet he had not taken away her Ornaments, which by the right of divorce he might have done, but still expected her Reformation, for that the threatning intimates, *ver.* 3. let her put away her Whordom, *lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day when she was born.* If she returned, she might recover what she had lost, if not, she might be stript of what remained. Thus God dealt with *Judah. Ezek.* 9. 3. The Glory of God goes first from the *Cherub* to the *Threshold* of the house, and stays there, as if he had a mind to be invited back again; then

* *Kimchi.*

then it goes from the Threſhold of the houſe, and ſtands over the *Cherubims*, as if upon a penitent Call it would drop down again to its antient Station and Seat, over which it hovered; *Ezek.* 10. 18. And when he was not ſollicited to return, he departs out of the City, and ſtood upon the Mountain, which is on the Eaſt part of the City, *Ezek.* 11. 23. looking ſtill towards, and hovering about the Temple, which was on the Eaſt of *Jeruſalem*, as if loath to depart, and abandon the place and people. He walks ſo leaſurely with his Rod in his hand, as if he had a mind rather to fling it away, than uſe it. His *Patience* in not pouring out all his Vials, is more remarkable than his wrath in pouring out one or two. Thus hath God made his ſlowneſs to anger viſible to us in the gradual puniſhment of us; Firſt, the *Peſtilence* on this City, then *Firing* our Houſes, *Conſumption* of Trade, theſe have not been anſwer'd with ſuch a carriage as God expects, therefore a greater is reſerved. I dare Prognoſticate, upon reaſons you may gather from what hath been ſpoke before, if I be not much miſtaken, the Forty years of his uſual *Patience* are very near expired, he hath inflicted ſome, that he might be met with in a way of Repentance, and omit with honour the inflicting the remainder.

4. *His Patience is manifeſt, in moderating his Judgments, when he ſends them.* Doth he empty his Quiver of his Arrows, or exhauſt his Magazines of Thunder? No, he could roul one Thunder-bolt ſucceſſively upon all Mankind; 'Tis as eaſie with him to Create a perpetual motion of Lightning and Thunder, as of the Sun and Stars, and make the World as terrible by the one, as it is delightful by the other. He opens not all his ſtore, he ſends out a light party to skirmiſh with Men, and puts not in array his whole Army, *He ſtirs not up all his wrath, Pſal.* 78. 38. he doth but pinch, where he might have torn aſunder; When he takes away much, he leaves enough to ſupport us. If he had ſtirred up all his anger, he had taken away all, and our Lives to boot. He rakes up but a few ſparks, takes but one firebrand to fling upon men, when he might diſcharge the whole Furnace upon them; He ſends but a few drops out of the Cloud, which he might make to break in the groſs, and fall down upon our heads to overwhelm us; he abates much of what he might do. When he might ſweep away a whole Nation by deluges of Water, corruption of the Air, or convulſions of the Earth, or by other ways that are not wanting at his order. He picks out only *ſome* Perſons, ſome Families, *ſome* Cities, ſends a Plague into one houſe, and not into another; here is *Patience* to the ſtock of a Nation, while he inflicts puniſhment upon ſome of the moſt notorious ſinners in it. *Herod* is ſuddenly ſnatcht away, being willingly flattered into the thoughts of his being a God; God ſingl'd out the chiefin the Herd, for whoſe ſake he had been affronted by the rabble. *Acts* 12. 22, 23. Some find him ſparing them, while others feel him deſtroying them; He arreſts ſome, when he might ſeize all, all being his Debtors; And often in great deſolations brought upon a people for their ſin, he hath left a *ſtump* in the Earth, as *Daniel* ſpeaks, *Dan.* 4. 15. for a Nation to grow upon it again, and ariſe to a ſtronger conſtitution. He doth puniſh *leſs than our iniquities deſerve, Ezra* 9.13. and rewards us *not according to our iniquities, Pſal.* 103. 10. The greatneſs of any puniſhment in this Life, anſwers not the greatneſs of the crime. Though there be an equity in whatſoever he doth, yet there is not an equality to what we deſerve. Our iniquities would juſtify a ſeverer Treating of us; His Juſtice goes not here to the end of its line, 'tis ſtopped in its progreſs, and the blows of it weakned by his *Patience*; He did nor curſe the Earth after *Adams* fall, that it ſhould bring forth no fruit, but that it ſhould not bring forth fruit without the wearíſom toil of Man, and ſubjected him to diſtempers preſently, but inflicted not death immediately; while he puniſhed him, he ſupported him; And while he expelled him from Paradiſe, he did not order him not to caſt his eye towards it, and conceive ſome hopes of regaining that happy place.

5. *His patience is ſeen in giving great mercies after provocations.* He is ſo *ſlow to anger*, that he heaps many kindneſſes upon a Rebel, inſtead of puniſhment.

There

There is a proſperous wickedneſs, wherein the provokers ſtrength continues firm; the troubles which like Clouds drop upon others, are blown away from them, and they are *not plagued like other men*, that have a more worthy demeanour towards God. *Pſal.* 73. 3, 4, 5. He doth not only continue their lives, but ſends out freſh beams of his goodneſs upon them, and calls them by his Bleſſings, that they may acknowledge their own fault and his bounty, which he is not obliged to by any gratitude he meets with from them, but by the richneſs of his own patient nature: for he finds the unthankfulneſs of Men as great as his benefits to them. He doth not only continue his outward mercies, while we continue our ſins, but ſometimes gives freſh benefits after new provocations: that if poſſible he might excite an ingenuity in Men. When *Iſrael* at the Red Sea flung dirt in the face of God, by quarrelling with his ſervant *Moſes* for bringing them out of *Egypt*, and miſ-judging God in his deſign of deliverance, and were ready to ſubmit themſelves to their former oppreſſors, *Exod.* 14. 11, 12. which might juſtly have urged God to ſay to them, take your own courſe; yet he is not only *patient* under their unjuſt charge, but *makes bare his Arm in a deliverance at the Red Sea*, that was to be an amazing monument to the World in all ages; and afterwards when they repiningly quarrelled with him in their wants in the Wilderneſs, he did not only not revenge himſelf upon them, or caſt off the conduct of them, but bore with them by a miraculous long ſuffering, and ſupplyed them with miraculous proviſion, *Manna* from Heaven, and Water from a Rock. Food is given to ſupport us, and Cloaths to cover us, and Divine *Patience* makes the creatures, which we turn to another uſe, than what they were at firſt intended for, ſerve us contrary to their own *Genius*: For had they reaſon, no queſtion but they would complain, to be ſubjected to the ſervice of man, who hath been ſo ungrateful to their Creator, and groan at the abuſe of God's *Patience*, in the abuſe they themſelves ſuffer from the hands of Man.

6. *All this is more manifeſt, if we conſider the provocations he hath.* Wherein his *ſlowneſs to anger* infinitely tranſcends the *Patience* of any creature; nay the Spirits of all the Angels and Glorified Saints in Heaven, would be too narrow to bear the ſins of the World for one day, nay not ſo much as the ſins of Churches, which is a little ſpot in the whole World: 'tis becauſe *he is the Lord*, one of an infinite power over himſelf, that not only the whole Maſs of the Rebellious World, but of *the Sons of* Jacob (either conſidered as a Church and Nation ſpringing from the loyns of *Jacob*, or conſidered as the Regenerate part of the World, ſometimes called the Seed of *Jacob*) *are not conſumed*, *Mal.* 3. 6. A *Jonah* was angry with God, for recalling his anger from a ſinful people; Had God committed the Government of the World to the Glorified Saints, who are perfect in Love and Holineſs, the World would have had an end long ago; They would have acted that, which they ſue for at the hands of God, and is not granted them. *Rev.* 6. 10. *How long Lord holy and true, doſt thou not avenge our blood, on them that dwell on the Earth?* God hath deſigns of *Patience* above the World, abve the unſinning Angels, and perfectly renewed Spirits in Glory. The greateſt Created long ſuffering is infinitely diſproportion'd to the Divine; Fire from Heaven would have been ſhowred down before the greateſt part of a day were ſpent, if a Created Patience had the Conduct of the World, though that creature were poſſeſſed with the Spirit of Patience, extracted from all the Creatures which are in Heaven, or are, or ever were upon the Earth. Methinks *Moſes* intimates this; for as ſoon as God had paſſed by proclaiming his Name Gracious, and *Long ſuffering*; As ſoon as ever *Moſes* had paid his Adoration, he fals a Pra ying, that God would go with the *Iſraelites*; *Exod.* 34. 8, 9. *For it is a ſtiff-necked people*: What an argument is here for God to go along with them? He might rather, ſince he had heard him but juſt before ſay, he would *by no means clear the guilty*, deſire God to ſtand further off from them, for fear the fire of his wrath ſhould burſt out from him, to burn them as he did the *Sodomites*. But he conſiders, that as none but God had ſuch anger to deſtroy them, ſo none but God had ſuch a *Patience* to bear with them; 'Tis as much as if he ſhould have ſaid,

Lord

Lord! if thou ſhould'ſt ſend the moſt tender-hearted Angel in Heaven to have the guidance of this People, they would be a loſt People; a period will quickly be ſet to their lives, no Created ſtrength can reſtrain its power from cruſhing ſuch a ſtiff-necked people; Fleſh and Blood cannot bear them, nor any Created Spirit of a greater might.

1. Conſider *the greatneſs of the provocations.* No light matter, but *actions of a great defiance*: What is the practical Language of moſt in the World, but that of *Pharaoh? Who is the Lord that I ſhould obey him?* How many queſtion his Being, and more, his Authority? What blaſphemies of him, what reproaches of his Majeſty? Men *drinking up iniquity like water*, and with a haſte and ardency *ruſhing into ſin, as the Horſe into the battle.* What is there in the reaſonable Creature, that hath the quickeſt capacity, and the deepeſt obligation to ſerve him, but oppoſition and enmity, a ſlight of him in every thing, yea the ſervices moſt ſeriouſly performed, unſuited to the Royalty and Purity of ſo great a Being? Such *provocations* as dare him to his face, that are a burden to ſo righteous a Judge, and ſo great a lover of the Authority and Majeſty of his Laws; That were there but a ſpark of anger in him, 'tis a wonder it doth not ſhew it ſelf; When he is invaded in all his attributes, 'tis aſtoniſhing that this ſingle one of *Patience* and Meekneſs, ſhould withſtand the aſſault of all the reſt of his Perfections; His Being which is attack'd by Sin, ſpeaks for vengeance. His Juſtice cannot be imagin'd to ſtand ſilent, without charging the ſinner. His Holineſs cannot but encourage his Juſtice to urge its pleas, and be an Advocate for it. His Omniſcience proves the truth of all the charge; and his abuſed mercy hath little encouragement, to make oppoſition to the Indictment; Nothing but *Patience* ſtands in the gap to keep off the arreſt of judgment from the ſinner.

2. His *Patience* is manifeſt, if you conſider the *multitudes of theſe provocations.* Every Man hath ſin enough in a day to make him ſtand amazed at Divine *Patience*, and to call it as well as the Apoſtle did, *all long ſuffering*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 16. How few duties of a perfectly right ſtamp are performed? What unworthy conſiderations mix themſelves like droſs, with our pureſt and ſincereſt Gold? How more numerous are the reſpects of the Worſhippers of him to themſelves, than unto him? How many Services are paid him, not out of love to him, but becauſe he ſhould do us no hurt, and ſome ſervice; When we do not ſo much deſign to pleaſe him, as to pleaſe our ſelves by expectations of a reward from him? What Maſter would endure a Servant that endeavoured to pleaſe him, only becauſe he ſhould not kill him? Is that former charge of God upon the Old World yet out of date, That the *imagination of the thoughts of the heart of man was only evil, and that continually?* *Gen.* 6. 5. Was not the New World as chargeable with it as the Old? Certainly it was; *Gen.* 8. 21. And is of as much force this very minute, as it was then; How many are the ſins againſt knowledge, as well as thoſe of ignorance; Preſumptuous ſins as well as thoſe of infirmity? How numerous thoſe of Omiſſion and Commiſſion? * 'Tis above the reach of any man's underſtanding to conceive all the Blaſphemies, Oaths, Thefts, Adulteries, Murders, Oppreſſions, contempt of Religion, the open Idolatries of Turks and Heathens, the more ſpiritual and refin'd Idolatries of others. Add to thoſe the ingratitude of thoſe that profeſs his Name, their pride, earthlineſs, careleſneſs, ſluggiſhneſs to Divine Duties; and in every one of thoſe a *multitude of provocations*; The whole man being engag'd in every ſin, the underſtanding contriving it, the Will embracing it, the affections complying with it, and all the members of the Body inſtruments in the acting the unrighteouſneſs of it; Every one of theſe faculties beſtowed upon Men by him, are armed againſt him in every act: and in every employment of them there is a diſtinct provocation, though center'd in one ſinful end and object. What are the offences all the men of the World receive from their fellow creatures, to the injuries God receives from men, but as a ſmall duſt of Earth to the whole maſs of Earth and Heaven too? What multitudes of ſins is one prophane wretch guilty of in the ſpace of 20, 40, 50 years? Who can compute

* *Leſſius* pag. 152.

compute the vast number of his transgressions, from the first use of Reason to the time of the separation of his Soul from his Body; from his *entrance* into the World to his *exit*? What are those, to those of a whose Village of the like Inhabitants? What are those to those of a great City? Who can number up all the foul-mouth'd Oaths, the beastly excess, the goatish uncleanness committed in the space of a day, year, twenty years in this City, much less in the whole Nation, least of all in the whole World? Were it no more than the common Idolatry of former ages, when the whole World turn'd their backs upon their Creator, and passed him by to sue to a Creature, a stock, or stone, or a degraded spirit. How provoking would it be to a Prince to see a whole City under his Dominion deny him a Respect; and pay it to his Scullion, or the common Executioner he employs? Add to this the unjust invasions of Kings, the oppressions exercised upon Men, all the private and publick sins that have been committed in the World, ever since it began. The *Gentiles* were describ'd by the *Apostle*, *Rom.* 1. 29, 30, 31. in a black character, *They were haters of God*; yet how did the *Riches of his patience* preserve multitudes of such disingenuous persons, and how *many millions of such haters of him* breath every day in his Air, and are maintained by his bounty, have their Tables spread, and their Cups fill'd to the brim; and that too in the midst of reiterated belchings of their enmity against him? All are under sufficient *provocations* of him to the highest indignation. The presiding Angels over Nations could not forbear, in Love and Honour to their Governour, to arm themselves to the destruction of their several charges, if *Divine patience* did not set them a pattern, and their Obedience incline them to expect his Orders, before they act what their zeal would prompt them to. The Devils would be glad of a Commission to destroy the World, but that his *patience* puts a stop to their fury, as well as his own Justice.

3. Consider the *long time of this patience.* He spread out his hands *all the day* to a rebellious World. *Isaiah* 65. 2. All mens day, all Gods day which is a *thousand years*, he hath born with the gross of Mankind, with all the Nations of the World in a long *succession of ages* for *five thousand years* and upwards already, and will bear with them, till the time comes for the Worlds dissolution. He hath suffered the monstrous acts of men, and endur'd the contradictions of a sinful World against himself, from the first sin of *Adam* to the last committed this minute. The line of his *patience* hath run along with the duration of the World to this day; and there is not any one of *Adams* posterity but hath been expensive to him, and partaked of the riches of it.

4. *All these he bears when he hath a sense of them.* He *sees* every day the Roll and Catalogue of sin increasing, he hath a *distinct view* of every one from the sin of *Adam* to the last, fill'd up in his *Omniscience*; and yet gives no order for the arrest of the World. He knows Men fitted for destruction, all the instants he exerciseth *long-suffering* towards them, which makes the Apostle call it not simply *long-suffering* without the addition of πολλῆ, *much long-suffering*, *Rom.* 9. 22. There is not a grain in the whole Mass of sin, that he hath not a distinct knowledge of, and of the quality of it. He perfectly understands the greatness of his own Majesty that is vilified, and the nature of the offence that doth dispatage him. He is sollicited by his *Justice*, directed by his *Omniscience*, and armed with judgments to vindicate himself, but his arm is restrained by *patience*. To conclude, no indignity is hid from him, no iniquity is beloved by him, the hatred of their sinfulness is infinite, and the knowledge of their malice is exact. The subsisting of the World under such weighty provocations, so numerous, so long time, and with his full sence of every one of them, is an evidence of such a *forbearance* and *long-suffering*, that the addition of *Riches* which the Apostle puts to it, *Rom.* 2. 4. labours with an insufficiency clearly to display it.

III. *Why God doth exercise so much patience.*

1. *To shew himself appeasable.* God did not declare by his *Patience* to former

ages, or any age, that he was appeaſed with them, or that they were in his favour, but that he was appeaſable, that he was not an implacable Enemy, but that they might find him favourable to them, if they did ſeek after him. The continuance of the World by *Patience*, and the beſtowing many Mercies by Goodneſs, were not a natural revelation of the manner how he would be appeaſed: That was made known only by the *Prophets*, and after the coming of Chriſt by the *Apoſtles*; and had indeed been intelligible in ſome ſort to the whole World, had there been a faithfulneſs in *Adams* poſterity, to tranſmit the tradition of the firſt promiſe to ſucceeding Generations. Had not the knowledge of that died by their careleſneſs, and neglect, it had been eaſie to tell the reaſon of Gods *Patience* to be in order to the exhibition of the *Seed of the Woman, to bruiſe the Serpents Head.*

They could not but naturally know themſelves ſinners, and worthy of death; they might by eaſie reflections upon themſelves, collect that they were not in that comely and harmonious poſture now, as they were, when God firſt wrought them with his own finger, and placed them as his Lieutenants in the World; they knew they did grievouſly offend him, this they were taught by the ſprinklings of his judgments among them ſometimes. And ſince he did not utterly root up Mankind, his ſparing *Patience* was a prologue of ſome further favours, or pardoning Grace to be diſplay'd to the World by ſome methods of God yet unknown to them. Though the Earth was ſomething impair'd by the curſe after the fall, yet the main pillars of it ſtood; the ſtate of the natural motions of the Creature was not chang'd, the Heavens remain'd in the ſame poſture, wherein they were Created, the Sun and Moon and other Heavenly bodies continued their uſefulneſs and refreſhing influences to Man. *The Heavens* did ſtill *declare the Glory of God, day unto day* did *utter ſpeech, their line is gone throughout all the Earth, and their words to the end of the World*, Pſal. 19. 1, 2, 3, 4. Which declar'd God to be willing to do good to his Creatures, and were as ſo many legible Letters or Rudiments, whereby they might read his *Patience*, and that a further deſign of favour to the World lay hid in that *Patience*. *Paul* applies this to the Preaching of the Goſpel. *Rom.* 10.18. *Have they not heard the word of God? yes verily their ſound went into all the Earth, and their words unto the end of the World.* Redeeming Grace could not be ſpell'd out by them in a clear notion, but yet they did declare that which is the Foundation of Goſpel-Mercy. Were not God *patient* there were no room for a Goſpel-Mercy, ſo that the Heavens declare the Goſpel, *not formally* but *fundamentally* in declaring the *long-ſuffering* of God, without which no Goſpel had been fram'd, or could have been expected. They could not but read in thoſe things favourable inclinations towards them. And though they could not be ignorant, that they deſerved a mark of Juſtice, yet ſeeing themſelves ſupported by God, and beholding the regular motions of the Heavens from day to day, and the Revolutions of the ſeaſons of the year, the natural concluſion they might draw from thence was, that God was *placable*: Since he behav'd himſelf more as a tender Friend, that had no mind to be at War with them, than an enraged Enemy. The good things which he gave them, and the *Patience* whereby he ſpar'd them, were no arguments of an *implacable* diſpoſition: And therefore of a diſpoſition *willing to be appeaſed.* This is clearly the deſign of the *Apoſtles* arguing with the *Lyſtrians*, when they would have offered Sacrifices to *Paul*, *Act.* 14. 17. When *God ſuffered all Nations to walk in their own ways, he did not leave himſelf without witneſs, giving Rain from Heaven, and fruitful ſeaſons.* What were thoſe witneſſes of? Not only of the Being of a God, by their readineſs to ſacrifice to thoſe that were not Gods, only ſuppoſed to be ſo in their falſe imaginations; but witneſſes to the tenderneſs of God, that he had no mind to be ſevere with his Creatures: but would allure them by ways of Goodneſs. Had not Gods *patience* tended to this end, to bring the world under another diſpenſation, the *Apoſtles* arguing from it had not been ſutable to his deſign, which ſeems to be a hindring the ſacrifices they intended for them, and a drawing them to embrace the Goſpel, and therefore preparing the way to it, by ſpeaking of the *Patience* and Goodneſs of God to them, as an unqueſtionable teſtimony of the *Reconcilableneſs* of God to them, by ſome ſacrifice which was repreſented

* *Amyrald.* diſſert. pag. 191, 192.

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under the common notion of Sacrifices. These things were not Witnesses of Christ, or syllables whereby they could spell out the redeeming person; but Witnesses that God was *placable* in his own nature. When Man abused those noble Faculties God had given him, and diverted them from the use and service God intended them for, God might have stript Man of them, the first time that he mis-employed them; and it would have seemed most agreeable to his Wisdom, and Justice, not to suffer himself to be abused, and the World to go contrary to its natural end. But since he did not level the World with its first nothing, but healed the World so favourably, it was evident, that his *Patience* pointed the World to a further design of Mercy and Goodness in him. To imagine, that God had no other design in his long-suffering but that of Vengeance, had been a notion unsuitable to the Goodness and Wisdom of God. He would never have pretended himself to be a Friend, if he had harboured nothing but enmity in his heart against them.

It had been far from his Goodness, to give them a cause to suspect such a design in him, as his *Patience* certainly did, had he not intended it. Had he preserv'd Men only for punishment, 'tis more like, he would have treated Men, as Princes do those they reserve for the Axe, or Halter, give them only things necessary, to uphold their Lives till the day of Execution, and not have bestowed upon them so many good things, to make their Lives delightful to them; nor have furnisht them with so many excellent means to please their senses, and recreate their minds; it had been a mocking of them to treat them at that rate, if nothing but punishment had been intended towards them. If the end of it to *lead men to Repentance*, were easily intelligible by them, as the *Apostle* intimates. (*Rom.* 2. 4. Which is to be linkt with the former chapter, a discourse of the *Gentiles*. Not knowing, saith he, *that the riches of his forbearance and goodness leads thee to repentance.*) it also gives them some ground to hope for pardon. For what other argument can more induce to Repentance, than an expectation of Mercy upon a relenting and acknowledging the crime? Without a design of pardoning Grace, his *Patience* would have been in great measure exercis'd in vain: For by meer *Patience* God is not reconcil'd to a sinner, no more than a Prince to a Rebel by bearing with him. Nor can a sinner conclude himself in the favour of God; no more than a Rebel can conclude himself in the favour of his Prince; only this he may conclude, that there is some hopes he may have the grant of a Pardon, since he hath time to sue it out. And so much did the *Patience* of God naturally signify, that he was of a reconcileable temper, and was willing Men should sue out their pardon upon Repentance; otherwise he might have magnified his Justice, and condemned Men by the Law of Works.

2. *He therefore exercised so much patience to wait for mens Repentance.* All the notices and warnings that God gives Men of either publick or personal calamities, is a continual *invitation to Repentance*. This was the common interpretation the Heathens made of extraordinary Presages and Prodigies, which shew'd as well the delays as the approaches of Judgments. What other notion but this, that those *warnings of Judgments* witness a *slowness to Anger*, and a willingness to turn his Arrows another way, should move them to multiply Sacrifices, go weeping to their Temples, sound out Prayers to their Gods, and shew all those other Testimonies of a Repentance, which their blind Understandings hit upon. If a * Prince should sometimes in a light and gentle manner punish a criminal, and then relax it, and shew him much kindness, and afterwards inflict upon him another kind of punishment as light as the former, and less than was due to his crime, what could the Malefactor suspect by such a way of proceeding, but that the Prince by those gently repeated chastisements, had a mind to move him to a regret for his crime? And what other thoughts could Men naturally have of Gods conduct, that he should warn them of great Judgments, send light afflictions, which are Testimonies rather of a *Patience*, than of a severe wrath, but that it was intended to move them to a relenting, and a breaking off their sins by

* *Amyraldus* moral. Tom. p. 186.

working Righteouſneſs? Though *Divine patience* doth not in the event, induce Men to Repentance, yet the natural tendency of ſuch a treatment, is to mollify Mens Hearts, to overcome their obſtinacy, and no man hath any reaſon to judge otherwiſe of ſuch a proceeding. The *long ſuffering of God is Salvation*, ſaith *Peter*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 15. i. e. hath a tendency to Salvation, in its being a ſollicitation of Men to the means of it: For the *Apoſtle* cites *Paul* for the confirmation of it, *Even as our beloved Brother* Paul *hath written unto you*, which muſt refer to *Rom.* 2. 4. *It leads to Repentance*, Ἄγει, it conducts, which is more than barely to invite; it doth as it were take us by the hand, and point us to the way wherein we ſhould go, and for this end it was exerciſed not only towards the *Jews* but towards the *Gentiles*, not only towards thoſe that are within the pale of the Church, and under the dews of the Goſpel, but to thoſe that are in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death: For this diſcourſe of the *Apoſtle* was but an inference from what he had treated of in the *Firſt chapter* concerning the Idolatry and ingratitude of the *Gentiles*; ſince the *Gentiles* were to be puniſhed for the *abuſe* of it as well as the *Jews*, as he intimates, *ver.* 9. 'tis plain that his *patience* which is exerciſed towards the Idolatrous *Gentiles*, was to *allure them to Repentance* as well as others; and it was a ſufficient motive in it ſelf to perſwade them to a change of their vile and groſs acts, to ſuch as were morally good. And there was enough in God's dealing with them, and in that light they had to engage them to a better courſe, than what they uſally walked in. And though Men do abuſe Gods *long-ſuffering*, to encourage their impenitence, and perſiſting in their crimes, yet that they cannot reaſonably imagine that to be the end of God, is evident; their own gripes of Conſcience would acquaint them, that it is otherwiſe. They know that Conſcience is a principle that God hath given them as well as Underſtanding, and Will and other Faculties. That God doth not approve of that, which the voice of their *own Conſciences*, and of the *Conſciences of all* men under natural light, are utterly againſt. And if there were really in this *forbearance* of God an approbation of Mens crimes, Conſcience could not frequently and univerſally in all Men check them for them. What Authority could *Conſcience* have to do it? But this it doth in all Men. As the *Apoſtle*, *Rom.* 1. 22. *They know the judgment of God, that thoſe that do ſuch things*, which he had mentioned before, *are worthy of death.* In this thing the Conſciences of all men cannot err: They could not therefore conclude from hence Gods approbation of their iniquities, but his deſire that their Hearts ſhould be touched with a *Repentance* for them.

The *Sin of Ephraim is hid*, *Hoſea* 13. 12, 13. i. e. God doth not preſently take notice of it, to order puniſhment; he lays it in a ſecret place from the Eye of his Juſtice, that *Ephraim* might not be his unwiſe Son, and *ſtay long in the place of breaking forth of Children*, i. e. That he ſhould ſpeedily reclaim himſelf and not continue in the way of deſtruction. God hath no need to abuſe any, he doth not lie to the Sons of Men, if he would have Men periſh, he could eaſily deſtroy them, and have done it long ago. He did not leave the woman *Jezabel* in being, nor lengthened out her time, but as a ſpace to *Repent*. *Revelations* 2. 21. That ſhe might reflect upon her ways, and devote her ſelf ſeriouſly to his ſervice, and her own happineſs. His *patience* ſtands between the offending Creature and Eternal miſery a long time, that Men might not fooliſhly throw away their Souls, and be damned for their impenitency; by this he ſhews himſelf ready to receive Men to mercy upon their return. To what purpoſe doth he invite Men to *Repentance*, if he intended to receive them, and damn them after they Repent?

3. *He doth exerciſe Patience for the propagation of Mankind.* If God puniſhed every ſin *preſently*, there would not only be a period put to Churches, but to the World; without *Patience Adam* had ſunk into Eternal anguiſh the firſt moment of his provocation; and the whole World of Mankind in his Loins, had periſhed with him, and never ſeen the light. If this perfection had not interpoſed

poſed after the firſt ſin, God had loſt his end in the Creation of the World, which he *Created not in vain, but formed it to be inhabited, Iſai.* 45. 18. It had been inconſiſtent with the wiſdom of God to make a World to be inhabited, and deſtroy it upon ſin, when it had but two principal Inhabitants in it; the reaſon of his making this Earth had been inſignificant; He had not had any upon Earth to Glorify him, without erecting another World, which might have proved as ſinful, and as quickly wicked as this; God ſhould have always been pulling down, and rearing up, creating and annihilating, one World would have come after another, as Wave after Wave in the Sea. His *Patience* ſtept in to ſupport the honour of God, and the *continuance* of Men, without which one had been in part impaired, and the other totally loſt.

4. *He doth exerciſe Patience for the continuance of the Church.* If he be not *patient* toward Sinners, what ſtock would there be for Believers to ſpring up from? He bears with the provoking carriage of Men, evil Men; becauſe out of their Loins he intends to extract others, which he will form for the Glory of his Grace. He hath ſome unborn, that belong to the *election of Grace, which* are to be the ſeed of the worſt of men; *Jeroboam* the chief incendiary of the *Iſraelites* to Idolatry, had an *Abijah*, in whom was found *ſome good thing towards the Lord God of Iſrael*, 1 *King* 14. 13. Had *Ahaz* been ſnapt in the firſt act of his wickedneſs, the *Iſraelites* had wanted ſo good a Prince, and ſo good a man as *Hezekiah*, a branch of that wicked predeceſſor. What Gardiner cuts off the thorns from the Roſe-buſh, till he hath gathered the Roſes? And Men do not uſe to burn all the Crab-tree, but preſerve a Stock, to engraft ſome ſweet fruit upon. There could not have been a Saint in the Earth, nor conſequently in Heaven, had it not been for this perfection. He did not deſtroy the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs, that he might keep up a Church among them, and not extinguiſh the whole Seed that were heirs of the Promiſes and Covenant made with *Abraham*. Had God puniſhed Men for their ſins as ſoon as they had been committed, none would have lived to have been better, none could have continued in the World to honour him by their Virtues? *Manaſſeh* had never been a Convert, and many brutiſh men had never been changed from Beaſts to Angels, to praiſe and acknowledge their Creator. Had *Peter* received his due recompence upon the denial of his Maſter, he had never been a Martyr for him; Nor had *Paul* been a Preacher of the Goſpel, nor any elſe: and ſo the Goſpel had not ſhined in any part of the world. No Seed would have been brought into Chriſt, Chriſt is beholding immediately to this attribute, for all the Seed he hath in the World; 'Tis for his *Name ſake* that he doth *defer* his *Anger*, and for his *praiſe*, that he doth refrain from *cutting us off*, *Iſaiah* 48. 9. And in the next *chapter* follows a Propheſie of Chriſt. To overthrow Mankind for Sin, were to prevent the ſpreading a *Church* in the world. A Woman that is guilty of a Capital Crime, and lies under a condemning ſentence, is reprieved from Execution, for her being with Child: 'Tis for the Child's ſake the Woman is reſpited, not for her own; 'Tis for the *Elects ſake* in the Loins of Tranſgreſſors, that they are a *long time* ſpared, and not for their own. *Iſai.* 65. 8, 9. *As the new Wine is found in the cluſter, and one ſaith, deſtroy it not for a bleſſing is in it; ſo will I do for my Servants ſake, that I may not deſtroy them all: as a Husbandman ſpares a Vine for ſome good cluſters in it.* He had ſpoke of Vengeance before, yet he would reſerve ſome, from whom he would bring forth thoſe, that ſhould be *inheritors of his Mountains*: that he might make up his Church of *Judea*, *Jeruſalem* being a Mountainous place, and the type of the Church in all Ages. What is the reaſon he doth not level his Thunder at the heads of thoſe, for whoſe deſtruction he receives ſo many Petitions from the *Souls under the Altar*, *Rev.* 6. 9, 10. Becauſe God had others to write a Teſtimony for him in their own Blood, and perhaps out of the Loins of thoſe for whom vengeance was ſo earneſtly ſupplicated; * And God as the Maſter of a Veſſel, lies *Patiently* at Anchor, till the laſt Paſſenger he expects, be taken in.

* *Smith* on Creed, p. 404.

5. *For the ſake of his Church he is patient to wicked men.* The Tares are *Patiently*

ently endured till the Harveſt, for fear in the plucking up the one, there might be ſome prejudice done to the other. Upon this account he ſpares ſome, who are worſe than others, whom he cruſheth by ſignal judgments; The *Jews* had committed ſins worſe than *Sodom*, for the confirmation of which we have God's Oath, *Ezek.* 16. 48. and more by half than *Samaria*, or the Ten Tribes had done, *ver.* 51. Yet God ſpared the *Jews*, though he deſtroyed the *Sodomites*. What was the reaſon, but a large remnant of Righteous perſons, *more cluſters* of good Grapes were found among them, than grew in *Sodom*, *Iſai.* 1 9. A few more Righteous in *Sodom* had dampt the Fire and Brimſtone deſign'd for that place; And a *remnant of ſuch in Judea* was a bar to that fierceneſs of anger, which otherwiſe would have quickly conſumed them. Had there been but *Ten Righteous in Sodom*, *Divine Patience* had ſtill bound the Arms of Juſtice, that it ſhould not have prepared its Brimſtone, notwithſtanding the clamour of the ſins of the multitude. *Judea* was ripe for the Sickle, but God would put a lock upon the torrent of his Judgments, that they ſhould not flow down upon that wicked place, to make them a deſolation and a curſe, as long as tender-hearted *Joſiah* lived, *who had humbled himſelf* at the threatning, and wept before the Lord; 1 *King.* 22. 19, 20. Sometimes he bears with wicked Men, that they might exerciſe the *Patience* of the Saints. *Rev.* 14. 12. The whole time of the *forbearance of Antichriſt* in all his intruſions into the Temple of God, invaſions of the Rights of God, uſurpations of the Office of Chriſt, and beſmearing himſelf with the Blood of the Saints, was to give them an opportunity of *Patience*. God is *Patient* towards the wicked, that by their means he might try the Righteous. He burns not the wiſp, till he hath ſcoured his Veſſels; Nor lays by the Hammer till he hath formed ſome of his matter into an excellent faſhion. He uſeth the worſt Men as Rods to correct his People, before he ſweeps the twigs out of his houſe. God ſometimes uſes the thorns of the World, as a hedge to ſecure his Church, ſometimes as inſtruments to try, and exerciſe it. Howſoever he uſeth them, whither for ſecurity or trial, he is *Patient* to them for his Churches advantage.

6. When Men are not brought to Repentance by his *Patience*, *he doth longer exerciſe it to manifeſt the equity of his future juſtice upon them.* As *Wiſdom is juſtified* by her obedient Children, ſo is Juſtice juſtified by the Rebels againſt *Patience*, the contempt of the later is the juſtification of the former. The *Apoſtles were unto God a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt in them that periſh*, as well as in them that were ſaved by the acceptation of their meſſage, 2 *Cor.* 2. 15. Both are fragrant to God, his *Mercy* is Glorified by the ones acceptance of it, and his *Juſtice* freed from any charge againſt it by the others refuſal. The cauſe of Mens ruine cannot be laid upon God, who provided means for their Salvation, and ſollicited their complyance with him. What reaſon can they have to charge the Judge with any wrong to them, who reject the tenders he makes, and who hath forborn them with ſo much *Patience*, when he might have cenſured them by his Righteous Juſtice, upon the firſt crime they committed, or the firſt refuſal of his gracious offers? *Quanto Dei magis judicium tardum eſt tanto magis juſtum* * After the deſpiſing of *Patience*, there can be no ſuſpition of an irregularity in the acts of Juſtice. Man hath no reaſon to fall foul in his charge upon God, if he were puniſhed for his own ſin, conſidering the dignity of the injured perſon, and the meanneſs of himſelf the offender; But his wrath is more juſtified, when it is poured out upon thoſe whom he hath endured with much long-ſuffering. There is no plea againſt the ſhooting of his Arrows into thoſe, for whom this voice hath been loud, and his Arms open for their return. As *Patience* while it is exerciſed, is the ſilence of his juſtice, ſo when it is abuſed, it ſilenceth Mens complaints againſt his juſtice. The *riches of his forbearance* made way for the manifeſting the *treaſures of his wrath*. If God did but a little bear with the inſolencies of Men, and cut them off after two or three ſins, he would not have opportunity to ſhew either the *power of his Patience*, or that of his wrath; But when he hath a right to puniſh for one ſin, and yet bears with them for many, and they will not be reclaimed, the ſinner is more inexcuſable, Divine Juſtice leſs chargeable, and his *wrath more powerful*, Rom. 9. 22.

* *Minuc.* Felix pag. 41.

22. *What if God willing to ſhew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-ſuffering, the veſſels of wrath fitted for deſtruction?* The proper and immediate end of his *long-ſuffering*, is to lead Men to Repentance, but after they have by their obſtinacy, fitted themſelves for deſtruction, he bears *longer* with them, to *magnify his wrath* more upon them, and if it is not the *finis operantis*, 'tis at leaſt the *finis operis*, where *Patience* is abuſed. Men are apt to complain of God, that he deals hardly with them; The *Iſraelites* ſeem to charge God with too much ſeverity, to caſt them off, when ſo many promiſes were made to the Fathers for their perpetuity and preſervation, which is intimated, *Hoſ.* 2. 2. *Plead with your Mother, plead*; by the double repetition of the Word *plead*; Do not accuſe me of being falſe, or too rigorous, but accuſe your Mother, your Church, your Magiſtracy, your Miniſtry, for their ſpiritual fornications which have provoked me; For their זנותיה intimating the greatneſs of their ſins by the reduplication of the Word; *leſt I ſtrip her naked.* I have born with her under many provocations, and I have not yet taken away all her Ornaments, or ſaid to her according to the rule of Divorce, *res tuas tibi habeto.* God anſwers their impudent charge, *She is not my Wife, nor am I her Husband*: He doth not ſay firſt, I am not her Husband, but ſhe is not my Wife; *She firſt* withdrew from her duty, by breaking the Marriage-Covenant, and then I ceaſed to be her Husband. No man ſhall be condemned, but he ſhall be convinced of the due deſert of his Sin, and the juſtice of God's proceeding. God will lay open Mens guilt, and repeat the meaſures of his *Patience*, to juſtifie the ſeverity of his wrath, *Hoſ.* 7. 10. *Sins will teſtify to their face.* What is in its own nature a preparation for Glory, Men by their obſtinacy make a preparation for a more indiſputable puniſhment. We ſee many evidences of God's *forbearance* here, in ſparing Men under thoſe Blaſphemies which are audible, and thoſe prophane carriages which are viſible, which would ſufficiently juſtify an act of ſeverity; Yet when Mens ſecret ſins both in heart and action, and the vaſt multitude of them, far ſurmounting what can arrive to our knowledge here, ſhall be diſcovered, how great a luſtre will it add to God's bearing with them, and make his juſtice triumph without any reaſonable demurr from the ſinner himſelf! He is *long-ſuffering* here, that his juſtice may be more publick hereafter.

IV. *The USE.*

I. For *Inſtruction.*

1. How is this *Patience of God abuſed!* The *Gentiles* abuſed thoſe Teſtimonies of it, which were written in ſhowers, and fruitful ſeaſons. No Nation was ever ſtript of it, under the moſt provoking Idolatries till after multiplyed ſpurns at it. Not a perſon among us but hath been guilty of the abuſe of it. How have we contemned that which demands a reverence from us? How have we requited God's waitings with rebellions, while he hath continued urging and expecting our return? *Saul* relented at *David*'s forbearing to revenge himſelf, when he had his proſecuting and induſtrious enemy in his power. 1 *Sam.* 24. 17. *Thou art more Righteous than I, thou haſt rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.* And ſhall we not relent at God's wonderful *long-ſuffering*, and ſilencing his anger ſo much? He could puff away our Lives, but he will not, and yet we endeavour to ſtrip him of his Being, though we cannot.

1. *Let us conſider the ways, how ſlowneſs to anger is abuſed.*

1. 'Tis *abuſed by miſ-interpretations* of it, when Men ſlander his *Patience*, to be only a careleſneſs, and neglect of his Providence; As *Averroes* argued from his ſlowneſs to anger, a total neglect of the Government of the lower World. Or when men from his *long-ſuffering* charge him with impurity, as if his *Patience* were a conſent to their crimes; and becauſe he ſuffered them, without calling them to account, he were one of their partizans, and as *wicked as themſelves*, *Pſal.* 50. 21. *Becauſe I kept ſilence, thou thoughteſt I was altogether ſuch a one as thy ſelf.* His ſilence makes them conclude him to be an abettor of, and a conſort in their ſins;

And

And think him more pleaſed with their iniquity, than their obedience. Or when they will inferr from his *forbearnce* a want of his Omniſcience: Becauſe he ſuffers their ſins, they imagine he forgets them. *Pſal.* 10. 11. *He hath ſaid in his Heart God hath forgotten.* Thinking his *Patience* proceeds not from the ſweetneſs of his nature, but a weakneſs of his mind. How baſe is it inſtead of admiring him, to diſparage him for it; and becauſe he ſtands in ſo advantageous a poſture towards us, not to own the choiceſt prerogatives of his Deity? This is to make a perfection ſo uſeful to us, to ſhadow, and extinguiſh thoſe others, which are the prime flowers of his Crown.

2. *His Patience is abuſed, by continuing in a courſe of Sin under the influences of it.* How much is it the practical language of Men, Come let us commit this, or that iniquity, ſince *Divine Patience* hath ſuffered worſe than this at our hands? Nothing is remitted to their ſenſual pleaſures and eagerneſs in them. How often did the *Iſraelites* repeat their murmurings againſt him, as if they would put his *Patience* to the utmoſt proof, and ſee how far the line of it could extend? They were no ſooner ſatisfied in one thing, but they quarrelled with him about another, as if he had no other attribute to put in motion againſt them. They tempted him, as often as he relieved them, as though the declaration of his name to *Moſes*, 34 *of Exod. To be a God Gracious and Long-ſuffering*, had been intended for no other purpoſe but a protection of them in their Rebellions. Such a ſort of Men the Prophet ſpeaks of, that were *ſetled in their Lees*, or dregs. *Zeph.* 1. 12. They were congeal'd and frozen in their ſucceſsful wickedneſs; ſuch an abuſe of *Divine patience* is the very dregs of ſin; God chargeth it highly upon the *Jews*, *Iſaiah* 57. 11. *I have held my peace, even of old, and thou feareſt me not*, my ſilence made thee confident, yea impudent in thy ſin.

3. *His patience is abuſed, by repeating ſin, after God hath, by an act of his patience, taken off ſome affliction from Men.* As Metals melted in the fire remain fluid under the operations of the flames, yet when removed from the Fire, they quickly return to their former hardneſs, and ſometimes grow harder than they were before. So Men who in their afflictions ſeem to be melted, like *Ahab* confeſs their ſins, lye proſtrate before God, and ſeek him early, yet if they be brought from under the power of their afflictions, they return to their old nature, and are as ſtiff againſt God, and reſiſt the blows of the Spirit, as much as they did before. They think they have a new ſtock of patience, to ſin upon. *Pharaoh* was ſomewhat thaw'd under judgments, and frozen again under *forbearance*, *Exod.* 9. 27. 34. Many will howl when God ſtrikes them, and laugh at him when he *forbears* them. Thus that *patience* which ſhould *melt* us, doth often *harden* us, which is not an effect natural to his *patience*, but natural to our abuſing corruption.

4. *His Patience is abus'd, by taking encouragement from it, to mount to greater degrees of Sin.* Becauſe God is *ſlow to Anger*, Men are more fierce in Sin, and not only continue in their old Rebellions, but heap new upon them. If he ſpare them for *three tranſgreſſions* they will commit *four*, as is intimated in the *firſt and ſecond of Amos*; *Mens hearts are fully ſet in them to do evil, becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not ſpeedily executed*, *Eccleſ.* 8. 11. Their Hearts are more deſperately bent; before they had ſome waverings, and pull-backs, but after a fair Sun-ſhine of *Divine patience*, they entertain more unbridled reſolutions, and paſs forward with more liberty and licentiouſneſs. They make his *long-ſuffering* ſubſervient to turn out all thoſe little relentings, and regrets they had before, and baniſh all thoughts of barring out a Temptation. No encouragement is given to Men by *God's patience*, but they force it by their preſumption. They invert Gods order, and bind themſelves ſtronger to iniquity by that which ſhould bind them faſter to their duty. A happy eſcape at Sea makes Men go more confidently into the deeps afterward. Thus we deal with God, as Debtors do with good natur'd Creditors: Becauſe they do not Dunn them for what they owe, they take encouragement to run more upon the ſcore, till their ſum amounts above their ability of payment.

But

But let it be *conſidered*,

1. *That this abuſe of Patience is a high Sin.* As every act of *forbearance* obligeth us to duty, ſo every act of it abuſed, encreaſeth our guilt. The more frequent its ſollicitations of us have been, the deeper aggravations our ſin receives by it. Every Sin, after an act of *Divine Patience*, contracts a blacker guilt. The ſparing us after the laſt ſin we committed, was a ſuperadded act of *long-ſuffering*, and a laying out more of his riches upon us: And therefore every new act committed, is a deſpite againſt greater riches expended, and greater coſt upon us, and againſt his preſerving us from the hand of Juſtice for the laſt tranſgreſſion. 'Tis diſ-ingenuous not to have a due reſentment of ſo much Goodneſs, and baſe to injure him the more, becauſe he doth not right himſelf. Shall he receive the more wrongs from us, by how much the ſweeter he is to us? No Mans Conſcience but will tell him, 'tis vile to prefer the ſatisfaction of a ſordid Luſt, before the Councel of a God of ſo gracious a diſpoſition. The ſweeter the nature, the fouler is the Injury that is done unto it.

2. *'Tis dangerous to abuſe his patience.* Contempt of kindneſs is moſt irkſom to an ingenuous ſpirit, and he is worthy to have the arrows of Gods indignation lodg'd in his heart, who *deſpiſeth the riches of his long-ſuffering*. For,

1. *The time of patience will have an end.* Though his Spirit ſtrives with Man, yet it ſhall *not always ſtrive*, Gen. 6. 3. Though there be a time wherein *Jeruſalem* might *know the things that concerned her peace*, yet there is another period wherein they ſhould be *hid from her eyes*, Luke 19. 43. *Oh that thou hadſt known in this thy day?* Nations have their Day, and Perſons have their Day, and the Day of moſt Perſons is ſhorter than the Day of Nations. *Jeruſalem* had her Day of *forty years*, but how many particular Perſons were taken off, before the laſt or middle hours of that Day were arriv'd? *Forty years was God griev'd* with the Generation of the *Iſraelites*, Heb. 3. 11. One Carcaſs dropt after another in that limited time, and at the end not a man but fell under the Judicial Stroke, except *Caleb* and *Joſhua*. *One hundred and twenty years* was the Term ſet to the maſs of the old World, but not to every Man in the old World; ſome fell while the *Ark* was preparing, as well as the whole Stock when the Ark was compleated. Though he be *patient* with moſt, yet he is not in the ſame degree with all; every ſinner hath his time of ſinning, beyond which he ſhall proceed no further, be his Luſts never ſo impetuous, and his affections never ſo imperious. The *time of his patience* is in Scripture ſet forth ſometimes by *years*; *three years* he came to find fruit on the Fig-tree; ſometimes by *days*, ſome Mens ſins are ſooner ripe, and fall. There is a *meaſure* of ſin, *Jer.* 51. 13. Which is ſet forth by the *Ephah*, *Zach.* 5. 8. Which when it is fill'd, is *ſeal'd* up, and a weight of Lead caſt upon the mouth of it. When Judgments are preparing, once and twice the Lord is prevail'd with by the Interceſsion of the Prophet. The prepar'd *Graſhoppers* are not ſent to devour, and the *kindled Fire* is not blown up to conſume, *Amos* 7. from *ver.* 1. to *ver.* 8. But at laſt God takes the *plumb-line*, to ſute and meaſure puniſhment to their Sin, and would not paſs by them any more, and when their ſin was ripe, repreſented by a *basket of Summer-fruit*, God would withhold his hand no longer, but brought ſuch a day upon them, wherein the *ſongs of the Temple ſhould be howlings, and dead bodies be in every place*, Amos 8. 2, 3. He lays by any further thoughts of *patience* to ſpeed their ruine. God had born *long* with the *Iſraelites*, and long it was before he gave them up. He would firſt break the *bow in Jezreel*, Hoſ. 1. 5. take away the ſtrength of the Nation by the death of *Zathariah*, the laſt of *Jehu*'s race, which introduc'd Civil Diſſentions and ambitious Murders for the Throne, whereby in weakning one part, they weakned the whole; or as ſome think, alluding to *Tiglah Pilezar*, who carried Captive two Tribes and a half. If this would not reclaim them, then follows *Loruhamah*, *I will not have mercy*, I will ſweep them out of the Land, *verſe* 6. If they did not Repent they ſhould be *Loammi*, *verſe* 9. *You are not my people*, and *I will not be your God*. They ſhould be diſcovenanted, and ſtript of all federal Relation.

Here *Patience* for ever withdrew from them, and wrathful anger took its place. And for particular Perſons, the time of life, whither ſhorter or longer, is the only time of *long-ſuffering*. It hath no other ſtage, than the preſent ſtate of things to act upon. There is none elſe to be expected after, but giving account of what hath been done in the Body, not of any thing done after the Soul is fled from the Body. The *time of patience* ends with the firſt moment of the Souls departure from the Body. This time only is the *day of Salvation*, i.e. The day wherein God offers it, and the day wherein God waits for our acceptance of it. 'Tis at his pleaſure to ſhorten or lengthen our day, not at ours. 'Tis not our long ſuffering, but his, he hath the command of it.

2. *God hath wrath to puniſh, as well as patience to bear.* He hath a fury to revenge the outrages done to his meekneſs, when his Meſſages of peace ſent to reclaim Men are ſlighted, his Sword ſhall be whetted, and his Inſtruments of War prepar'd, Hoſ. 5. 8. *Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah.* As he deals gently like a Father, ſo he can puniſh capitally as a Judge. Though he holds his peace for a long time, yet at laſt he will go forth like a mighty Man, and ſtir up jealouſie as a Man of War, to cut in pieces his Enemies. 'Tis not ſaid, he hath no anger, but that he is *ſlow to anger*, but ſharp in it. He hath a *Sword* to cut, and a *Bow* to ſhoot, and *Arrows* to pierce, *Pſal.* 12. 13. Though he be long a drawing the one out of its Scabbard, and long a fitting the other to his Bow, yet when they are ready, he ſtrikes home and hits the mark. Though he hath a *time of patience*, yet he hath alſo a *day of rebuke*, Hoſ. 5. 9. Though *patience* overrules Juſtice by ſuſpending it, yet Juſtice will at laſt over-rule *patience* by an utter ſilencing it. God is Judge of the whole Earth to right Men, yet he is no leſs Judge of the Injuries he receives to right himſelf. Though God a while was preſſed with the murmurings of the *Iſraelites*, after their coming out of *Egypt*, and ſeemed deſirous to give them all ſatisfaction upon their unworthy complaints, yet when they came to open hoſtility, in ſetting a *Golden Calf* in his Throne, he commiſſions the *Levites*, *to kill every man his brother and companion in the camp*, Exod. 32. 27. And how deſirous ſoever he was to content them before, they never murmured afterwards, but they ſeverely ſmarted for it. When once he hath begun to uſe his Sword, he ſticks it up naked, that it might be ready for uſe upon every occaſion. Though he hath feet of Lead, yet he hath hands of Iron. It was long that he ſupported the pieviſhneſs of the *Jews*, but at laſt he captiv'd them by the arms of the *Babylonians*, and laid them waſt by the power of the *Romans*. He planted by the *Apoſtles* Churches in the Eaſt, and when his Goodneſs and *Long-ſuffering* prevail'd not with them, he tore them up by the roots. What Chriſtians are to be found in thoſe once famous parts of *Aſia*, but what are overgrown with much Error and Ignorance?

3. The *more his patience is abus'd, the ſharper will be the wrath he inflicts.* As his wrath reſtrained, makes his *patience long*; ſo his compaſſions reſtrained, will make his *wrath ſevere*. As he doth tranſcend all Creatures in the meaſures of the one, ſo he tranſcends all Creatures in the ſharpneſs of the other. Chriſt is deſcrib'd with *feet of braſs*, as if they burn'd in a Furnace, *Rev.* 1. 15. ſlow to move, but heavy to cruſh, and hot to burn. His wrath loſeth nothing by delay; it grows the freſher by ſleeping, and ſtrikes with greater ſtrength when it awakes. All the time Men are abuſing his *patience*, God is whetting his Sword, and the longer it is whetting, the ſharper will be the edge. The longer he is fetching his blow, the ſharper it will be. The heavier the Canons are, the more difficultly are they drawn to the beſieged Town, but when arriv'd, they recompence the ſlowneſs of their march by the fierceneſs of their Battery. *Becauſe I have purged thee, i. e.* uſed means for thy reformation, and waited for it, *and thou waſt not purg'd, thou ſhalt not be purg'd from thy filthineſs any more, till I have cauſed my fury to reſt upon thee. I will not go back, neither will I ſpare, according to thy ways, and according to thy doings ſhall they judge thee*, Ezek. 24. 13, 14. God will ſpare as little then, as he ſpar'd much before. His *wrath* ſhall be as raging upon them, as the Sea of their wicked-

wickedneſs was within them. When there is a bank to forbid the irruption of the ſtreams, the Waters ſwell, but when the Bank is broke, or the Lock taken away, they ruſh with the greater violence, and ravage more than they would have done, had they not met with a ſtop. The longer a Stone is a falling, the more it bruiſeth, and grinds to powder. There is a greater treaſure of Wrath laid up by the *abuſes of patience*. Every ſin muſt have a juſt *recompence of reward*; and therefore every ſin, in regard of its aggravations muſt be more puniſhed, than a ſi[illegible] in the ſingleneſs and ſimplicity of its own nature. As treaſures of mercy are kept by God for us, *he keeps mercy for thouſands*, ſo are treaſures of wrath kept by him, to be expended; and a time of expence there muſt be, *Patience* will account to Juſtice all the good offices it hath done the ſinner, and demand to be righted by Juſtice. Juſtice will take the account from the hands of *Patience*, and exact a recompence for every diſingenuous injury offered to it. When Juſtice comes to arreſt men for their debts, *Patience*, Mercy and Goodneſs will ſtep in as Creditors, and clap their Actions upon them, which will make the condition ſo much more deplorable.

4. *When he puts an end to his abus'd patience, his wrath will make quick, and ſure work.* He that is *ſlow to anger*, will be *ſwift* in the execution of it. The departure of God from *Jeruſalem*, is deſcribed with *wings* and *wheels*, Ezek. 11. 23. One ſtroke of his hand is irreſiſtible, he that hath ſpent ſo much time in waiting, needs but one minute to ruine; though it be long ere he draws his Sword out of his ſcabbard, yet when once he doth it, he diſpatcheth Men at a blow. *Ephraim*, or the Ten *Tribes*, had a *long time of patience* and proſperity, but now ſhall a *month devour him with his portion*, Hoſea 5. 7. One fatal month puts a period to the many years peace and ſecurity of a ſinful Nation. His arrows wound *ſuddenly*, Pſal. 64. 7. And while men are about to fill their Bellies, he caſts the fruits of his wrath upon them, *Job* 20. 23. Like thunder out of a Cloud, or a Bullet out of a Cannon, that ſtrikes dead before it is heard. God deals with ſinners, as Enemies do with a Town, batter it not by planted Guns, but ſecretly undermines, and blows up the Walls, whereby they involve the Garriſon in a ſuddain ruine, and carry the Town. God ſpar'd the *Amalekites* a long time after the Injury committed againſt the *Iſraelites* in their paſſage out of *Egypt* to *Canaan*, but when he came to reckon with them, he would waſte them in a trice, and make an *utter conſumption* of them, 1 *Sam.* 15. 2, 3. He deſcribes himſelf by a *travelling woman*, Iſaiah 42. 14. That hath born long in her Womb, and at laſt ſends forth her Birth with ſtrong cries. Though he hath held his peace, been ſtill and refrained himſelf, yet at laſt, he will deſtroy and devour at *once*. The *Ninivites* ſpar'd in the time of *Jonah* for their Repentance, are in Nature threatned with a certain and total ruine; when God ſhould come to bring them to an account for his *length and patience*, ſo much abus'd by them. Though God endur'd the murmuring *Iſraelites* ſo long in the Wilderneſs, yet he paid them off at laſt, and took away the Rebels in his Wrath. He uttered their ſentence with an irreverſible Oath, that *none of them ſhould enter into his reſt*, and he did as ſurely execute it, as he had ſolemnly ſworn it.

5. *Though he doth defer his viſible wrath, yet that very delay may be more dreadful than a quick puniſhment.* He may forbear ſtriking, and give the Reins to the hardneſs and corruption of Mens hearts. He may ſuffer them to walk in their own Counſels, without any more ſtriving with them, whereby they make themſelves fitter fuel for his vengeance. This was the fate of *Iſrael*, when they would not hearken to his voice, he *gave them up to their own hearts luſts, and they walked in their own counſels*, Pſal. 81. 12. Though his ſparing them had the outward aſpect of *Patience*, it was a wrathful one, and attended with Spiritual Judgments: Thus many *abuſers of patience* may ſtill have their line lengthned, and the Candle of proſperity to ſhine upon their heads, that they may encreaſe their ſins, and be the fitter mark at laſt for his Arrows. They ſwim down the ſtream of their own ſenſuality with a deplorable ſecurity, till they fall into an unavoid-

able gulf, where at laſt it will be a great part of their Hell, to reflect on the length of *divine patience* on Earth, and their inexcuſable abuſe of it.

2. *It informs us of the reaſon, why he lets the Enemies of his Church oppreſs it, and defers his promiſe of the deliverance of it.* If he did puniſh them preſently, his Holineſs and Juſtice would be glorified, but his Power over himſelf in his *Patience* would be obſcured. Well may the Church be content, to have a perfection of God glorified, that is not like to receive any honor in another World by any exerciſe of it ſelf. If it were not for this *Patience*, he were uncapable to be the Governor of a ſinful World; he might without it be the Governor of an innocent World, but not of a criminal one; he would be the deſtroyer of the World, but not the orderer and diſpoſer of the extravagancies and ſinfulneſs of the World. The intereſt of his Wiſdom in drawing good out of evil, would not be ſerved, if he were not clothed with this perfection as well as with others. If he did preſently deſtroy the Enemies of his Church upon the firſt oppreſſion, his Wiſdom in contriving, and his Power in accompliſhing deliverance againſt the united powers of Hell and Earth, would not be viſible, no nor that power in preſerving his people unconſumed in the furnace of Affliction. He had not got ſo great a name in the reſcue of his *Iſrael* from *Pharaoh*, had he thundered the Tyrant into deſtruction upon his firſt Edicts againſt the innocent. If he were not *patient* to the moſt violent of men, he might ſeem to be cruel. But when he offers peace to them under their rebellions, waits that they may be members of his Church, rather than Enemies to it; he frees himſelf from any ſuch imputation, even in the judgment of thoſe that ſhall feel moſt of his wrath; 'tis this renders the equity of his Juſtice unqueſtionable, and the deliverance of his people righteous in the Judgment of thoſe from whoſe fetters they are delivered. *Chriſt Reigns in the midſt of his enemies*, to ſhew his power over himſelf, as well as over the heads of his Enemies, to ſhew his power over his Rebels. And though he retards his promiſe, and ſuffers a great interval of time between the publication and performance, ſometimes *years*, ſometimes *ages* to paſs away, and little appearance of any preparation, to ſhew himſelf a God of Truth; 'Tis not that he hath forgotten his Word, or repents that ever he paſſed it, or ſleeps in a ſupine neglect of it: but that men might not periſh, but bethink themſelves, and come as friends into his boſome, rather than be cruſh'd as enemies under his feet, 2 Pet. 3. 9. *The Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe, but is long-ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to Repentance.* Hereby he ſhews, that he would be rather pleaſed with the converſion, than the deſtruction of men.

3. *We ſee the reaſon, why ſin is ſuffered to remain in the Regenerate*; To ſhew his *Patience* towards his own; for ſince this attribute hath no other place of appearance but in this World, God takes opportunity to manifeſt it: becauſe at the cloſe of the World, it will remain cloſed up in the Deity, without any further operation. As God ſuffers a multitude of ſins in the World, to evidence his *Patience* to the wicked, ſo he ſuffers great remainders of ſin in his people, to ſhew his *Patience* to the Godly. His ſparing mercy is admirable, before their converſion, but more admirable in bearing with them after ſo high an Obligation, as the conferring upon them ſpecial converting Grace.

2. *The ſecond Uſe is of comfort.* 'Tis a vaſt *comfort* to any, when God is pacified towards them; but it is ſome comfort to all, that God is yet *Patient* towards them, though but very little to a refractory ſinner. His *continued Patience* to all, ſpeaks a poſſibility of the cure of all, would they not ſtand againſt the way of their recovery. 'Tis a Terror that God hath Anger, but it is a mitigation of that Terror, that God is *ſlow* to it; While his Sword is in his ſheath, there is ſome hopes to prevent the drawing of it; Alas, if he were all fire and ſword upon ſin, what would become of us? We ſhould find nothing elſe but overflowing Deluges, or ſweeping Peſtilences, or perpetual flaſhes of *Sodom*'s Fire and Brimſtone from Heaven. He dooms us not preſently to Execution,

but

but gives us a long breathing time after the Crime, that by retiring from our Iniquities, and having recourſe to his Mercy, he may be with-held for ever from ſigning a Warrant againſt us, and change his Legal Sentence into an Evangelical Pardon. 'Tis a ſpecial *comfort* to his people, that he is a *Sanctuary to them*, Ezek. 11. 16. A place of refuge, a place of Spiritual Communications; But it is ſome refreſhment to all in this Life, that he is a defence to them: for ſo is his *Patience* call'd. *Numb.* 14. 9. *Their defence is departed from them*; Speaking to the *Iſraelites*, that they ſhould not be afraid of the *Canaanites*, for their *defence* is departed from them. God is no longer *Patient* to them, ſince their ſins be full and ripe. *Patience*, as long as it laſts, is a temporary defence to thoſe that are under the wing of it; but to the Believer it is a ſingular *comfort*; And God is called the *God of patience and conſolation* in one breath, Rom. 15. 5. *The God of Patience and Conſolation grant you to be like-minded*; All Interpreters underſtand it *effectively*. The God that inſpires you with *Comfort*, and chears you with *Comfort*, grant this to you. Why may it not be underſtood *formally*, of the *Patience* belonging to the Nature of God? and though it be expreſt in the way of Petition, yet it might alſo be propoſed as a pattern for Imitation, and ſo ſuits very well to the Exhortation laid down, *ver.* 1. which was, to *bear with the infirmities of the weak*, which he preſſeth them to, *ver.* 3. *by the example of Chriſt*; and *ver.* 5. *by the Patience of God to them*, and ſo they are very well link'd together. God of *Patience and Conſolation* may well be joyned, ſince *Patience* is the firſt ſtep of *Comfort* to the poor Creature. If it did not adminiſter ſome comfortable hopes to *Adam*, in the interval between his Fall, and Gods coming to examine him; I am ſure it was the firſt diſcovery of any comfort to the Creature, after the ſweeping the deſtroying Deluge out of the World, *Gen.* 9. 21. After the *ſavour of Noah's Sacrifice*, repreſenting the great Sacrifice which was to be in the World, had aſcended up to God, the return from him is a publication of his *forbearing to puniſh* any more in ſuch a manner: And though he found Man no better than he was before, and the Imaginations of mens hearts as evil as before the Deluge, that he would not again ſmite every Living Thing, as he had done. This was the firſt expreſſion of *Comfort to Noah*, after his *exit* from the Ark; and declares nothing elſe but the *continuance of Patience* to the New World, above what he had ſhewn to the Old.

1. *'Tis a comfort in that 'tis an argument of his Grace to his people.* If he hath ſo rich a *Patience* to exerciſe towards his Enemies, he hath a greater Treaſure to beſtow upon his Friends. *Patience* is the firſt Attribute, which ſteps in for our Salvation, and therefore called *Salvation*, 2 Pet. 3. 15. Something elſe is therefore built upon it, and intended by it to thoſe that believe. Thoſe two Letters of his Name, *a God keeping Mercy for thouſands, and forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſions and ſin*, follows the other Letter of his *long-ſuffering*, in the Proclamation, *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. He is *ſlow to anger*, that he may be Merciful, that Men may ſeek and receive their Pardon. If he be *long ſuffering*, in order to be a pardoning God, he will not be wanting in pardoning thoſe who anſwer the deſign of his forbearance of them. You would not have had ſparing Mercy to improve, if God would have deny'd you ſaving Mercy upon the improvement of his ſparing Goodneſs. If he hath ſo much reſpect to his Enemies that provoke him, as to endure them with much *long-ſuffering*, he will ſurely be very kind to thoſe that obey him and conform to his Will. If he hath much *long-ſuffering* to thoſe that are *fitted for deſtruction*, Rom. 9. 22. he will have a *muchneſs of Mercy* for thoſe that are prepared for Glory by Faith and Repentance. 'Tis but a natural Concluſion a gracious Soul may make, if God had not a mind to be appeaſed towards me, he would not have had a mind to *forbear* me; but ſince he hath forborn me, and given me a heart to ſee, and anſwer the true end of that forbearance, I need not queſtion, but that *ſparing* Mercy will end in *ſaving*, ſince it finds that Repentance ſpringing up in me, which that *Patience* conducted me to.

2. *His*

2. *His Patience is a ground to truſt in his promiſe.* If his *ſlowneſs to anger* be ſo great, when his Precept is ſlighted, his readineſs to give what he hath promiſed, will be as great, when his Promiſe is believed. If the provocations of them meet with ſuch an unwillingneſs to puniſh them, Faith in him will meet with the choiceſt embraces from him. He was more ready to make the promiſe of Redemption after mans Apoſtacy, than to execute the threatning of the Law. He doth ſtill witneſs a greater willingneſs to give forth the fruits of the Promiſe, than to pour out the vials of his Curſes. His ſlowneſs to anger is an evidence ſtill, that he hath the ſame diſpoſition, which is no ſlight Cordial to Faith in his Word.

3. *'Tis a comfort in infirmities.* If he were not patient, he could not bear with ſo many pieviſhneſſes and weakneſſes in the hearts of his own. If he be Patient to the groſſer ſins of his Enemies, he will be no leſs to the lighter infirmities of his people. When the Soul is as a bruiſed Reed, that can emit no ſound at all, or one very harſh and ungrateful, he doth not break it in pieces, and fling it away in diſdain, but waits to ſee whether it will fully anſwer his pains, and be brought to a better frame, and ſweeter note. He brings them not to account for every ſlip, but *as a father ſpares his ſon that ſerves him*, Mal. 3. 17. 'Tis a *comfort* to us in our diſtracted ſervices; for were it not for this ſlowneſs to anger, he would ſtifle us in the midſt of our Prayers, wherein there are as many fooliſh thoughts to diſguſt him, as there are petitions to implore him. *The Patienteſt Angels* would hardly be able to bear with the follies of good Men in acts of Worſhip.

3. *The third Uſe is for Exhortation.*

1. *Meditate often on the Patience of God.* The Devil labors for nothing more, than to deface in us the conſideration and memory of this perfection. He is an envious Creature, and ſince it hath reached out it ſelf to us, and not to him, he envies God the Glory of it, and Man the advantage of it. But God loves to have the Volumes of it ſtudied, and daily turn'd over by us. We cannot without an inexcuſable wilfulneſs miſs the thoughts of it, ſince it is viſible in every bit of bread, and breath of Air in our ſelves, and all about us.

1. *The frequent conſideration of his Patience, would render God highly amiable to us.* 'Tis a more endearing argument, than his meer Goodneſs; His Goodneſs to us as Creatures, endowing us with ſuch excellent faculties, furniſhing us with ſuch a commodious World, and beſtowing upon us ſo many attendants for our pleaſure and ſervice, and giving us a Lordſhip over his other Works, deſerves our affection. But his Patience to us as ſinners after we have merited the greateſt wrath, ſhews him to be of a ſweeter diſpoſition, than creating Goodneſs to unoffending Creatures; and conſequently ſpeaks a greater love in *him*, and beſpeaks a greater affection from us. His Creating goodneſs diſcovered the Majeſty of his Being, and the greatneſs of his mind, but this the ſweetneſs and tenderneſs of his Nature. In this Patience he exceeds the mildneſs of all Creatures to us; and therefore ſhould be enthroned in our affections above all other Creatures. The conſideration of this would make us affect him for his Nature, as well as for his Benefits.

2. *The conſideration of his Patience, would make us frequent and ſerious in the exerciſe of Repentance.* In its nature it *leads to* it, and the conſideration of it would *engage* us to it, and melt us in the exerciſe of it. Could we deeply think of it, without being touched with a ſence of the kindneſs of our forbearing Creditor and Governor? Could we gaze upon it? nay, could we glance upon it without relenting at our offending one of ſo mild a nature, without being ſenſibly affected, that he hath preſerved us ſo long from being loaded with thoſe Chains of darkneſs, under which the Devils groan? This *forbearance* hath good reaſon to make ſin and ſinners aſham'd. That you are in being, is not for want of advantages enough in his hand againſt you, many a forfeiture you have made, and many an engagement you have broke; he hath ſcarce met with any other dealing from us, than what had treachery in it. Whatſoever our ſincerity is, we have no

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reaſon to boaſt of it, when we conſider what mixtures there are in it, and what ſwarms of baſe motions taint it. Hath he not lain preſſed and groaning under our ſins, as a *Cart is preſſed with ſheaves*, Amos 2. 13. when one ſhake of himſelf, as *Sampſon*, might have rid him of the burthen, and diſmiſt us in his fury into Hell? If we ſhould often ask our Conſciences, why have we done thus and thus againſt ſo mild a God? Would not the reflection on it, put us to the bluſh? If men would conſider, that ſuch a time they provoked God to his face, and yet have not felt his Sword; ſuch a time they blaſphemed him, and made a reproach of his name, and his thunder did not ſtop their motion; ſuch a time they fell into an abominable brutiſhneſs, yet he kept the puniſhment of Devils, the unclean Spirits from reaching them; ſuch a time he bore an open affront from them, when they ſcoft at his Word, and he did not ſend a deſtruction, and laugh at it. Would not ſuch a meditation work ſome ſtrange kind of relentings in men? What if we ſhould conſider, that we cannot do a ſinful act without the ſupport of his concurring Providence? We cannot ſee, hear, move without his concourſe. All Creatures we uſe for our neceſſity or pleaſure, are ſupported by him in the very act of aſſiſting to pleaſure us; and when we abuſe thoſe Creatures againſt him, which he ſupports for our uſe, how great is his *Patience* to bear with us, that he doth not annihilate thoſe Creatures, or at leaſt imbitter their uſe? What iſſue could reaſonably be expected from this conſideration, but, *Oh wretched man that I am, to ſerve my ſelf of Gods power, to affront him, and of his Long-ſuffering to abuſe him? Oh Infinite Patience* to employ that Power to preſerve me, that might have been uſed to puniſh me! He is my Creator, I could not have a being without him, and yet I offend him. He is my Preſerver, I cannot maintain my being without him, and yet I affront him. Is this a worthy requital of God? Deut. 32. 6. *Do you thus requite the Lord?* would be the heart-breaking reflection. How would it give men a fuller proſpect of the depravation of their nature, than any thing elſe; that their corruption ſhould be ſo deep and ſtrong, that ſo *much patience* could not overcome it? It would certainly make a Man aſham'd of his Nature as well as his Actions.

3. *The conſideration of his Patience, would make us reſent more the injuries done by others to God.* A *patient Sufferer*, though a deſerving Sufferer, attracts the pity of Men that have a value for any Vertue, though clouded with a heap of Vice. How much more ſhould we have a concern for God, who ſuffers ſo many abuſes from others? And be grieved that ſo admirable a *Patience* ſhould be ſlighted by Men, who ſolely live by, and under the daily influence of it? The Impreſſion of this would make us take Gods part, as it is uſual with Men, to take the part of good diſpoſitions that lie under oppreſſion.

4. *It would make us patient under Gods hand.* His *ſlowneſs to anger* and his *forbearance* is viſible, in the very ſtrokes we feel in this Life. We have no reaſon to murmur againſt him who gives us ſo little cauſe, and in the greateſt afflictions gives us more occaſion of thankfulneſs than of repining. Did not ſlowneſs to the extreameſt anger, moderate every affliction, it had been a Scorpion inſtead of a rod. We have reaſon to bleſs him, who from his *long-ſuffering* ſends temporal ſufferings, where Eternal are juſtly due. Ezra 9. 13. *Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities do deſerve.* His Indulgences towards us have been more than our corrections, and the length of his *Patience* hath exceeded the ſharpneſs of his rod. Upon the account of his *long-ſuffering*, our mutinies againſt God have as little to excuſe them, as our ſins againſt him have to deſerve his forbearance.

The Conſideration of this, would ſhew us more reaſon to repine at our own repinings, than at any of his ſmarter dealings. And the Conſideration of this, would make us ſubmiſſive under the Judgments we expect. His *undeſerved patience* hath been more than our merited judgments can poſſibly be thought to be. If we fear the removal of the Goſpel for a ſeaſon, as we have reaſon to do, we ſhould rather bleſs him, that by his waiting *patience* he hath continued it ſo long,

than

then murmur, that he threatens to take it away ſo late. He hath born with us many a year, ſince the light of it was re-kindled, when our Anceſtors had but *ſix years of patience* between the riſe of *Edward* the VI. and the aſcent of Queen *Mary* to the Crown.

2. Exhortation is, *To admire and ſtand aſtoniſh'd at his patience, and bleſs him for it.* If you ſhould have defil'd your Neighbors bed, or ſullyed his Reputation, or rifled his Goods, would he have with-held his Vengeance, unleſs he had been too weak to execute it? We have done worſe to God, than we can do to Man, and yet he draws not that Sword of Wrath out of the Scabbard of his *patience*, to ſheath it in our hearts. 'Tis not ſo much a wonder, that any Judgments are ſent, as that there are no more and ſharper. That the World ſhall be fired at laſt, is not a thing ſo ſtrange, as that fire doth not come down every day upon ſome part of it. Had the Diſciples, that ſaw ſuch excellent patterns of mildneſs from their Maſter, and were ſo often urg'd to learn of him that was lowly and meek, the Government of the World, it had been long ſince turn'd into Aſhes, ſince they were too forward to deſire him to open his Magazine of Judgments, and kindle a Fire to conſume a *Samaritan* Village, for a ſlight affront in compariſon of what he received from others, and afterwards from themſelves in their forſaking of him. *Luke* 9, 52, 53, 54. We ſhould admire, and praiſe that here, which ſhall be prais'd in Heaven; though *patience* ſhall ceaſe, as to its exerciſe, after the conſummation of the World, it ſhall not ceaſe from receiving the acknowledgments of what it did when it travers'd the ſtage of this Earth. If the *Name* of God be glorified and acknowledged in Heaven, no queſtion but this will alſo; ſince *long-ſuffering* is one of his Divine Titles, a letter in his Name, as well as *Merciful and Gracious, abundant in Goodneſs and Truth.* And there is good reaſon to think, that the *patience* exerciſed towards ſome, before Converting Grace was ordered to ſeize upon them, will bear a great part in the *Anthems* of Heaven. The greater his *long-ſuffering* hath been to Men, that lay covered with their own dung, a long time before they were freed by Grace from their Filth; the more admiringly and loudly they will cry up his Mercy to them, after they have paſt the Gulf, and ſee a deſerv'd Hell at a diſtance from them, and many in that place of Torments, who never had the taſts of ſo much *forbearance.* If Mercy will be prais'd there, that which began the Alphabet of it, cannot be forgot. If *Paul* ſpeak ſo highly of it in a damping World, and under the pull-backs of a *body of death*, as he doth, 1 *Tim.* 1. 16, 17. *For this cauſe I obtained mercy, that Chriſt might ſhew forth all long-ſuffering. Now unto the King Eternal, Immortal, Inviſible, the Only Wiſe God, be Honor and Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.* No doubt but he will have a higher note for it, when he is ſurrounded with a Heavenly Flame, and freed from all remains of dullneſs, ſhall it be praiſed above, and have we no notes for it here below? Admire Chriſt too, who ſued out your reprieve upon the account of his merit. As Mercy acts not upon any but in Chriſt, ſo neither had *patience* born with any but in Chriſt. The pronouncing the *arreſt of Judgment*, Gen. 8. 21. was when *God ſmell'd a ſweet ſavour from Noahs Sacrifice*, not from the Beaſts offer'd, but the *Antitypical Sacrifice* repreſented.

That we may be raiſed, to bleſs God for it, let us *conſider*,

1. *The multitude of our provocations.* Though ſome have blacker Guilt than others, and deeper Stains, yet let none wipe his Mouth, but rather imagine himſelf to have but little reaſon to bleſs it. Are not all our Offences as many, as there have been minutes in our lives? All the moments of our continuance in the World, have been moments of his *Patience* and our Ingratitude. *Adam* was puniſhed for one ſin. *Moſes* excluded *Canaan* for a paſſionate unbelieving word. *Ananias* and *Saphira* loſt their lives for one ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. *One ſin* ſullyed the beauty of the World, defaced the Works of God, had crack'd Heaven and Earth in pieces, had not infinite Satisfaction been propoſed to the provoked Juſtice by the Redeemer; And not one ſin committed, but is of the ſame venemous

nemous nature; How *many of those contradictions against himself* hath he born with? Had we been only unprofitable to him, his *forbearance* of us had been miraculous; But how much doth it exceed a Miracle, and lift it self above the meanness of a Conjunction with such an Epethet, since we have been provoking? Had there been no more than our impudent or careless rushings into his presence in Worship. Had they been only sins of Omission, and sins of Ignorance, it had been enough to have put a stand to any further Operations of this Perfection towards us. But add to those, sins of Commission, sins against Knowledge, sins against spiritual Motions, sins against repeated Resolutions, and pressing Admonitions, the neglects of all the opportunities of Repentance; put them *all together*, and we can as little recount them, as the sands on the Sea shore. But what do I only speak of particular men? view the whole World, and if our own iniquities render it an *amazing Patience*; what a mighty supply will be made to it in all the numerous and weighty provocations under which he hath continued the World for so many Revolutions of Years and Ages? Have not all those pressed into his presence with a loud cry, and demanded a sentence from Justice? yet hath not the Judge been overcome by the importunity of our sins? * Were the Devils punished for *one* sin, a *proud thought*, and that not committed against the blood of Christ, as we have done numberless times? yet hath not God made us partakers in their punishment, though we have exceeded them in the quality of their sin? Oh admirable *patience!* that would bear with me under so *many*, while he would not bear with the sinning Angels for *one*.

* *Pont.* part. 1. 24.

2. *Consider how mean things we are, who have provoked him.* What is Man but a vile thing, that a God abounding with all riches, should take care of so abject a thing, much more to bear so many affronts from such a drop of matter, such a nothing Creature! That he that hath anger at his command, as well as pity, should endure such a detestable, deformed Creature by sin, to fly in his face. *What is man, that thou art mindful of him?* Psal. 8. אנוש miserable, incurable man, derived from a word, that signifies to be incurably sick. Man is *Adam*, Earth from his Earthly Original, and *Enosh* incurable from his corruption. It is not worthy to be admired, that a God of infinite Glory should wait on such *Adams*, worms of Earth, and be as it were a servant and attendant to such *Enoshes*, sickly and pievish Creatures?

3. *Consider who it is that is thus patient.* He it is that with one breath could turn Heaven and Earth, and all the Inhabitants of both into nothing; That could by one Thunder-bolt have razed up the Foundations of a cursed World. He that wants not Instruments without to ruine us, that can arm our own Consciences against us, and can drown us in our own Phlegm. And by taking out one pin from our Bodies, cause the whole frame to fall asunder. Besides, 'tis a *God*, that while he suffers the sinner, hates the sin, more than all the Holy men upon Earth, or Angels in Heaven can do; So that his *Patience* for a minute, transcends the *patience* of all Creatures from the Creation to the Dissolution of the World: because it is the *patience* of a God infinitely more sensible of the cursed quality of sin, and infinitely more detesting it.

4. *Consider how long he hath forborn his anger.* A reprieve for a *Week* or a *Month*, is accounted a great favor in Civil States; The Civil Law enacts, * that *if the Emperor commanded a man to be condemned, the Execution was to be deferred* 30 *days*: because in that time the Princes anger might be appeased. But how great a favor is it to be reprieved 30 *years* for many offences, every one of which deserves death more at the hands of God, than any Offence can at the hands of Man? *Paul*, was according to the common account, but about thirty *years* old at his Conversion, and how much doth he elevate Divine *long-suffering*? Certainly there are many who have more reason, as having larger quantities of *patience* cut out to them, who have lived to see their own gray Hairs in a rebellious posture against God, before Grace brought them to a surrender. We were

* *Cod.* Lib. 9. Titul. 47. 20.

all condemn'd in the Womb, our Lives were forfeited the firſt moment of our breath, but *patience* hath ſtop'd the Arreſt; The merciful Creditor deſerves to have acknowledgment from us, who hath laid by his Bond ſo many years, without putting it in ſuit againſt us. Many of your Companions in ſin have perhaps been ſurprized long ago, and haled to an Eternal Priſon; Nothing remaining of them but their duſt, and the time is not yet come for your Funeral. Let it be conſidered, that that God, that would not wait upon the fallen Angels *one inſtant* after their ſin, nor give them a moments ſpace of Repentance, hath prolonged the Life of many a ſinner in the World to innumerable moments, to 420000 *minutes* in the ſpace of a *Year*, to 8 *Millions* and 400000 *minutes* in the ſpace of 20 *Years*. The damned in Hell would think it a great kindneſs to have but a Years, Months, nay Days reſpite, as a ſpace to Repent in.

5. *Conſider alſo, how many have been taken away under ſhorter meaſures of patience.* Some have been ſtruck into a Hell of miſery, while thou remaineſt upon an Earth of *forbearance*. In a Plague, the deſtroying Angel hath hew'd down others, and paſt by us; The Arrows have flew about our heads, paſt over us, and ſtuck in the heart of a Neighbor. How many rich Men? How many of our friends and Familiars have been ſeiz'd by death, ſince the beginning of the Year, when they leaſt thought of it, and imagin'd it far from them? Have you not known ſome of your acquaintance ſnach'd away in the height of a Crime? Was not the ſame wrath due to you as well as to them? And had it not been as dreadful for you to be ſo ſurpriz'd by him, as it was for them? Why ſhould he take a *leſs ſturdy ſinner* out of thy company, and let thee remain ſtill upon the Earth? If God had dealt ſo with you, how had you been cut off, not only from the enjoyment of this life, but the hopes of a better? And if God hath made ſuch a Providence beneficial for reclaiming you, how much reaſon have you to acknowledge him? He that hath had leaſt *patience*, hath cauſe to admire, but thoſe that have more, ought to exceed others in bleſſing him for it. If God had put an end to your Natural Life, before you had made proviſion for Eternal, how deplorable would your condition have been?

Conſider alſo, who ever have been ſinners formerly of a deeper note; Might not God have ſtruck a Man in the embraces of his Harlots, and choaked him in the moment of his exceſſive and intemperate healths, or on the ſudden have ſpurted Fire and Brimſtone into a Blaſphemers mouth? What if God had ſnatch'd you away, when you had been ſleeping in ſome great iniquity, or ſent you, while burning in Luſt, to the Fire it merited? Might he not have crackt the ſtring, that link'd your Souls to your Bodies, in the laſt ſickneſs you had? And what then had become of you? What could have been expected to ſucceed your impenitent ſtate in this World, but howlings in another? But he repriev'd you upon your petitions, or the ſollicitations of your Friends; and have you not broke your word with him? Have your hearts been ſtedfaſt, hath he not yet waited, expecting when you would put your Vows and Reſolutions into Execution? What need had he to cry out to any ſo loud and ſo long, Oh you Fools, *how long will you love fooliſhneſs?* Prov. 1. 22. when he might have ceaſed his crying to you, and have by your Death prevented your many neglects of him? Did he do all this, that any of us might add new ſins to our old, or rather, that we ſhould bleſs him for his *forbearance*, comply with the end of it, in reforming our lives, and having recourſe to his mercy?

3. Exhortation. *Therefore preſume not upon his patience.* The exerciſe of it is *not Eternal*; you are at preſent under his *Patience*, yet while you are unconverted, you are alſo under his anger; *Pſal.* 7. 11. *God is angry with the wicked every day.* You know not how ſoon his Anger may turn his *Patience* aſide, and ſtep before it. It may be his Sword is drawn out of his Scabbard, his Arrows may be fetled in his Bow; and perhaps there is but a little time, before you may feel the edge of the one, or the point of the other; and then there will be no

more

more time for *Patience* in God to us, or petition from us to him. If we repent here, he will pardon us. If we defer Repentance, and dye without it, he will have no longer mercy to pardon, nor *Patience* to bear.

What is there in our power but the preſent? the future time we cannot command, the paſt time we cannot recal, ſquander not then the preſent away. The time will come, when *time ſhall be no more*, and then *long-ſuffering* ſhall be no more. Will you neglect the time, wherein *Patience* acts, and vainly hope for a time beyond the reſolves of *Patience* Will you ſpend that in vain, which Goodneſs hath allotted you for other purpoſes? What an eſtimate will you make of a little forbearance to reſpite death, when you are gaſping under the ſtroke of its Arrows? How much would you value ſome few days, of thoſe many years you now trifle away? Can any think God will be always at an expence with them in vain, that he will have ſuch Riches trampled under their feet, and ſo many editions of his *Patience*, be made waſte Paper? Do you know how few ſands are yet to run in your Glaſs? Are you ſure that he that waits to day, will wait as well to morrow? How can you tell, but that God that is *ſlow to anger* to day, may be *ſwift* to it the next? *Jeruſalem* had but a *day* of peace, and the moſt careleſs ſinner hath no more. When their day was done, they were deſtroyed by Famine, Peſtilence, or Sword, or led into a doleful Captivity. Did God make our lives ſo uncertain, and the duration of his forbearance unknown to us, that we ſhould live in a lazy neglect of his Glory, and our own happineſs? If you ſhould have more *patience* in regard of your lives, do you know whether you ſhall have the effectual offers of Grace? As your lives depend upon his Will, ſo your converſion depends ſolely upon his Grace. There have been many examples of thoſe miſerable wretches, that have been left to a reprobate ſenſe, after they have a long time abus'd Divine *forbearance*. Though he waits, yet he *binds up ſin*, *Hoſ.* 13.12. *The ſin of Ephraim is bound up*, as bonds are bound up by a Creditor till a fit opportunity; when God comes to put the bond in ſuit, it will be too late to wiſh for that *patience* we have ſo ſcornfully deſpiſed. Conſider therefore the *end of patience*. The *Patience of God* conſidered in it ſelf, without that which it tends to, affords very little Comfort, 'tis but a ſtep to pardoning Mercy, and it may be without it, and often is. Many have been reprieved, that were never forgiven; Hell is full of thoſe, that had *Patience* as well as we, but not one that accepted pardoning Grace, went within the Gates of it. *Patience* leaves men, when their ſins have ripen'd them for Hell; but pardoning Grace never leaves men, till it hath conducted them to Heaven. His *Patienee* ſpeaks him placable, but doth not aſſure us, that he is actually appeas'd. Men may hope that *long-ſuffering* tends to a pardon, but cannot be aſſured of a pardon, but by ſomething elſe above meer *long-ſuffering*. Reſt not then upon bare *Patience*, but conſider the *end* of it; 'tis not, that any ſhould ſin more freely, but repent more meltingly; 'tis not to ſpirit rebellion, but give a merciful ſtop to it. Why ſhould any be ſo ambitious of their ruine, as to conſtrain God to ruine them againſt the inclinations of his ſweet diſpoſition?

4. *The fourth Exhortation is, Let us imitate God's patience in our own to others.* He is unlike God, that is hurried with an unruly *impetus*, to puniſh others for wronging him. The conſideration of *Divine Patience* ſhould make us ſquare *our ſelves* according to that pattern. God hath exercíſed a *long-ſuffering* from the fall of *Adam* to this minute on innumerable ſubjects, and ſhall we be tranſported with deſire of revenge upon a ſingle injury? If God were not *ſlow to wrath*, a ſinful World had been long ago torn up from the foundation. And if revenge ſhould be exerciſed by all men againſt their enemies, what man ſhould have been alive, ſince there is not a man without an Enemy? If every man were like *Saul*, breathing out threatnings, the World would not only be an *Aceldama*, but a Deſert. How diſtant are they from the *nature of God*, who are in a flame upon every ſlight provocation from a ſence of ſome feeble and imaginary honour, that muſt bloody their Sword for a trifle, and write their revenge in wounds and

death? When God hath his Glory every day bespattered, yet he keeps his Sword in his sheath: What a Wo would it be to the World, if he drew it upon every affront? This is to be like Brutes, Dogs or Tygers, that snarl, bite, and devour upon every slight occasion: But to be *Patient*, is to be Divine, and to shew our selves acquainted with the disposition of God. *Be you therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect*, Matth. 5. 48. i. e. Be you perfect, and good; for he had been exhorting them, to bless them that curs'd them, and to do good to them that hated them, and that from the example God had set them, in causing his Sun to rise upon the evil as well as the good. *Be you therefore perfect.* To Conclude, as *Patience* is Gods Perfection, so it is the accomplishment of the Soul. And as his *slowness to anger* argues the greatness of his Power over himself, so an unwillingness to revenge, is a sign of a power over our selves, which is more noble than to be a Monarch over others.

A TABLE

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A

TREATISE

OF

Divine Providence:

I. In GENERAL.
II. In PARTICULAR.

As relating to the

CHURCH of GOD

IN THE

WORLD.

By that late Eminent Minister of Christ, Mr. *STEPHEN CHARNOCKE*, B. D. and sometimes *Fellow* of *New-Colledge* in *OXON.*

PSAL. 103. 19. *His Kingdom Ruleth over all.*



LONDON:
Printed for *Thomas Cockerill*, at the Three *Legs* in the *Poultrey*, near the *Stocks-Market*. 1683.

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TO THE

READER.

Reader,

THOU art here Preſented with a little Piece, of a Great Man; Great indeed, if great Piety, great Parts, great Learning, and great Wiſdom, may beadmitted to claim that Title: And we verily belive that none well accquanted with him, will deny him his right: however malevolent Perſons may grudge him the honour. It hath been expected, and deſired by many, that ſome account of his Life might be given to the World; But we are not willing to offer violence to his aſhes, by making him *ſo* publick now he is Dead, who ſo much affected privacy while he lived. Thou art therefore deſired to reſt ſatisfied with this brief account of him, That being very young he went to *Cambridge*, where in *Immanuel Colledge*, he was brought up under the Tuition of the preſent Arch-B. of *Canterbury*: What Gracious workings and Evidences of the New-Birth appeared in him while there, hath already been ſpoken of by * one who was at that time his *Fellow-Collegiate* and Intimate. Some time he afterward ſpent in a private Family, and a little more in the exerciſe of his Miniſtery in *Southwark*, then removed to *New-Colledge* in *Oxon*, where he was Fellow, and ſpent ſeveral years; being then taken notice of for his ſingular Gifts, and had in Reputation by the moſt Learned and Godly in that Univerſity, and upon that account the more frequently put upon Publick work. Being thence (the year after he had been Proctor) called over into *Ireland* to a conſtant publick Employment, he exerciſed his Miniſtry for about four or five years, not with the approbation only, but to the admiration of the moſt Wiſe and and Judicious Chriſtians, and with the concurrent applauſe of ſuch as were of very different ſentiments from him in the things of Religion; Nay, even thoſe that never loved his Piety, yet would commend his Learning and Gifts, as being beyond exception, if not above compare. About the year 1660. Being diſcharged from the publick exerciſe of his Miniſtry, he returned back into *England*, and in and about *London* ſpent the greateſt part of fifteen years, without any call to his old work in a ſetled way; but for about theſe five years laſt paſt hath been more known

* *Mr.* Johnſon *in his Sermon on occaſion of Mr.* Charnock's *death.*

known by his Conſtant Preaching, of which we need not ſpeak, but let them that heard him, ſpeak for him; or, if they ſhould be ſilent, his Works will do it. He was a Perſon of excellent Parts, ſtrong Reaſon, great Judgement, and (which do not often go together) curious Phanſie, of high Improvements, and general Learning, as having been all his days a moſt diligent and methodical Student, and a great Redeemer of time, reſcuing not only his reſtleſs hours in the Night, but his very walking-time in the Streets, from thoſe impertinencies and fruitleſs vanities which do ſo cuſtomarily fill up mens minds, and ſteal away their hearts from thoſe better and more Noble objects, which do ſo juſtly challenge their greateſt regards: This he did by not only carefully watching (as every good Chriſtian ſhould do) but conſtantly writing down his Thoughts, whereby he both govern'd them better, and furniſhed himſelf with many materials for his moſt elaborate diſcourſes. His chief Talent was his Preaching-Gift, in which, to ſpeak modeſtly, he had few equals. To this therefore, as that for which his Lord and Maſter had beſt fitted him (neglecting the practice of Phyſick, in which he had arrived at a conſiderable meaſure of knowledg) he did eſpecially addict himſelf, and direct his Studies, and even when Providence denied him opportunities, yet he was ſtill laying in more Stock, and preparing for work againſt he might be called to it. When he was in imployment, none that heard him, could juſtly blame his retiredneſs, he being even when moſt private, continually at work for the Publick; and had he been leſs in his Study, he would have been leſs liked in the Pulpit. His Library, furniſhed (though not with a numerous, yet) a curious collection of Books, was his Workhouſe, in which he laboured hard all the week, and on the Lords day made it appear, he had not been idle; and that though he conſulted his privacy, yet he did not indulge his Sloth. He was ſomewhat reſerved where he was not well acquainted, otherwiſe very free, affable and communicative, where he underſtood and liked his Company. He affected not much acquaintance, becauſe he would eſcape Viſitants, well knowing how much the ordinary ſort of Friends were apt to take up of his time, which he could ill ſpare from his beloved Studies, meeting with few that could give him better entertainment with their company, than he could give himſelf alone: They had need be very good, and very learned, by whoſe converſe he could gain more than by his own Thoughts and Books. He was a true Son of the Church of *England*, in that ſound Doctrine laid down in the Articles of Religion, and Taught by our moſt famous ancient Divines and Reformers; and a real follower of their piety, as well as a ſtrenuous maintainer of the Truth they profeſſed. His Preaching was moſtly practical, yet rational and argumentative,

mentative, to his Hearers underſtandings, as well as affections; and where Controverſies came in his way, he ſhewed great Acuteneſs and Judgment in diſcuſſing and determining them, and no leſs skill in applying them to practiſe: So that he was indeed *a workman that needed not to be aſhamed*, being *able by ſound Doctrine both to exhort and convince gain-ſayers.* Some have thought his Preaching too high for vulgar Hearers; and it cannot be denied but his Gifts were ſuited to the more intelligent ſort of Chriſtians; yet it muſt withal be ſaid, that if he were ſometimes deep, he was never abſtruſe; he handled the great Myſteries of the Goſpel with much clearneſs and perſpicuity; ſo that if in his Preaching he were above moſt, it was only becauſe moſt were below him. Several conſiderable Treatiſes on ſome of the moſt important points of Religion, he finiſhed in his ordinary Courſe, which he hath left behind him, in the ſame form he uſually writ them for the Pulpit. This comes out firſt as a *Prodromus* to ſeveral others deſigned to be made publick, as ſoon as they can be with conveniency tranſcribed, which (if the Lord will, and ſpare life) ſhall be atteſted with our hands; and whatever any elſe ſhall publiſh, can be but imperfect Notes (his own Copies being under our reviſal at the requeſt of his Friends) taken from him in the Pulpit; in which, what miſtakes do often happen, every one knows, and we have found by experience in the caſe of this very Author more than once. This was thought fit to be ſaid to ſecure the Reputation of the Dead, and prevent the abuſe of the Living. Theſe Sermons might have come out with the ſolemn ceremony of large recommendations, the Authors worth being ſo well known to, and his Preaching ſo highly eſteemed by the moſt eminent Miniſters about this City; but it was judged needleſs, his own *Works* being ſufficient to *Praiſe* him.

One thing more is to be added, That ſuch as he is here, ſuch he is in his other pieces; ſo that thou haſt here, Reader, a ſpecimen of the ſtrain and Spirit of this holy man, this being his familiar and ordinary way of Preaching, and theſe Sermons coming out firſt, not as if they were the non-ſueh of what he left behind him, but becauſe they could ſooneſt be diſpatched; and to obviate the injuries might elſe be done by ſpurious Treatiſes, both to him, and thee; and likewiſe by this little taſte to gratifie the Appetites of ſuch who having been his Auditors, did long even with greedineſs, to Feaſt themſelves again upon thoſe excellent Truths, which in the delivery were ſo ſweet to them; Perhaps too it may quicken their appetites who never heard him, it may be never yet heard of him. If thou like this Cluſter, Fear not but the Vintage will be anſwerable: If this little earneſt be good metal, the whole ſum will be no leſs currant. That a Bleſſing from Heaven may be upon this work, and upon thee in read-

reading and ſtudying the Nature; and Beauty, and Ends of Divine Providence, and that the Lord of the Harveſt (eſpecially when ſo many are dayly called home) would ſend forth more and more *ſuch* labourers into the Harveſt, is the hearty prayer of

Thine in the Lord,

RICHARD ADAMS.
EDWARD VEAL.

OF

A

DISCOURSE

OF

Divine Providence.

2 Chron. 16. 9.

For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in the behalf of them whoſe heart is perfect towards him.

IN the beginning of the Chapter you find *Baaſha* King of *Iſrael* raiſing Walls about, and Fortifying *Ramah*, a place about twelve miles from *Jeruſalem*, the Metropolis of *Judah*, intending by that means to block *Aſa* up, becauſe *Ramah* lay juſt upon the Road between *Jeruſalem* and *Samaria*, the Seats of the two Kings, *ver.* 1.

Baaſha was probably afraid of the Revolt of *Iſrael* to *Judah*, upon that Reformation of Religion wrought by *Aſa*, and therefore would Fortifie that place to be a hinderance, and to intercept any that ſhould paſs upon that account. And to this purpoſe makes great preparation, as appears *ver.* 6. for with the proviſion *Baaſha* had made for the Fortification of *Ramah*; *Aſa* after the ſeizing of theſe Materials builds two Towns, *Gaba* and *Miſpah*.

Aſa ſeeing *Baaſha* ſo buſie about this Deſign, and fearing the conſequence of it, hath recourſe to carnal policy rather than to God: And therfore enters into league with *Benhadad*, a Neighbour, though an Idolatrous Prince, and purchaſeth his aſſiſtance with the Sacrilegious price of the Treaſure of the Temple, *ver.* 2, 3. And hereby engageth him to invade the King of *Iſraels* Territories, that he might thereby find work for *Baaſha* in another part, and ſo divert him from that Deſign upon which he was ſo bent, *ver.* 3. *Go, break thy League with Baaſha, that he may depart from me.*

Benhadad is eaſily perſwaded by the quantity of Gold, *&c.* to break his League, and make an Inroad, and proves victorious, and takes many Cities where the Magazines and Stores were laid up, *ver.* 4.

Baaſha now to ſave his Countrey, and make head againſt his Enemies, is forced to leave *Ramah*; whereupon *Aſa*, who watched his opportunity, ſeizeth the materials he had left for the fortifying of *Ramah*, and puts them to another uſe, *ver.* 5, 6.

Hanani the Seer is preſently ſent by God with a threatning of War, becauſe he applies himſelf to a Heathen Prince, rather than to the Lord of Hoſts, *ver.* 7. his ſin is aggravated by Gods former kindneſs to him, and experience he had given him of his miraculous Providence in his ſucceſs againſt that vaſt Army of the *Ethiopians* and *Lubims*, or *Lybians*, and that upon his recourſe to, or reliance on God. Aud that he ſhould afterwards have recourſe to the arm of Fleſh, was a diſparagement to Gods providential kindneſs, *ver.* 8. He further aggravates his ſin

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by the conſideration of Gods general providential care of his Creatures, and the particular end of it, and of all his providences, *viz.* the good of his Church and people, *ver.* 9. *For the eyes of the Lord*, &c. *Eyes of the Lord*, in Scripture, ſignify,

1. *His knowledge*, Job 34.21. *For his eyes are upon all the ways of man, and he ſees all his goings.* Heb. 4.13. *All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do**.

* τετχηλ's ſignificat ſpinam dorſi, & in mactatis animalibus per ſpinam omnia apparent interiora, ita ut nihil latere poteſt. Glaſſius, Vol. 2. l. 106.

2. *His Providence.*

1. *For good*, So it notes his Grace and good Will; ſo his Eyes and his Heart are joyned together, 1 *Kings* 6.3. *Mine Eyes and my Heart ſhall be there perpetually*, *viz.* in his Temple, the place which he had hallowed to put his Name there for ever, *Pſal.* 32.8. I will guide him *with mine eye*, that is, I will counſel him, and direct him in a gracious and a favourable way. Therefore to be cut off from *the eye* of the Lord, is to be deprived of his favour, *Pſal.* 31.22. for none can be cut off from a ſimple knowledg of God: So *Zach.* 3.9 *ſeven eyes upon one ſtone*, that is, the Providence of God was in an eſpecial manner with Chriſt in the midſt of his paſſion.

2. *For evil*, So it notes *His* anger and vindictive juſtice. *Iſa.* 3.8. *Their doings are againſt the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his Glory.* Kindneſs and anger appear firſt in the Eye, one by its pleaſantneſs, the other by its redneſs.

(*Run*) that notes diligence and care, an induſtrious inſpection into all things. *Pſal.* 119.32. *I will run the ways of thy Commandments*; noting ſpeed and diligence.

In the Verſe, we have

I. *A Deſcription of Gods Providence.*

II. *The end of it.*

I. *The deſcription of Gods Providence:*

1. *The immediateneſs of it*, [*his eyes*] his own eyes, not anothers. Not like Princes, who ſee by their Servants eyes more than by their own, what is done in their Kingdoms; his care is immediate. Though Angels are Miniſters of his Providence, the Guardians and Watchers of the World, yet God is their Captain, and is alwayes himſelf upon the Watch.

2. *Quickneſs and ſpeed* of Providence [*run*] His eyes do not only walk, but run the round; they are not ſlumbring eyes, nor drowzy eye-lids, their motion is quick and nimble.

3. *Extent of Providence* [*the whole Earth*] all things in the Earth, all the hairs on the Heads of theſe men: The meaneſt Worm as well as the mightieſt Prince, the loweſt Shrub as well as the talleſt Cedar, every cranny, corner or chink of the Earth.

4. *Diligence of Providence* [*to and fro*] His care is repeated, he looks this way and that way, again and again, his eyes are not confin'd to one place, fixed on one object, but are alwaies rouling about from one place to another.

5. *The Efficacy of his Providence*; His care doth engage his ſtrength; he doth not only diſcover dangers, but prevent them; he hath Eyes to ſee, and Power to order all things according to his pleaſure; Wiſe to ſee, and ſtrong to ſave.

II. *The end of Providence* [*to ſhew himſelf ſtrong*, &c.]

1. *Finis cujus*, [*to ſhew himſelf ſtrong.*] *Heb.* to make himſelf ſtrong, but beſt Tranſlated, *to ſhew himſelf ſtrong.* It is not an addition of ſtrength, but an exerciſe of ſtrength that is here meant.

2. *Finis cui, or the Perſons for whom, Thoſe that are perfect in heart.*

Doctrines.

Doct. 1. *There is a Providence exerciſed by God in the World.*

2. *All Gods Providences in the world, are in order to the good of his people.*

3. *Sincerity in Gods way gives a man an intereſt in all Gods Providences, and the good of them.*

Doct. 1. For the Firſt, *There is a Providential inſpection and Government of all things*

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in the World by God: 'Tis not a bare ſight of things that is here meant by Gods eye, but a ſight and knowledge in order to the Governing and diſpoſing of them. View this Doctrine at your leiſure, preached by God himſelf, with an inconceivable elegancy, and three whole Chapters ſpent in the Sermon, and *by the *Pſalmiſt* *.

* Job 38. 39, 40.
* Pſal. 147. 148.

Some obſerve, that the ſociety of Angels and Heavenly Creatures is repreſented *Ezek.* 1. by a quaternarian number, becauſe the World is divided into four dimenſions, *Eaſt*, *Weſt*, *North* and *South*, as Intimating the extention of Gods Providence over all parts*.

* Hudſons *Divine right of Government*, chap. 6. pag. 3.

Things are not ordered in the World *cæco impetu*; not by blind fortune, but an Allſeeing Deity, who hath the management of all ſublunary affairs. Τὰ μεγάλα ἡ δύναμις τῶν ὅλων διὰ πάντα ὑπ' ἀρίστου τοῦ γίνεται, was the Theological Maxim of the *Stoicks*.

* *Clemens ad Corinth*, p. 34.

Before I come particularly to explain the Providence of God, I ſhall lay down ſome Propoſitions as the Foundations of this Doctrine.

1. *God hath an indiſputable and peculiar Right to the Government of the World:* None ever queſtioned Gods Right, no nor his act, but thoſe that were ſwelled with an unreaſonable ambition, ſuch as *Nebuchadnezzar*, who for this cauſe underwent the puniſhment of a ſeven years baniſhment from the ſociety of men *.

* *Dan.* 4. 17.

None indeed that acknowledg a God, did or can queſtion Gods Right, though they may queſtion his Will and actual exerciſe of his Right. He is the Creator, and therefore is the Soveraign Lord and Ruler. The World is his Family, and as a Maſter, he hath an undoubted Right to govern his own Family; He gave all Creatures their beings, and therefore hath a right to enact their Laws, appoint their ſtations, and fix their ends. 'Tis as much his property and prerogative to rule, as it is to create. Creation is ſo peculiarly proper to God, that it is not communicable to any Creature, no not to Angels, though of a vaſt Capacity in other things, and that becauſe they are Creatures themſelves. 'Tis as impoſſible for one Creature, or all, to govern the world, and manage all the boyſterous paſſions of men to juſt and glorious ends, as to create them. 'Tis true, God uſeth inſtruments in the executive part of his Providence; but he doth not deſign the Government of the world only by Inſtruments. He uſeth them not for neceſſity, but ornament. He Created the World without them, and therefore can Govern the World without them.

Virtus Creativa eſt fundamentum providentiæ & argumentum ad providentiam. This right is founded upon that of Creation as he is the efficient cauſe of it. This right is alſo founded upon the excellency of his Being. That which is excellent having a right to rule in the way of that excellency, that which is inferior; every man hath a natural right to rule another in his own art and skill wherein he excells him: If it be the right of a chief Magiſtrate to manage the concerns of his Kingdom, with what reaſon can we deny that right to God?

2. *God only is qualified for the univerſal government of the World.* All Creatures, as they were unable to create themſelves, ſo are unable to manage themſelves without the Direction of a Superior power, much more unable to manage the vaſt body of the World. God is only fit in regard of,

1. *Power*: *Conſervation* is *continuata Creatio*; that power which is fit to Create, is only fit to preſerve. A continued Creation belongs as much to Omnipotency as the firſt Creation.

The Government of it requires no leſs power, both in regard of the numerouſneſs of the objects, and the ſtrange contrariety of paſſions in rational Creatures, and qualities in irrational; conſervation is but one continued act with Creation, following one from an inſtant to duration, as a line from its Mathematical point *.

* Tailors *exemplar*, *preface*. 6. 31.

2. *Holineſs and Righteouſneſs.* If *he that hates right* is not fit to govern, *Job* 34. 17. then he that is infinitely Righteous, and hath an infinite love to Righteouſneſs, is the fitteſt to undertake that task; without Righteouſneſs there would be nothing but confuſion in the whole Creation. Diſorder is the effect of unrighteouſneſs, as order is the effect of Juſtice. The juſteſt man is fitteſt for ſub-

ordinate Government among men, and the infinite juſt God is fitteſt for the univerſal Government of the World.

3. *Knowledge.* An infinite knowledge to deſcry all the contrivances and various labyrinths of the hearts of men, their ſecret intentions and aims, is neceſſary. The Government of the World conſiſts more in ordering the inward faculties of men touching the hearts, and tuning them to play what notes he pleaſes, than in external things. No Creature hath the skill or power to work immediately upon the will of man; neither Angels nor Divils can do it immediately, but by propoſing objects, and working upon the fancy, which is not alwaies ſucceſful. He that created the heart, knows all the wards of it, and hath only the skill to turn it, and incline it as he pleaſes; he muſt needs know all the inclinations of the Creatures and their proper activities, ſince he alone conferred all thoſe ſeveral principles and qualities upon them. * *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the World, viz.* the particular natures, inclinations, inward motions, which no Creature fully underſtands; he needs no deputy to inform him of what is done, he is every where, and ſees all things: Worldly Governors cannot be every where eſſentially preſent.

* *Act.* 15. 8.

God is ſo perfect in his knowledge of all things, that he cannot be impoſed upon by the evil ſuggeſtions and flatteries of men or Angels.

In nature it is ſo, the eye guides the body, becauſe that is the chief Organ of ſenſitive knowledge; the mind, which is the ſeat of Wiſdom, guides the whole.

4. *Patience.* Infinite patience is requiſite to the preſervation and government of the World in the circumſtances wherein it hath ſtood ever ſince the fall: What Angel, though the meekeſt, or can all the Angels in Heaven be Maſters of ſo much patience as is needful for this work of governing the World, though for the ſpace of one day? Could they bear with all thoſe evils which are committed in the world in the ſpace of 24 hours? Might we not reaſonably conceive, that they would be ſo tired with the obliquities, diſorders, deformities which they would ſee in the acts of men, (beſides all the evil which is in the hearts of men, which lye without the verge of their knowledge) that they would rather call for fire from Heaven to burn the World to Aſhes.

* *Averroes* thought, that becauſe of Gods ſlowneſs to anger, he meddled not with ſublunary concerns: This rather fits him for it, becauſe he can bear with the injuries of wicked men, otherwiſe the World would not continue a moment.

* Trap *in* Exod. 34.

Angels, though powerful, holy, wiſe and patient creatures, yet being Creatures, they want the infiniteneſs of all theſe qualifications which are neceſſary to this government: Though they are knowing, yet they know not mens hearts; though they are wiſe, yet they may be charged with a folly uncapable of this; though holy, yet not able in this reſpect to manage it to the ends and deſigns of an infinite holineſs; though nimble, yet cannot be in all parts of the world at every turn: but the Providence of God is infallible, becauſe of his infinite Wiſdom; indefatigable, becauſe of his Omnipotency; and righteous, becauſe of his Goodneſs.

3. *There can be no reaſon rendered why God ſhould not actually govern the World,* ſince He only hath a right and fitneſs. If God doth not actually govern it, it is either becauſe He cannot, or becauſe He will not.

1. *Not becauſe He cannot,* this inability muſt be either for want of knowledge, or want of power. The one if aſſerted, would deny his Omnipotence, the other his Omniſcience; the one would make him a weak God, the other an ignorant God, and conſequently no God.

2. *Not becauſe He will not;* If He can and will not, it is, ſay ſome, a teſtimony of envy, that he maligns the good of his Creatures: but not to inſiſt upon this; This muſt be either becauſe of the

1. *Difficulty.* This cannot be: What difficulty can there be in a ſingle word, or one act of his will, which can be done by God without any moleſtation, were there millions of Worlds as well as this? For ſtill they would be finite, and ſo governable by an infinite Superior. May we not more reaſonably think the forming

ing ſuch a Maſs would require more *pains* than the government of it? The right ſtringing an inſtrument is more trouble to a skilful Muſitian, than the tripping over the ſtrings afterwards to make an harmony. What difficulty can it be to Omnipotence? Is it a greater labour to preſerve and govern, than it was to create? Doth not the Soul order every part of the body, and all its functions, without any pain to it? and ſhall not the God that made that Soul ſo indefatigable, much more manage the concernments of the World without labour to himſelf? Is it not as eaſie with God to guide all theſe things by one ſingle act of his Will, as for me by an act of my Soul to do many things without a diſtinct act of cogitation or conſideration before? Can it be more laborious to him, to govern the world, than it is to know all things in the World? He ſees all things in an inſtant by one act of his underſtanding, and he orders all Creatures in a moment by one act of his will. Can one act of his will be more painful, than one act of his underſtanding? Can he with a word make this great Ball, and can he not with as much eaſe order all to conform to the law of his own righteous will? Can a continual eruption of goodneſs be a difficulty to an infinite Being, which we find natural to the Sun, to the Fountains, to the Sea, to many works of that Omnipotent Goodneſs? Or,

2. *Diſparagement*, Denial of Gods Providence over the leſſer things of the World, did ariſe from the conſideration of the ſtate of Monarchs, who thought it an abridgment of their felicity and dignity, to ſtoop to ſuch low conſiderations as the *minutula* of their eſtates might exact from them, but left them to their Vicegerents. But they conſider not that the felicity of God as it reſpects the Creature, is to communicate his goodneſs to as many ſubjects as he hath made capable of his care. If it were his glory to create the world, can it be his diſhonour to Govern it? The glorifying his wiſdom is as honourable to him as the magnifying his power; though both are eminent in Creation and Providence, yet his wiſdom is more ſignal in the Governing, as his power was in framing of the world.

Why was it not as much a diſparagement to God to *Create* things contemptible in our eyes, as ſince he hath Created them to take care of them, and marſhal them for his own glorious ends? The Sun in the Heavens is a ſhadow of God, which doth not diſdain to communicate its natural goodneſs, and emit its beams to the meaneſt Creatures, and let the little flies ſport themſelves in them, as well as the greateſt Princes: and tranſmits its influences upon things obſcure and at a diſtance from it, whereby it manifeſts an univerſal regard to all. And would it not be a diſparagement to an infinite goodneſs to be out-ſtript by a Creature, which he hath ſet up for a natural communication of goodneſs to the reſt of the World? The very conſideration of the *Sun*, and the nature of it, gives us as much an account of God, as any inanimate being whatſoever: 'Tis as much the Suns honour to produce a ſmall Inſect, as the growth of the greateſt Plant.

*Have not all Creatures a natural affection in them to preſerve and provide for their own? hath not God much more, who endued all creatures with that diſpoſition? Whatſoever is a natural perfection in Creatures, is eminently an infinite perfection in God. If it be therefore a praiſe to you to preſerve your own, can it be a diſgrace to God? You may as well ſay, it is as much a diſhonour to him to be good, as to have a tender regard to his Creatures. Cenſure him, as well you may, for creating them for your delight as preſerving and governing them for the ſame end. They are all good, for he pronounced them ſo; and being ſo, a God of goodneſs will not account them unworthy of his care. Are they now the Products of his Omnipotent wiſdom, and ſhall not they be the objects of his directing Wiſdom? If they are not unworthy of God to create, how can they be unworthy of God to govern them? It would be as much below him to make them, as to rule them when they were made. *Mornæ. de Verit Relig. Chriſtian. Chap. 11.

4. Therefore, *God doth actually preſerve and govern the World*; though Angels are in Miniſtry in ſome particular works of his providence, yet God is the Steersman, who gives out his particular orders to them. *Fourthly.*

Jacobs Ladder had the top in Heaven, where God ſtood to keep it firm: Its

foot on Earth, and the Angels going up and down upon ſeveral errands at their Maſters beck.

As God made all things for himſelf, ſo he orders the ends of all things made by him, for his own glory. For being the moſt excellent and intelligent Agent, he doth reduce all the motions of his Creatures to that end for which he made them.

This actual government of the World by God, brancheth it ſelf out in three things.

1. *Nothing is acted in the world without Gods knowldege.* The Viſion of the *Wheels* in *Ezekiel*, preſents us with an excellent portraiture of providence, there are eyes round about the Wheels*.

* Ezek. 18. *their wings were full of eyes*, &c.

The eye of God is upon the whole circle of the Creatures motion. In all the revolutions in the World, there is the Eye of Gods Omniſcience to ſee them, and the arm of his Omnipotence to guide them: Not the moſt retired corner, or the darkeſt cell, not the deepeſt cavern, or moſt inward project, nor the moſt ſecret wickedneſs, not the cloſeſt goodneſs, but the eye of the Lord beholds it. * *Prov.* 15. 3. *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.* He hears the words, ſees the actions, knows the thoughts, regiſters the gracious diſcourſes, bottles up the penitent tears, and conſiders all the wayes of men; not a whiſpered Oath, not an Atheiſtical thought, though but only peeping upon the heart, and ſinking down again in that maſs of corruption; not a diſorderly word, but he knows and marks it. The Soul hath a particular knowledge of every act, becauſe it is the ſpring of every act in any member; and nothing is done in this little World, but the Soul knows it. Surely then there is not an act done in the world, nor the motion of any Creature, but as God doth concur to it, he muſt needs know what he doth concur to. The knowledge and ordaining every thing, is far leſs to the infinite being of God, than the knowledg and ordaining every motion of the body is to a finite Soul.

* Pro. 15. 3.

Or, Suppoſe a Soul cloathed with a body of as big a proportion as the matter of the whole Creation, it would actuate this body, though of a greater bulk, and know every motion of it. How much more God, who hath infinity and excellency and ſtrength of all Angels and Souls, muſt needs actuate this World, and know every motion of it? There is nothing done in the World, but ſome Creature or other knows it; he that acts it, doth at leaſt know it: If God did not know it, the Creatures then in that particular knowledge would be ſuperior to God, and know ſomething mor than God knows; can this be poſſibe?

2. *Nothing is acted in the World without the Will of God.* His Will either commands it, or permits it. * *Pſal.* 135. 6. *Whatſoever the Lord pleaſed, that did he in Heaven and in Earth.*

* Eph. 1. 11. *He works all things after the Counſel of his own will.*

Even the ſins of the World, his will permits them, his power aſſiſts in the act, and his Wiſdom orders the ſinfulneſs of the act for holy ends. The Four Chariots in *Zech.* 6. 2, 3, 4, 5. by which ſome underſtand *Angels*, are ſent upon commiſſion into the ſeveral parts of the world, and compared to Chariots, both for their ſtrength, their ſwiftneſs, their employment in a military way to ſecure the Church. Theſe are ſaid to come * out of the two Mounrains of braſs, which ſignify the irreverſible decrees of God, which the Angels are to execute. He alarums up the Winds, when he would have *Jonah* arreſted in his flight. He ſounds a retreat to them, and locks them up in their Chambers *. Bread hath a natural vertue in it to nouriſh, but it muſt be accompanied with his ſecret bleſſing, *Mat.* 4. 4.

* ver. 1.

Reynolds.

* *Pſal.* 107. 25, 29.

Virtute primi actus, agunt agentia omnia quicquid agunt.

3. *Nothing doth ſubſiſt without Gods care and power.* His eyes running to and fro, implies not only knowledg, but care. He doth not careleſly behold what is done in the World, but like a skilful *Pilot*, he ſits at the helm, and ſteers the World in what courſe it ſhould Sale. Our being we owe to his power, our well-being to his care, our motion and exerting of every faculty, to his merciful provi-

providence and concurrence; *in him we live and move and have our being* *. He frames our being, preſerves our life, concurs with our motion. This is an *Idea* that bears date in the minds of men, with the very notion of a God. Why elſe did the Heathen in all their ſtreights fly to their Altars, and fill their Temples with cries and ſacrifices? To what purpoſe was this, if they had not acknowledged Gods ſuperintendency, his taking notice of their cauſe, hearing their prayers, conſidering their cries? Why ſhould they do this, if they thought that God did not regard humane affairs, but ſtood untouched with a ſenſe of their miſeries? * *Act.* 17. 28.

If all things were done by chance, there could be no perdictions of future things, which we frequently find in Scripture, and by what wayes accompliſhed. Impoſſible it is that any thing can be continued without his care. If God ſhould in the leaſt moment withhold the influence of his Providence, we ſhould melt into nothing, as the impreſſion of a Seal upon the water, vaniſhes, as ſoon as the Seal is removed; or as the reflection of the face in the glaſs diſappears upon the firſt inſtant of our removal from it. The light in the air is by participation of the light of the Sun; The light in the air withdraws upon the departure of the Sun. The Phyſical and moral goodneſs the Creature would vaniſh upon the removal of God from it, who is the Fountain of both.

What an Artificer doth work, may continue, though the workman dies, becauſe what he doth is materially, as to the matter of it, ready to his hands; he creates not the matter, but only ſets materials together, and diſpoſeth them into ſuch a form and Figure: But God gives a being to the matter and form of all things, and therefore the continuance of that being depends upon his preſerving influence *. God upholds the World, and cauſes all thoſe laws which he hath impreſſed upon every Creature, to be put in execution; not as a man that makes a Watch, and winds it up, and then ſuffers it to go of it ſelf; Or that turns a River into another Channel, and lets it alone to run in the graff he hath made for it; but there is a continual concurrence of God to this goodly frame. For they do not only live, but move in him, or by him; His living and Omnipotent power runs through every vein of the Creation, giving it life and motion, and ordering the acts of every part of this great body. All the motions of ſecond cauſes are ultimately reſolved into the Providence of God, who holds the firſt link of them in his hands *. More particularly, the nature of Providence may be explained by Two propoſitions. * Stillingfleet *Orig. ſacræ. lib.* 3. *cap.* 3. Sect. 3. * Hoſ. 2. 21, 22.

The univerſality of it. His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole Earth. *Firſt Propoſition.*

'Tis over all Creatures, 1. *The higheſt.* 2. *The loweſt.*

I. *The higheſt and moſt magnificent pieces of the Creation.* *Firſt.*

1. *Over Jeſus Chriſt,* the firſt-born of every Creature. Gods providence was in an eſpecial manner converſant about him, and fixed upon him. It was by the *determinate Counſel of God,* that he was delivered up *: His providence was diligently exerciſed about him in his whole courſe. Chriſt anſwers his Mothers ſolicitouſneſs with the care his Father took of him *. Do you not know that I am about thoſe things my Father takes care of *? This expoſition beſt agrees with his reproof, who blames them for creating ſo much trouble to themſelves upon their miſſing him in the Town. 'Tis not, why do you interrupt me in my diſpute with the *Jewiſh* Doctors? But [How is it that you ſought me? Do you think I am not under the care of my Father?] It was particularly exerciſed on him in the midſt of his paſſion *. *Seven eyes* were *upon* the *Stone*; Seven, a number of perfection, a perfect and peculiar care of God attended him. * *Acts.* 2. 23. * Luk. 2. 49. *wiſt you not that I muſt be about my Fathees buſineſs?* * ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός. Hammond *in loc.* * Zach. 3. 9.

2. *Over Angels and Men.* The Soul of the leaſt Animal, and the ſmalleſt plant, is formed and preſerved by God, but the breath of mankind is more particularly in his hand: *Job* 12. 10. *In whoſe hand is the Soul of every living thing, and the breath of all Mankind.*

1. *Over good Angels and Men.* He charges his Angels with folly and weakneſs. They cannot direct themſelves without his wiſdom, nor preſerve themſelves without his power. God hath a Book of Providence, wherein he writes down who ſhall be preſerved, and this Book *Moſes* underſtands, *Exod.* 32. 33. *Whoſoever hath*

hath ſinned againſt me, him will I blot out of my Book; not the Book of Election, no names written there are blotted out; but out of the Book of Providence. As it is underſtood, *Iſa.* 4. 3. [Every one that is written among the living in *Jeruſalem,*] *i. e.* every one whom God deſigns to preſervation and deliverance *. That God, ſurely, that hath a care of the mean animals, will not be careleſs of his affectionate Worſhippers. He that feeds the Ravens, will not ſtarve his Doves. He that ſatisfies the Ravening Wolf, will not famiſh his gentle Lambs and harmleſs Sheep. He ſhelters *Jacob* from *Labans* fury, and * tutors him how he ſhould carry himſelf towards the good man. He brought *Haman* out of favour, and ſet *Mordecai* in his place for the deliverance of the *Jews* which were deſign'd for ſlaughter.

* Hortons *Serm.* Pſ. 87. p. 56.

* Gen. 2. 9.

2. *Over evil Angels and Men.* Gods power preſerves them, his patience ſuffers them, his Wiſdom orders them, and their evil purpoſes and performances to his own glory. The Devil cannot arreſt *Job*, nor touch a Lamb of his Flock, nor a hair of his head, without a commiſſion from God. He cannot enter into one filthy Swine in the *Gaderenes* herd, without asking our Saviour leave. Whatever he doth, he hath a grant or permiſſion from Heaven for it. Gods ſpecial providence is over his people, but his general Providence over all Kingdoms and Countreys.

He takes care of *Syria*, as well as of *Judea*; and ſends *Eliſha* to anoint *Hazael* King of *Syria*, as well as *Jehu* King of *Iſrael* *. Though *Iſhmael* had mocks for *Iſaac*, yet the God of *Iſaac* provided for the wants of *Iſhmael* *. *He cauſeth his Sun to ſhine upon the unjuſt*, as well as the *juſt*, to produce Fruits and plants for their preſervation.

* 1 King. 19. 13.
* Gen. 25. 16, 17, 18.

II. *Over the meaneſt Creatures.* As the Suns light, ſo Gods Providence diſdains not the meaneſt worms. 'Tis obſerved, that in the enumeration of the works of Creation *, only the Great Whales and ſmall creeping things are mentioned, and not the intermediate Creatures; to ſhew, that the leaſt as well as the greateſt are under his care. 'Tis one of his Titles to be the preſerver of Beaſts as well as *men* *. He is the great Caterer for all Creatures *. *The young Lyons ſeek their meat from God.* They attend him for their daily portion, and what they gather and meet with in their purſuit, is Gods gift to them, *verſ.* 27, 28. He liſtens to the cries of the young Ravens, though they are Birds of Prey. *He gives to the Beaſt his food, and to the young Ravens which cry* *. In *Pſalm.* 104. *David* throughout the whole reads a particular Lecture of this Doctrine, wherein you may take a proſpect of Gods Providence all over the world. He acts them by a Commandment and imprinted Law upon their natures, and makes them obſerve exactly thoſe ſtatutes he enacts for the guidance of them in their proper operations. *Pſal.* 147. 15. [*he ſendeth forth his Commandment upon Earth, and his word runs very ſwiftly*] *viz.* his word of Providence. God keeps them in the obſervation of their firſt ordinance *. They obſerve their ſtations, the Law God hath ſet them, as if they had a rational knowledg of their duty in their particular motions, *Pſ.* 104. 19. *the Sun knoweth his going down.* Sometimes he makes them inſtruments of his Miniſtry to us; ſometimes executioners of his judgments. Lice and Frogs arm themſelves at his command to puniſh *Egypt*. He makes a Whale to attend *Jonas* dropping into the Sea, to be an inſtrument both to puniſh and preſerve him? Yea, and which is more wonderful, the multitude of the very Cattel is brought among others as a reaſon of a peoples preſervation from deſtruction, *Jonah* 4. 11. the multitude of the Cattel are joyned with the multitude of the infants, as an argument to ſpare *Nineveh*. He remembers *Noah's* Cattel as well as his Sons, *Gen.* 8. 1. God remembered *Noah* and every living thing, and all the Cattel that were with him in * the Ark. He numbers the very hairs of our heads, that not one falls without his Will. Not only the immortal Soul, but the decaying body; not only the vital parts of that body, but the inconſiderable hairs of the head, are under his care.

* Neh. 9. 6.
* Pſ. 104. 21.
* Pſal. 147. 9.
* Pſ. 119. 91. *They continue this day according to thine Ordinances, for all are thy Servants.* i. e. *The Earth and what is upon it.*
* *A particular Act of remembrance is exerciſed by God for the very Battel.*

I. *This is no diſhonour to God, to take care of the meaneſt Creatures.* 'Tis as honourable for his Power to preſerve them, and his Wiſdom to Govern them, as for both to create them. 'Tis one part of a mans righteouſneſs to be merciful to his beaſts which he never made; and is it not a part of Gods righteouſneſs, as the

Rector

Rector of the World, to take care of those Creatures which he did not disdain to give a being to?

II. *It rather conduceth to his honour.*

1. *The honour of his goodness.* It shews the comprehensiveness of his goodness, which embraceth in the arms of his Providence, the lowest Worm, as well as the highest Angel. Shall infinite goodness frame a thing, and make no provision for its subsistence? At the first Creation he acknowledged whatever he had created, good in his kind, good in themselves, good in order to the end for which he created them; 'tis therefore an honourable thing for his goodness to conduct them to that end which in their Creation he design'd them for; and not leave them wild disorders, unsuitable to the end of that goodness which first called them into being. If he grow out of love with the operations of his hands, he would seem to grow out of love with his own goodness that formed them.

2. *The honour of his Power and Wisdom.* The Power of God is as much seen in making an insect full of life and spirit in all the parts of it, to perform all the actions suitable to its life and nature, as in making Creatures of a greater bulk; and is it not for the honour of his Power to preserve them, and the honour of his Wisdom to direct these little animals to the end he intended in their Creation; for as little as they seem to be, an end they have, and glorious too, for *natura nihil facit frustra.* It seems not to consist with his Wisdom to neglect that which he hath vouchsafed to Create. And though the Apostle seems to deny Gods care of Brutes, 1 *Cor.* 9. *Doth God take care for Oxen?* 'Tis true God did not in that Law only take care of *Oxen*, *i. e.* with a legislative care, as making a Law only for them, though with a Providential care he doth; but the Apostle there doth not deny Gods care for Oxen, but makes an argument *a minori ad majus.*

2. *Providence extends to all the actions and motions of the Creature.* Every *second* cause implies a dependance upon a *first* cause in its operation. If God did not extend his Providence over the actions of Creatures, he would not every where, and in all things and beings be the first Cause.

1. *To natural Actions.* What an orderly motion is there in the natural actions of Creatures, which evidenceth a guidance by an higher reason, since they have none of their own? How do fish serve several coasts at several seasons, as if sent upon a particular message by God? This cannot be by any other faculty than the instinct their Maker hath put into them. Plants that grow between a barren and fruitful Soil, shoot all their roots towards the moist and fruitful ground; by what other cause than a secret direction of Providential Wisdom*? There is a Law impress upon them and their motions, that are so orderly, as if they were acted according to a Covenant and agreement between them and their Creator, and therefore called the *Covenant* of the *day* and *night**. What avails the toyl and labour of man in plowing, trading, watching, unless God influence, unless he bless, unless he keep the City? The proceed of all things depends upon his goodness in blessing, and his power in preserving. God signified this, when he gave the Law from Mount *Sinai*, promising the People, that if they kept his Commandments, he would give them rain in due season, and that the Earth should bring forth her Fruit*. Evidencing thereby, that those natural causes can produce nothing without his blessing; that though they have natural principles to produce such Fruits according to their natures, yet he can put a stop to their operations, and make all their Fruits abortive. He weighs the waters, how much shall be poured out in showrs of rain upon the parched Earth. He makes a decree for the rain, and gives the Clouds Commission to dissolve themselves so much and no more*. Yea, he doth order the conduct of them by counsel, as imploying his wisdom about these things which are of concern to the World. *Job* 37. 11, 12. *He scattereth his bright Cloud, and it is turned round about by his Counsels, that they may do whatsoever he commands them upon the face of the World in the Earth.*

* Andrews *Catechistical Doctrine.* p. 60.

* Jer. 33. 20.

* Lev. 26. 3, 4 *Then will I give you rain, and the Land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.*

* Job 28. 23, 24, 25, 26.

2. *To Civil actions.* Counsels of men are ordered by him to other ends than what they aim at, and which their Wisdom cannot discover. God stirred up

Senacherib

Senâcherib to be the Executioner of his juſtice upon the *Jews*, and afterwards upon the *Egyptians*, when that great King deſigned only the ſatisfaction of his ambition in the enlarging his Kingdom, and ſupporting his greatneſs. *Iſa.* 10. 6,7. *I will ſend him againſt an Hypocritical nation, and againſt the people of my wrath: howbeit he means not ſo, neither doth his heart think ſo,* [He deſigns not to be an inſtrument of my juſtice] *but it is in his heart to deſtroy and cut off Nations, not a few.* His thoughts and aims were far different from Gods thoughts. The hearts of Kings are in his hands, as wax in the hands of a man, which he can work into what form and ſhape he pleaſes. He hath the ſoveraignty over, and the ordering the hearts of Magiſtrates, *Pſa.* 47. 9. *the ſhields of the Earth belong unto God.* Counſels of men for the good of his people, are his act. The Princes adviſed *Jeremiah* and *Baruch*, *Jer.* 36. 19. to hide themſelves, which they did, yet *ver.* 26. it is ſaid the Lord hid them. Though they followed the advice of their Court-friends, yet they could not have been ſecured, had not God ſtep't in by his providential care, and covered them with his hand. It was the Courtiers Counſel, but God challenges the honour of the ſucceſs.

Military actions are ordered by him. Marſhal employments are ordered by his providence. He is the great General of Armies: 'Tis obſerved that in the two Prophets, *Iſaiah* and *Jeremiah*, God is called the Lord of Hoſts no leſs than a Hundred and Thirty times*.

Arrowſmith *Chain of Principles Exercit.* 1. Sect. 1.

3. *To preternatural actions.* God doth command Creatures to do thoſe things which are no way ſuitable to their inclinations, and gives them ſometimes for his own ſervice a writ of eaſe from the performance of the natural Law he hath impreſſed upon them. A devouring Raven is made by the Providence of God the Prophets Caterer in time of Famine*. God inſtructs a ravenous Bird in a leſſon of abſtinence for *Elijah*'s ſafety, and makes it both a Cook and a Serving-man to the Prophet. The Whale that delights to play about the deepeſt part of the Ocean, approaches to the ſhore, and attends upon *Jonah* to tranſport him to the dry Land *. The fire* was ſlacked by God, that it ſhould not ſinge the leaſt hair of the three Childrens heads, but was let looſe to conſume the Officers of the Court. The mouths of the ravenous Lyons which had been kept with an empty ſtomach, were muzled by God, that they ſhould not prey upon *Daniel* in a whole nights ſpace. God taught them an Heroical temperance with ſo dainty a diſh at their mouths, and yet they tore the accuſers in a trice.

* 1 Kings 17. 4.

* Jonah 2. 10.

* Dan. 3.

4. *To all ſupernatural and miraculous actions* of the Creatures which are as ſo many new Creations. As when the Sun went backward in *Hezekiah's* time; when it ſtood ſtill in the valley of *Ajalon*, that *Joſhuah* might compleat his Victory on the *Canaanites*. The boyſterous waves ſtood on a heap like Walls to ſecure the *Iſraelites* paſſage; but returning to their natural motion, were the *Ægyptians* Sepulchre. When Creatures have ſtept out of their natural courſe, it could not be the act of the Creature, it being ſo much againſt and above their natures, but it muſt be by the order of ſome Superior Power.

5. *To all fortuitous actions.* What is caſual to us, is ordained by God; as effects ſtand related to the ſecond cauſe, they are many times contingent; but as they ſtand related to the firſt cauſe, they are acts of his Counſel, and directed by his Wiſdom. God never left ſecond cauſes to ſtraggle and operate in a Vagabond way; tho the effect ſeem to us to be a looſe act of the Creature, yet it is directed by a Superior cauſe to a higher end than we can preſently imagine. The whole diſpoſing of the lot which is caſt into the lap, is from the Lord *. A Souldier ſhoots an arrow at random, and God guides it to be the Executioner of *Ahab* for his Sin *; which Death was foretold by *Micaiah*, *v.* 17, 28. God gives us a certain Rule to judge of ſuch contingencies, *Exod.* 21. 13. And *if a man lye not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand*; A man accidentally kills another, but it is done by a ſecret commiſſion from God. [*God delivered him into his hands.*] Providence is the great Clock, keeping time and order, not only hourly, but inſtantly to its own honour. *

*Pro. 16. 33.

* 1 King. 22. 34.

*Fuller *Eccleſ. Hiſt. Cent.* 6. *book* 2. *P* 51.

6. *To all voluntary actions.*

1. *To good actions.* Not by compelling, but ſweetly inclining, determining the Will, ſo that it doth that willingly, which by an unknown and unſeen neceſſi-

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ty cannot be omitted. It conſtrains not a man to good againſt his will, but powerfully moves the will to do that by conſent, which God hath determined ſhall be done. *The way of man is not in himſelf*; the motion is mans, the action is mans, but the direction of his ſteps is from God. *Jer.* 10. 23. *'Tis not in man that walketh, to direct his ſteps.*

2. *To evil actions.*

1. *In permitting them to be done.* Idolatries and follies of the Heathen were permitted by God. He checked them not in their courſe, but laid the reins upon there necks, and ſuffered them to run what race they pleaſed, *Acts* 14. 16. *Who in times paſt ſuffered all nations to walk in their own wayes.* Not the moſt execrable villany that ever was committed in the world, could have been done without his permiſſion. Sin is not *amabile propter ſe*, and therefore the permiſſion of it is not deſirable in it ſelf, but the permiſſion of it is only deſirable, and *honeſtatur ex fine.* God is good and wiſe and righteous in all his acts: ſo likewiſe in this act of permitting ſin: and therefore he wills it out of ſome good and righteous end, which belongs to the manifeſtation of his glory, which is *that* he intends in all the acts of his will; of which this is one. Wicked men are ſaid to be a ſtaff in Gods hand; as a man manages a ſtaff which is in his own power, ſo doth God manage wicked men for his own holy purpoſes, and they can go no further than God gives them licence.

2. *In ordering them.* God governs them by his own unſearchable Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and directs them to the beſt and holieſt ends. Contrary to the natures of the ſins, and the intentions of the ſinner. *Joſeph's* Brothers ſold him to gratifie their revenge, and God ordered it for their preſervation in a time of famine. *Pharaoh's* hardneſs is ordered by God for his own glory, and that Kings deſtruction: God decrees the delivering up Chriſt to Death, and *Herod*, *Pilate*, the Phariſees, and common rout of People in ſatisfying their own paſſion, do but execute what God had before ordained. *Act.* 4. 28. *for to do whatſoever thy hand and thy Counſel determined before to be done.* *Judas* his Covetouſneſs, and the Devils malice, are ordered by God to execute his decree for the redemption of the World. *Titus* the Emperour, his ambition led him to *Jeruſalem*, but Gods end is the fulfilling of his threatnings, and the taking revenge upon the *Jews* for their murdering of Chriſt. The aim of the Phyſician is the Patients health, when the intent of the Leeches is only to ſuck the blood. God hath holy ends in permitting ſin, while man hath unworthy ends in committing it. The rain which makes the Earth fruitful is exhaled out of the Salt-waters, which would of themſelves ſpoil the ground and make it unfruitful. *The deceiver and the deceived* are his, *Job* 12. 16. Both the action of the Devil the Seducer, and of wicked men the ſeduced, are reſtrained by God within due bounds, in ſubſerviency to his righteous will. [*For with him is ſtrength and wiſdom.*]

2. *As Providence is univerſal, ſo it is myſterious.* Who can trace the motions of Gods eyes in their race? He makes the *Clouds his Chariot** in his motions about the Earth, and his throne is in the dark. He walks upon the wings of the wind, His providential ſpeed makes it too quick for our underſtanding. His wayes are myſterious, and put the reaſon and wiſdom of men to a ſtand. The cleareſt ſighted Servants of God do not ſee the bottom of his works, the motion of Gods eyes is too quick for ours. *Second Propoſition.* *Pſal. 104. 3.

John Baptiſt is ſo aſtoniſht at the ſtrange condeſcention of his Saviour to be baptiſed of him, that he forbids it*; Man is a weak Creature, and cannot trace or ſet out the wiſdom of God. * *Mat.* 3.

But this myſterioufneſs and darkneſs of Providence adds a luſtre to it. As ſtones ſet in Ebony, though the grounds be dark, make the beauty and ſparkling the clearer.

1. *His wayes are above humane methods.* Dark Providences are often the groundwork of ſome excellent piece he is about to diſcover to the world. His methods are like a plaited Picture, which on the one ſide repreſents a Negro, on the other a Beauty. He lets *Sarahs* womb be dead, and then brings out the root of a numerous progeny. He makes *Jacob* a Cripple, and then a Prince to prevail with God; he gives him a wound, and then a bleſſing. He ſends not the Goſpel

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till reaſon was nonpluſt, and that the world in that higheſt wiſdom it had at that that time attained unto, was not able to arrive to the knowledge of God. 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. *After that the World by Wiſdom knew not God, it pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe.*

2. *His ends are of a higher ſtrain than the aims of men.* Who would have thought that the forces *Cyrus* raiſed againſt *Babylon* to ſatisfie his own ambition, ſhould be a means to deliver the *Iſraelites*, and reſtore the Worſhip of God in the Temple? God had this end, which *Iſaiah* prophecyed of, and *Cyrus* never dreamt of, *Iſa.* 82 .41 *That ſaith of* Cyrus, *thou art my Shepherd, and ſhalt perform all my pleaſure, even ſaying, that* Jeruſalem *ſhall be built*, &c. * And this a long time before *Cyrus* was born: *Pharaoh* ſent *Iſrael* a way in the very night, at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, the time perfixt by God; he could not keep them longer becauſe Gods promiſe, he would not becauſe of Gods Plagues. God aims at the glorifying his truth, in keeping touch with his word. *Pharaoh* deſigns not the accompliſhing Gods will, but his deliverance from Gods judgements.

* *Iſa.* 45. 1.

There is an obſervable conſideration to this purpoſe, how Gods ends are far different from mans. *Luke* 2. 1, 4. In the taxing the whole World by *Auguſtus*. *Auguſtus* out of pride to ſee what a numerous people he was Prince of, would tax the whole world: Some tell us he had appointed the enrolling the whole *Empire* Twenty Seven years before the Birth of our Saviour, and had proclaimed it at *Tarracon* in *Spain*: But ſoon after this proclamation, *Auguſtus* found a breaking out of ſome ſtirrs, and thereupon deferred his reſolution to ſome other fit time, which was the very time of the birth of Chriſt. See now Gods wiſe diſpoſal of things, in changing *Auguſtus*'s reſolution, and deferring it till the Forty Fourth year of his Reign, when Chrſt was ready to come into the World! And this by giving occaſion, yea, neceſſitating *Mary* to come from *Nazareth*, where *Joſeph* and *Mary* dwelt, who perhaps being big with Child, without this neceſſity laid upon her by the Emperors edict, would not have ventured upon the Journey to *Bethlehem*: there ſhe falls in travel, that ſo Chriſt the ſeed of *David* being conceived in *Nazareth* ſhould be born at *Bethlem*, where *Jeſſe* lived, and *David* was born. How wiſely doth God order the ambition and pride of men to fulfil his own predictions, and to publiſh the truth of Chriſts birth of the ſeed of *David*, for the names of *Joſeph* and *Mary* were found in the Records of *Rome* in *Tertullians* time?

3. *God hath ſeveral ends in the ſame action.* *Jacob* is oppreſt with Famine, *Pharaoh* enricht with plenty, but *Joſeph's* impriſonment is in order to his Fathers relief, and *Pharaohs* wealth; his Miſtreſſes anger flings him into a Priſon. *Joſeph* is wronged, and hath Captivity for a reward of his chaſtity. God makes it a ſtep to his advancement, and by this way brings him from a Captive to be a favourite. What is Gods end? Not only to preſerve the *Ægyptian* Nation, but old *Jacob* and his *Family*. Was this all that God aimed at? No, He hath a further deſign, and lays the Foundation of ſomething to be acted in the future age. By this means *Jacob* is brought into *Ægypt*, leaves his poſterity there, makes way for that glory in the working of the future miracles for their deliverance, ſuch an action that the world ſhould continually ring of, and which ſhould be a type of the ſpiritual deliverance by Chriſt.

4. *God has more remote ends than ſhort ſighted Souls are able to eſpy.* God doth not eye the preſent advantage of himſelf and his Creature, but hath an eye to his own glory in all, yea, in the very laſt ages of the world. In ſmall things, there are often great deſigns laid by God, and myſteries in the leaſt of his acts. *Iſaac* was delivered from his Fathers Sword, when he was intentionally dead, to ſet forth to the World a type of Chriſts reſurrection, and a Ram is conducted thither by God, and entangled in the thickets, and appointed to ſacrifice, whereby God ſets forth a type of Chriſts death.* He uſeth the captivities of the People, to enlarge the bounds of the Goſpel.

* *Halls Contempl. P.* 796.

The wiſe men were guided by a Star to Chriſt as King of the *Jews*, and come to pay homage to him in his infancy; when was the foundation of this remarkable event laid? Probably, in *Balaams* prophecy, *Numb.* 24.17. *I ſhall ſee him, but not now: I ſhall behold him, but not nigh. There ſhall come a ſtar out of* Jacob, *and a Scepter ſhall*

ſhall riſe out of Iſrael, &c.) tranſmitted by tradition to thoſe wiſe men, and perhaps renewed by *Sibilla Chaldæa*, and confirm'd in their minds by the *Jews*, whilſt in the *Babyloniſh* captivity they converſed with them. Thus God many ages before in this prophecy had an end in promoting the readier entertainment of Chriſt among this people, when he ſhould be born; what the Wiſe mens end was, the Scripture doth not acquaint us; but however, their gifts were a means to preſerve our Saviour, *Joſeph* and *Mary*, from the rage of a Tyrant, and affording them wherewithal to ſupport them in *Ægypt*, whither they were ordered by God to fly for ſecurity. So * God threatens by the Prophet the Noble-man for his ſcoffing unbelief, that though he ſhould ſee the plenty, that he ſhould not taſte of it. See how God doth order Second cauſes, naturally to bring about his own decree! The King gives this perſon charge of the gate; whilſt the People croud for proviſion to ſatisfie their hunger, they accompliſh the threatning which they had no intentions to do, and trod him to death. Now I come to ſhew, That there is a Providence,

* 2 King. 7. 1, 2, 17.

1. *The wiſdom of God would not be ſo perſpicuous, were there not a providence in the World.* Tis eminent in the Creation, but more illuſtrious in the Government of the Creatures. A muſician diſcovers more skill in the touching an inſtrument, and ordering the ſtrings, to ſound what notes he pleaſeth, than he doth in the firſt framing and making of it. * All Gods providences are but his touch of the ſtrings of this great inſtrument of the World. And all his works are excellent, becauſe they are the fruit of his wonderful counſel, and unſearchable wiſdom, which is moſt ſeen in his providence, as in reading the verſes before. His power is glorified in creating and upholding this Fabrick: How ſhall his wiſdom be glorified but in his government of it? Surely God will be no leſs intent upon the honour of his wiſdom, than upon that of his power. For if any Attribute may be ſaid to excel another, it is his wiſdom and holineſs, becauſe thoſe are perfections which God hath ſtampt upon the nobler part of his Creation. Inferiour Creatures have more power and ſtrength than man, but Wiſdom is the perfection of a rational Creature. Now it is Gods Wiſdom to direct all things to their proper end, as well as to appoint them their ends, which direction muſt be by a particular providence, eſpecially in thoſe things which know not their end, and have no reaſon to guide them; We know in the World it is not a part of Wiſdom to leave things to chance, but to ſtate our ends, and lay a plat-form of thoſe means which direct to an attaining of them. And Wiſdom is moſt ſeen in drawing all things together, and making them ſubſervient to the end he hath fixed to himſelf; and therefore one of the great things that ſhall be admired at laſt, next to the great work of redemption, will be the harmony and conſent of thoſe things which ſeemed contrary, how they did all conſpire for the bringing about that end which God aimed at.

* Iſa. 28. 29. *This alſo comes from the Lord of Hoſts, which is wonderful in Counſel, and excellent in working.*

2. *The means whereby God acts, diſcover a providence,* He acts. *Secondly.*

1. *By ſmall means.* The conſiderable actions in the World have uſually very ſmall beginnings. As of a few letters, how many Thouſand words are made? of Ten figures, how many Thouſand Numbers? And a point is the beginning of all Geometry. A little ſtone flung into a pond, makes a little circle, then a greater, till it inlargeth it ſelf to both the ſides. So from ſmall beginnings, God doth cauſe an efflux through the whole World.

1. *He uſeth ſmall means in his ordinary works.* The common works of nature ſpring from ſmall beginnings. Great Plants are formed from ſmall ſeeds. The Clouds which water the great Garden of the World, are but a Collection of Vapours. The nobleſt operations of the Soul are wrought in an Organ, *viz.* the Brain, compoſed of coagulated Phlegm. Who would imagine that *Saul* in ſeeking his Fathers Aſſes, ſhould find a Kingdom?

2. *In his extraordinary works he uſeth ſmall means.* *Eliſha* that waited upon *Elijah*, and poured water upon his hands, ſhall do greater miracles then his Maſter. And the Apoſtles ſhall do greater works than Chriſt *; that the world may know that God is not tyed to any means that men count excellent; that all Creatures are his, and act not of themſelves, but by his Spirit and power.

* *John.* 14. 12.

In his extraordinary works of *Juſtice.* He makes a Rod in the hand of *Moſes* to

confound the skill of the *Ægyptian* Magicians: He commiſſioned Frogs and Flyes to countercheck a powerful and mighty people; When *Benhadad* was ſo proud as to ſay, the duſt of *Samaria* ſhould not ſuffice for handfuls for his Army, God ſcattered his army by the Lacquies of the Princes * about two hundred thirty two *v.* 15. The little ſling in the hand of *David* a youth, guided by Gods eye and hand, is a match fit enough for a blaſphemous Gyant, and defeats the ſtrength of a Weavers beam.

* 1 *King* 20. 14. *The young men of the Princes of the Provinces.*

In his extraordinary works of *mercy*.

1. *In the deliverance of a people or perſon.* A dream was the occaſion of *Joſephs* greatneſs, and *Joſephs* preſervation. He uſed the Cacklings of Geeſe to ſave the *Roman* Capitol from a ſurprize by the *Gauls*. He picks out *Gideon* to be a General, who was leaſt in his Fathers eſteem *; and what did his army conſiſt of, but few, and thoſe fearful *; thoſe that took water with their hands, (which as *Joſephus* ſaith, is a natural ſign of fear) did God chooſe out to overthrow the *Midianites* who had over-ſpread the Land as Graſhoppers, to ſhew that he can make the moſt fearful men to be ſufficient inſtruments againſt the greateſt powers, when the concernments of his Church and People lye at ſtake.

* *Judg.* 6. 15.
* *Judg.* 7. 6, 7.

God ſo delights in thus baffling the pride of men, that *Aſa* uſes it as an argument to move God to deliver him in the ſtrait he was in, when *Zerah* the *Æthiopian* came againſt him with a great multitude, when he was but a ſmall point and center in the midſt of a wide circumference *. Hereby God ſets off his own power, and evidenceth his ſuperintendent care of his People. It was more ſignally the arm of God for *Moſes* to confound *Pharaoh* with his Lice and Frogs, than if he had beaten him in a plain field with his Six Hundred Thouſand *Iſraelites*.

* 2 *Chron.* 41. 11. *Lord, it is nothing with thee to help with many or with few.*

2. *In the Salvation of the ſoul.* Our Saviour himſelf, though God, the great redeemer of the World, was ſo mean in the eyes of the World, that he calls himſelf a *worm*, and *no man* *. He picks out many times the moſt unlikely perſons to accompliſh the greateſt purpoſes for mens Souls. He lodgeth the Treaſures of Wiſdom in Veſſels of Earth; He choſe not the Cedars of *Lebanon*, but the Shrubs of the valley; not the learned Phariſees of *Jeruſalem*, but the poor men of *Galilee*; *out of the mouths of Babes and Sucklings, he ordains praiſe to himſelf.*

* *Pſal.* 22. 6.

The Apoſtles breeding was not capable of ennobling their minds, and fitting them for ſuch great actions as Chriſt employed them in. But after he had new-moulded and enflamed their Spirits, he made them of Fiſhermen, greater conquerors of the World, than the moſt magnified Grandees could pretend to.

Thus Salvation is wrought by a crucified Chriſt; and that God who made the world by wiſdom, would ſave it by the fooliſhneſs of preaching. And make *Paul*, the leaſt of the Apoſtles as he terms himſelf, more ſucceſful than thoſe who had been inſtructed at the feet of Chriſt *.

* 2 *Cor.* 15. 9. 10.

2. *By contrary means.* God by his Providence makes contrary things contribute to his glory, as contrary Colours in a picture do to the beauty of the piece. Nature is Gods inſtrument to do whatſoever he pleaſes; and therefore nothing ſo contrary, but he may bring to his own ends. As in ſome Engines you ſhall ſee wheels have contrary motions, and yet all in order to one and the ſame end. God cured thoſe by a Brazen Serpent, which were ſtung by the fiery ones; whereas Braſs is naturally hurtful to thoſe that are bit by Serpents *.

* Grotius *Mat.* 20. 16. *Æs naturaliter nocet τοῖς ὀφιοδήκτοις.*

1. *Afflictions.* *Joſeph* is ſold for a ſlave, and God ſends him as a Harbinger; his Brothers ſold him to deſtroy him, and God ſends him to ſave them. *Pauls* Bonds in the opinion of ſome might have ſtifled the Goſpel; but he tells us, that they had fallen out to the furtherance of the Goſpel, *Phil.* 1. 12.

2. *Sins.* * God doth often effect his juſt *Will* by our weakneſs; neither thereby juſtifying our infirmities, nor blemiſhing his own action: *Jacob* gets the bleſſing by unlawful means, telling no leſs than two lies to attain it; [I am *Eſau*, and this is veniſon] But hereby God brings about the performance of his promiſe, which *Iſaac's* natural affection to *Eſau* would have hindred *Jacob* of.

* Hall *contempl. book* 3. p. 806, 807.

The breach of the firſt Covenant was an occaſion of introducing a better. Mans ſinning away his firſt ſtock, was an occaſion to God to enrich him with a ſurer. The loſs of his original righteouſneſs made way for a clearer and more durable. The folly of man made way for the evidence of Gods wiſdom; and the ſin of man for the manifeſtation of his grace; and by the wiſe diſpoſal of God, opens a way for

for the honour of those attributes, which would not else have been experimentally known by the Sons of men.

3. *Casual means.* The Viper which leapt upon *Pauls* hand out of the bundle of sticks, was a casual act, but designed by the providence of God for the propagation of the Gospel. *Pharaoh's* Daughter comes casually to wash her self in the river, but indeed conducted by the secret influence of God upon her, to rescue *Moses*, exposed to a forlorn condition, and breed him up in the *Ægyptian* learning, that he might be the fitter to be his kindreds deliverer. *Saul* had been hunting *David*, and at last had lodged him in a place whence he could not well escape, and being ready to seize upon him in that very instant of time, a Post comes to *Saul*, and brings the news that the *Philistines* had invaded the Land, which cut out other work for him, and *David* for that time escapes*. * 1 *Sam.* 23. 26, 27, 28.

3. Reason. *Such actions and events of things are in the world, which cannot rationally be ascribed to any other cause than a supreme providence.* Tis so in common things. Men have the same parts, the same outward advantages, the same industry, and yet prosper not alike. One labours much, and gets little; another uses not altogether such endeavours, and hath riches flowing in upon him. Men lay their projects deep, and question not the accomplishment of them, and are disappointed by some strange and unforeseen accident. And sometimes men attain what they desire in a different way, and many times contrary to the Method they had projected. This is evidenced, *Thirdly.*

1. *By the restraints upon the passions of men:* the waves of the Sea, and the tumults of the People are much of the same impetuous natures, and are quelled by the same power. * Tumults of the People could no more be stilled by the force of a man, than the Waves of the Sea by a puff of breath. How strangely did God qualify the hearts of the *Ægyptians* willingly to submit to the sale of their Land, when they might have risen in a tumult, broke open the Granaries, and supplied their wants*. Indeed, if the World were left to the conduct of chance and fortune, what work would the savage lusts and passions of men make among us? How is it possible that any but an Almighty power can temper so many jarring Principles, and rank so many quarrelsom and trubulent Spirits in a due order? If those bruitish passions which boyl in the hearts of men, were let loose by that infinite power that bridles them, how soon would the World be run headlong into unconceivable confusions, and be rent in pieces by its own disorders? * *Psal.* 65. 7. *which stilleth the noise of the Sea, and tumult of the People.* * *Gen.* 47. 19, 21.

2. *By the sudden changes which are made upon the Spirits of men for the preservation of others.* God takes off the Spirit of some as he did the wheels from the *Egyptian* Chariots, in the very act of their rage. *Paul* was struck down, and changed while he was yet breathing out threatnings, *&c.* God sees all the workings of mens hearts, all those cruel intentions in *Esau* against his Brother *Jacob*; but God on a sudden turns away that torrent of hatred, and disposeth *Esau* for a friendly meeting*. And he who had before an exasperated malice by reason of the loss of his birth-right and blessing, was in a moment a changed man. Thus was *Sauls* heart changed towards *David*, and from a Persecutor, turns a justifier of him, confesseth *Davids* innocence, and his own guilt, 1 *Sam.* 24. 17, 18. *Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil,* &c. What reason can be rendred for so sudden a change in *Saul's* revengeful Spirit, which had all the force of interest to support it, and considered by him at that very time? For *vers.* 24. he takes special notice that his Family should be disinherited, and *David* be his Successor in the Throne. How suddenly did God turn the Edge of the Sword, and the heart of an Enemy from *Jehosaphat.* 2 *Chron.* 18. 31. *Jehosaphat* cried out, and the Lord helped him, and God moved them to depart from him. The holy Ghost emphatically ascribes it to Gods motion of their wills, by twice expressing it: But stranger is the preservation of the *Jews* from *Hamans* bloody designs, after the decree was gone out against them. *Mordecai* the *Jew* is made *Ahasuerus's* Favourite by a strange wheeling of Providence: First, The Kings Eyes are held waking, and he is inclined to pass away the solitariness of the night with a Book, rather then a game, or some other Court past-time; no book did he fix on but the Records of that Empire, no place in that voluminous book, but the Chronicle of *Mordecai's* service * in the discovery of a treason against * *Esther* 6. 1, 2.

againſt the Kings life; he doth not careleſly paſs it over, but enquires what recompence had been beſtowed on *Mordecai* for ſo conſiderable a ſervice, and this juſt before *Mordecai* ſhould have been deſtroyed; had *Ahaſuerus* ſlept, *Mordecai* and all his Countrey-men had been ſacrificed notwithſtanding all his Loyalty. Could this be a caſt of blind chance which had ſuch a concatenation of Evidences in it for a ſuperior power?

3. *In cauſing Enemies to do things for others which are contrary to all rules of policy.* 'Tis wonderful, that the *Jews*, a People known to be of a ſtubborn nature, and tenacious of their laws wherein they differed from all the nations, ſhould in the worſt of their captivities be ſo often befriended by their Conquerors, not only to rebuild their City, and reedify their Temple, but at the charge of their Conquerors too. The very Enemies that had captived the *Jews*, though they knew them to be a People apt to rebel: That the People whoſe Temple they helped to build, would keep up a diſtinct worſhip and difference in Religion, which is uſually attended with the greateſt animoſities. And when they knew it to be ſo ſtrong in ſcituation, as to be a Fort as well as a place of Worſhip. That for this, their Enemies ſhould furniſh them with materials, when they were not in a condition to procure any for themſelves, and give them money out of the Publick Exchequer, and timber out of the Kings Foreſt, as we read*. And all this they lookt upon as the hand of God. *Ezra* 6. 22. [*The Lord had turned the heart of the King of Aſſyria unto them, to ſtrengthen their hands in the work of the houſe of God.* And the Heathen *Artaxerxes* takes notice of it. *Cicero* tells us, that in his time Gold was carried out of *Italy* for the ornament of the Temple. They had their rites in religion preſerved intire under the *Roman* Government, though more different from the *Roman* cuſtoms than any Nation ſubdued by them. *Dion*, and *Seneca*, and others obſerve, that whereever they were tranſplanted, they proſper'd and gave Laws to the victors. And this was ſo generally acknowledged, that *Hamans* Cabinet-counſel (who were ſurely none of the meaneſt States-men) gave him no hopes of ſucceſs, when he appeared againſt *Mordecai*, becauſe he was of the race of the *Jews*; ſo much did God own them by his gracious Providence: They were alſo ſo intire in all their Captivities before their crucifying of our Lord and Saviour, that they count their Genealogies.

* *Ezra* 1. 1, 2, 4, 7. *Ezra* 4. 12, 15, 19. *Ezra* 6. 4, 5, 8, 9, 11. *Nehem.* 2. 8.

* *Eſth.* 6. 13.

4. *In infatuating the Counſels of men.* God ſets a ſtamp of folly upon the Wiſdom of men, *Iſa.* 44. 25. *That turns the wiſe men backward, and makes their knowledge fooliſhneſs. And makes their Counſels as Chaff and Stubble.* Iſa. 33. 11. [*ye ſhall conceive chaff, and ſhall bring forth ſtubble*]. *Herod* was a crafty perſon, inſomuch that Chriſt calls him Fox. How fooliſh was he in managing his project of deſtroying Chriſt, his ſuppoſed competitor in the Kingdom, when the wiſe men came to *Jeruſalem*, and brought the news of the birth of a King of the *Jews*? He calls a *Synod* of the ableſt men among the *Jews*. The reſult of it is to manifeſt the truth of Gods perdiction in the place of our Saviours birth, and to direct the wiſe men in their way to him. *Herod* had no reſolutions, but bloody, concerning Chriſt*. God blinds his mind in the midſt of all his craft, that he ſees not thoſe rational waies, which he might make uſe of for the deſtruction of that which he feared; he ſends thoſe wiſe men, meer ſtrangers, to him, and intruſts them with ſo great a concern; he goes not himſelf, nor ſends any of his guard with them to cut him off immediately upon the diſcovery, but leaves the whole conduct of the buſineſs to thoſe he had no acquaintance with, and of whoſe faithfulneſs he could have no aſſurance. God croſſes the intentions of men. *Joab* ſlew *Amaſa*, becauſe he thought him his rival in *Davids* favour, and then imagined he had rid his hands of all that could ſtand in his way; yet God raiſed up *Benajah*, who drew *Joab* from the horns of the *Altar*, and cut him in pieces at *Solomons* comand. God doth ſo order it, many times, that when the moſt rational Counſel is given to men, they have not hearts to follow it. *Achitophel* gave as ſutable Counſel for *Abſaloms* deſign, as the beſt Stateſman in the World could give*; To ſurprize *David* while he was amuz'd at his Sons rebellion, and dejected with grief at ſo unnatural an action, and whilſt his forces had not yet made their Rendezvouz, and thoſe that were with him were tired in their march. Speed was beſt in attempts of this nature. *David* in all probability

* *Mat.* 2. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

* 2 *Sam.* 17. 1, 2.

bility had been cut off, and the hearts of the People would have melted at the fall of their Soveraign. But *Abſalom* inclines rather to *Huſhai's* Counſel, which was not ſo proper for the buſineſs he had engaged in, *v.* the 7*th*, to *v.* 14. Now this was from God. *For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good Counſel of Achitophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Abſalom.* So fooliſh were the *Egyptians* againſt reaſon, in entring into the Red Sea after the *Iſraelites*; for could they poſſibly think that that God who had by a ſtrong hand, and an Army of Prodigies brought *Iſrael* out of their Captivity, and conducted them thus far, and now by a miracle opened the Red Sea, and gave them paſſage through the bowels of it, ſhould give their Enemies the ſame ſecurity in purſuing them, and unravel all that web he had been ſo long a working?

5. *In making the Counſels of men ſubſervient to the very ends they deſign againſt.* God brings a Cloud upon mens underſtandings, and makes them the contrivers of their own ruin, wherein they intend their own ſafety, and gains honour to himſelf by outwitting the Creature. The *Babel*-projectors fearing to be ſcattered abroad, would erect a power to prevent, and this proved the occaſion of diſperſing them over the World in ſuch a confuſion, that they could not underſtand one another *. God ordered *Pharaohs* policies to accompliſh the end againſt which they were directed; He is afraid *Iſrael* ſhould grow too mighty, and ſo wreſt the Kingdom out of his hands, and therefore he would oppreſs them to hinder their increaſe, which made them both ſtronger, and more numerous. [Exerciſe ſtrengthens men, and luxurie ſoftens the Spirit.] The *Jews* fear, if they ſuffered Chriſt to make a farther progreſs in his Doctrine and miracles, they ſhould loſe *Cæſars* favour, and expoſe their Countery as a prey to a *Roman* Army; this cauſed their deſtruction by thoſe Enemies they thought by this means to prevent: God ordering it ſo, that a *Roman* Army was poured in upon them, which ſwept them into all corners of the Earth. Prieſts and Phariſees ſit cloſe together in Counſel, how to hinder mens believing in Chriſt, and the reſult of their conſultation was to put him to death, and no man then would believe in a dead perſon, not capable of working any miracles *, for the amuſing of the People, and by this means there were a greater number of believers on him, than in the time of his life, according to his own prediction, *Joh.* 12.32. *and I, if I be lifted up from the Earth, will draw all men unto me.*

* *Gen.* 11.4,8.

* *Joh.* 11.47, 48, 49, 50.

6. *In making the fancies of men ſubſervient to their own ruine.* God brings about ſtrange events by the meer imaginations and conceits of men, which are contrary to common and natural obſervation, and the ordinary courſe of rational conſequences *. The Army of the *Moabites* which had invaded *Iſrael*, thought the two Kings of *Judah* and *Iſrael* had turned their Swords againſt one another, becauſe the riſing Sun had coloured thoſe unexpected waters, and made them look red, which they took for the blood of their Enemies, and ſo diſorderly run without examination of the truth of their conceit; but inſtead of dividing the ſpoil, they left their lives upon the points of the *Iſraelites* ſwords. So the *Syrian* Army are ſcared with a panick fear, and ſcatter themſelves upon an empty ſound *. Thus a dream ſtruck a terror into the *Midianites*, and the noiſe of the broken pot-ſheards made them fear ſome treaſon in their Camp, and cauſed them to turn their ſwords into one anothers bowels, *Judg.* 7. 19, 22, *The Lord ſet every mans ſword againſt his fellow.*

* 2 *King.* 3. 22, 23.

* 2 *King.* 7. 6.

First *Queſtion.* If Gods providence orders all things in the World, and concurs to every thing, *how will you free God from being the Author of ſin?* *Queſt.*

Anſwer in ſeveral Propoſitions. *Anſw.*

1. *'Tis certain, God hath a hand about all the ſinful actions in the World.* The ſelling *Joſeph* to the *Iſhmaelites*, was the act of his Brethren; the ſending him into *Egypt*, was the act of God *, *Gen.* 45. 8. *It was not you that ſent me hither, but God.* Where *Joſeph* aſcribes it more to God than to them. Their wicked intention was to be rid of him, that he might tell no more tales of them to his Father: Gods gracious intention was to advance him for his honour and their good; and to bring about this gracious purpoſe, he makes uſe of their ſinful practice.

* *Pſa.* 105.17. *He ſent a man before them, even Joſeph, who was ſold for a Servant.*

practice. Gods end was righteous, when theirs was wicked. 'Tis ſaid, God moved *David* to number the People, 2 *Sam.* 24. 1. *The anger of the Lord was kindled againſt Iſrael, and he moved David againſt them to ſay, Go number Iſrael and Judah.* Yet Satan is ſaid to provoke *David* to number the People, 1 Chron. 21. 1. *And Satan ſtood up againſt Iſrael, and provoked David to number Iſrael.* Here are two agents; But the text mentions Gods hand in it out of Juſtice to puniſh *Iſrael*; Satans end, no queſtion, was out of malice to deſtroy. Satan wills it as a ſin. God as a puniſhment. God, ſay ſome, *permiſſive*, Satan *Efficaciter*. In the moſt villanous and unrighteous action that ever was done, God is ſaid to have an influence on it. God is ſaid to deliver up Chriſt, *Act.* 2. 23. *Him, being delivered by the determinate Counſel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain.* Acts 4. 28. *For to do whatſoever thy hand and thy Counſel determined before to be done.* Not barely as an act of his preſcience, but his Counſel, and that determinate, *i. e.* ſtable and irreverſible. He makes a diſtinction between thoſe two acts. In God it was an act of Counſel, in them an act of wickedneſs [*by wicked hands*;] there was Gods Counſel about it, an actual tradition. *Rom.* 8. 32. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.* All the Agents had ſeveral ends. God in that act aimed at the redemption of the world; Satan at the preventing it; *Judas* to ſatisfie his covetouſneſs; the *Jews* to preſerve themſelves from the *Roman* invaſion, and out of malice to him for ſo ſharply reproving them. God had a gracious principle of love to mankind, and acted for the Salvation of the World in it; the inſtruments had baſe principles and ends, and moved freely in obedience to them. So in the affliction of *Job*, both God and Satan had an hand in it. *Job* 1. 12. *The Lord ſaid unto Satan, behold, all that he hath is in thy power, verſ.* 11. *Touch all that he hath, and he will curſe thee to thy face*; their ends were different, the one righteous for Tryal, the other malicious againſt God, that he might be curſed, againſt *Job* that he might be damned. Gods end was the brightning of his grace, and the Devils end was the ruin of his integrity, and diſpoiling him of Gods favour.

* *Senguer. Metaph. lib.* 2 *cap.* 15. *Sect.* 5.

2. *In all Gods acts about ſin, there is no ſtain to Gods holineſs* *. In ſecond cauſes, one and the ſame action proceeding from divers cauſes, in reſpect of one cauſe, may be ſinful; in reſpect of the other, righteous. As when two Judges condemn a guilty perſon, one condemns him out of love to juſtice, becauſe he is guilty; the other condemns him out of a private hatred and ſpleen: One reſpects him as a Malefactor only, the other as a private Enemy chiefly. Here is the ſame action with two concurring cauſes, one being wicked in it, the other righteous. Much more may we conceive it in the concurrence of the Creator, with the action of the Creature.

1. *God moves every thing in his ordinary providence according to their particular natures.* God moves every thing ordinarily according to the nature he finds it in. Had we ſtood in innocency, we had been moved according to that originally righteous nature; but ſince our Fall we are moved according to that nature introduced by us with the expulſion of the other. Our firſt corruption was our own act, not Gods work; we owe our Creation to God, our corruption to our ſelves. Now, ſince God will govern his Creature, I do not ſee how it can be otherwiſe, than according to the preſent nature of the Creature, unleſs God be pleaſed to alter that nature. God forces no man againſt his nature; he doth not force the will in converſion, but graciouſly and powerfully inclines it. He doth never force nor incline the will to ſin, but leaves it to the corrupt habits it hath ſettled in it ſelf. *Pſal.* 81. 12. *So I gave them up to their own hearts luſts, and they walked in their own Counſels*; Counſels of their own framing, not of Gods. He moves the will which is *ſponte mala*, according to its own nature and counſels. As a man flings ſeveral things out of his hand, which are of ſeveral figures, ſome ſpherical, tetragons, cylinders, conicks, ſome round, and ſome ſquare; though the motion be from the agent, yet the variety of their motions is from their own figure and frame; and if any will hold his hand upon a ball in its motion, regularly it will move according to his nature and figure; and a man by caſting a boul out of his hand, is the cauſe of the motion, but the bad biaſs is the cauſe of its

its irregular motion. The power of action is from God, but the viciouſneſs of that action from our own nature. As when a Clock or Watch hath ſome fault in any of the wheels, the man that winds it up, or putting his hand upon the wheels moves them, he is the cauſe of the motion, but it is the flaw in it, or deficiency of ſomething is the cauſe of its erroneous motion; that error was not from the perſon that made it, or the perſon that winds it up, and ſets it on going, but from ſome other cauſe; yet till it be mended it will not go otherwiſe, ſo long as it is ſet upon motion. Our motion is from God. [Acts 17. 28. *in him we move*] but not the diſorder of that motion. 'Tis the foulneſs of a mans ſtomach at Sea is the cauſe of his ſickneſs, and not the Pilots government of the ſhip.

2. *God doth not infuſe the luſt, or excite it,* tho he doth preſent the object about which the luſt is exerciſed. God delivered up Chriſt to the *Jews*, he preſented him to them: but never commanded them to crucifie him, nor infuſed that malice into them, nor quickned it; but he ſeeing ſuch a frame, withdrew his reſtraining grace, and left them to the conduct of their own vitiated wills. All the corruption in the World ariſeth from luſt in us, not from the object which God in his providence preſents to us. 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. *the corruption that is in the World through luſt.* The Creature is from God, but the abuſe of it from corruption. God created the grape, & filled the Vine with a ſprightlineſs; but he doth never infuſe a drunken frame into a man, or excite it. Providence preſents us with the Wine, but the precept is to uſe it ſoberly. Can God be blamed, if that which is good in it ſelf, be turned into Poyſon by others? No more than the flower can be called a criminal, becauſe the Spiders nature turns that into venome, which is ſweet in it ſelf. Man hath ſuch a nature not from Creation, wherein God is poſitive; but from corruption, wherein God is permiſſive. Providence brings a man into ſuch a condition of poverty, but it doth not encourage his ſtubbornneſs and impatience. There is no neceſſity upon thee from God to exerciſe thy ſin under affliction, when others under the ſame exerciſe their graces. The Rod makes the Child ſmart, but it is its own ſtubbornneſs makes it curſe. In ſhort, though it be by Gods permiſſion that we *can* do evil, yet it is not by his inſpiration that we *will* to do evil; that is wholly from our ſelves.

3. *God ſupports the faculties wherewith a man ſinneth, and ſupports a man in that act wherein he ſinneth, but concurs not to the ſinfulneſs of that act.* No ſin doth properly conſiſt in the act it ſelf, as an act, but in the deficiency of that act from the rule. No action wherein there is ſin, but may be done as an action, though not as an irregular action. Killing a man is not in it ſelf unlawful, for then no Magiſtrate ſhould Execute a Malefactor for murdering another, and juſtice would ceaſe in the World; man alſo muſt diveſt himſelf of all thoughts of preſerving his Life againſt an invader; but to kill a man without juſt cauſe, without authority, without rule, contrary to rule, out of revenge, is unlawful. So that it is not the act, as an act, is the ſin, but the ſwerving of that act from the rule, makes it a ſinful act: So ſpeaking as ſpeaking, is not a ſin, for it is a power and act God hath endued us with; but ſpeaking irreverently and diſhonourably of God, or falſly and ſlandrouſly of man, or any otherwiſe irregularly, therein the ſin lyes. So that it is eaſie to conceive that an act and the viciouſneſs of it are ſeparable. That act which is the ſame in kind with another, may be laudable, and the other baſe and vile in reſpect of its circumſtances. The mind wherewith a man doth this or that act, and the irregularity of it, makes a man a criminal. There is a concurrence of God to the act wherein we ſin, but the ſinfulneſs of that act is purely from the inherent corruption of the Creature. As the power and act of ſeeing is communicated to the eye by the Soul, but the ſeeing doubly or dimly, is from the vitiouſneſs of the Organ, the eye. God hath no manner of immediate efficiency in producing ſin; as the Sun is not the efficient cauſe of darkneſs, though the darkneſs immediately ſucceeds the ſetting of the Sun, but it is the deficient cauſe. So God withdraws his grace, and leaves us to that luſt which is in our wills. *Act.* 14. 16. *Who in times paſt ſuffered all Nations to walk in their own wayes.* He beſtowed no grace upon them, but left them to themſelves. As a man who lets a glaſs fall out of his hand is not the efficient cauſe that the glaſs breaks, but its own brittle nature; yet he is the deficient cauſe, becauſe he withdraws his ſupport from it. God is not obliged to give us grace, becauſe we have made a total for-

forfeiture of it. He is not a Debtor to any man by way of merit, of any thing but puniſhment. He is indeed in ſome ſence a debtor to thoſe that are in Chriſt upon the account of Chriſts purchaſe and his own promiſe, but not by any merits of theirs.

4. *Gods providence is converſant about ſin, as a puniſhment, yet in a very righteous manner.* God did not will the firſt ſin of *Adam* as a puniſhment, becauſe there was no puniſhment due to him before he ſinned, but he willed the continuance of it as a puniſhment to the nature *ſub ratione boni*. This being a judicial act of God, is therefore righteouſly willed by him. Puniſhment is a moral good. 'Tis alſo a righteous thing to ſuit the puniſhment to the nature of the offence, and what can be more righteous than to puniſh a man by that wherein he offends? Hence God is ſaid to give up men to ſin. *Rom.* 2. 26, 27. *for this cauſe God gave them up unto vile affections.* And *to ſend ſtrong deluſions that they may believe a lye.* And the reaſon is rendred 2 *Theſ.* 2. 12. *that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs**. What more righteous than to make thoſe vile affections, and that unrighteouſneſs their puniſhment, which they made their pleaſure, and to leave them to purſue their own ſinful inclinations, and make them (as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks) *Pſal.* 5. 10. *fall by their own Counſels?* A Drunkards Beaſtlineſs is his puniſhment as well as his Sin. Thus God delivers up ſome to their own luſts as a puniſhment both to themſelves and others. As he hardened *Pharaohs* heart for the deſtruction both of himſelf and his People.

2 *Theſ.* 2. 11.

5. *God by his providence draws glory to himſelf, and good out of ſin.* 'Tis the higheſt excellency to draw good out of evil, and it is Gods right to manifeſt his excellency when he pleaſes, and to direct that to his honour, which is acted againſt his Law. The holineſs of God could never intend Sin as Sin. But the Wiſdom of God foreſeeing it, and decreeing to permit it, intended the making it ſubſervient to his own honour. He would not permit it but for ſome good, becauſe he is infinitely good, and could not by reaſon of that goodneſs, ſuffer that which is purely evil, if by his Wiſdom he could not raiſe good out of it: 'Tis purely evil as it is contrary to Law; It is good *ratione finis* as God orders it by his Providence; yet that goodneſs flows not from the nature of ſin, but from the wiſe diſpoſal of God.

As God at the Creation framed a beautiful world out of a *Chaos*, out of matter without form, and void. So by his infinite wiſdom he extracts honour to himſelf, out of the ſins of men. As ſin had diſhonoured him at its entrance in defacing his works, and depraving his Creature: So he would make uſe of the ſins of men in repairing his honour, and reſtoring the Creature.

'Tis not conceivable by us, what way there could be more congruous to the wiſdom and holineſs of God, as the ſtate of the World then ſtood, to bring about the death of Chriſt, which in his decree was neceſſary to the ſatisfaction of his juſtice, without ordering the evil of ſome mens hearts to ſerve his gracious purpoſe. If we could ſuppoſe that Chriſt could commit ſome capital crime for which he ſhould deſerve death, which was impoſſible by reaſon of the hypoſtatical union, the whole deſign of God for redemption had ſunk to the ground. Therefore God doth reſtrain or let out the fury of mens paſſions, and the corrupt habits of their wills to ſuch a degree as ſhould anſwer directly to the full point of his moſt gracious will, and no further. He lets out their malice ſo far as was conducing to the grand deſign of his death, and reſtrains it from every thing that might impair the truth of any prediction, as in the parting his garments, or breaking his bones. If God hath put him to death by ſome thunder or otherwiſe, and after raiſed him, how could the voluntarineſs of Chriſt appear, which was neceſſary to make him a perfect oblation? How would his innocency have appeared? The ſtrangeneſs of the judgment would have made all men believe him ſome great and notorious ſinner. How then could the Goſpel have been propagated? Who would have entertained the Doctrine of one, whoſe innocency could not be cleared? If it be ſaid, *God might raiſe him again*, what evidences would have been had that he had been really dead? But as the caſe was, his Enemies confeſs him dead really, and many Witneſſes there were of his reſurrection.

1. *God orders the ſins of men to the glory of his grace.* As a foil ſerves to make the luſtre of a Diamond more conſpicuous; ſo doth God make uſe of the deformities of men to make his own grace more illuſtrious, and convey it with a more

more pleasing relish to them. Never doth grace appear more amiable, never is God entertained with so high admirations, as by those who of the worst of sinners are made the choicest of Saints; *Paul* oftentakes occasion from the greatness of his sin, to admire the unsearchable riches of that grace which pardoned him.

2. *God orders them to bring forth temporal mercies.* In Providence there are two things considerable. First, *Mans Will.* 2. *Gods purpose.* What mans will intends as a harm in sin, God in his secret purpose orders to some eminent advantage. In the selling of *Joseph*, his Brothers intend the execution of their revenge; And God orders it for the advancement of himself, and the preservation of his unrighteous Enemies, who might otherwise have starved. His Brothers sent him to frustrate his dream, and God to fulfil it. Our reformation and return from under the yoke of Antichrist, was by the wise disposal of God occasioned by the three great Idols of the World, the lust of the eye, the lust of the Flesh, and the pride of life; lust, covetousness and ambition, three vices notoriously eminent in *Henry* the Eighth, the first instrument in that work. What he did for the satisfaction of his Lust is ordered by God for the glory of his mercy to us. And though the Papists upon that account reflect upon our Reformation, they may as well reflect upon the glorious work of redemption, because it was in the wisdom of God brought about by *Judas* his covetousness, and the *Jews* malice.

3. *God orders them for the glory of his justice upon others. Nathan* had threatned *David*, that one in his house should lye with his Wives in the sight of the Sun *. *Achitophel* adviseth *Absalom* to do so, not with any design to fulfil Gods threatning, but secure his own stake, by making the quarrel between the Father and the Son irreconcilable, because he might well fear that upon a peace between *David* and *Absalom* he might be offered up as a Sacrifice to *Davids* justice. God orders *Achitophels* counsel, and *Absoloms* sin to the glory of his justice in *Davids* punishment. *2 Sam. 12. 11.

The ambition of *Vespasian* and *Titus* was only to reduce *Judea* to the *Roman* Province after the revolt of it: But God orders hereby the execution of his righteous will in the punishment of the *Jews* for their rejecting Christ, and the accomplishment of Christs prediction. *Luke* 19. 43. *For the days shall come, that thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee*, &c. To conclude, if we deny God the government of sin in the course of his Providence, we must necessarily deny him the government of the World, because there is not an action of any mans in the World, which is under the government of God, but is either a sinful action, or an action mixt with sin. *Luk.* 19. 43.

God therefore in his government doth advance his power in the weakness, his wisdom in the follies, his holiness in the sins, his mercy in the unkindness, and his justice in the unrighteousness of men; yet God is not defiled with the impurities of men, but rather draws forth a glory to himself, as a rose doth a greater beauty and sweetness from the strong smell of the garlick set near it. *Vid.* Ovid *Amor.* lib. 3. Eleg. 3. v. 1. *and* v. 27. Boetius *de Consol.* lib. 1.

Second *Question. If there be a providence, how comes those unequal distributions to happen in the World?* How is it so bad with good men as if they were the greatest enemies to God; and so well with the wicked, as if they were the most affectionate Friends? Doth not vertue languish away in obscurity, whiles wickedness struts about the World? What is the reason that splendid vertue is oppressed by injustice, and notorious vices triumph in prosperity? It would make men believe that the world was governed rather by a blind and unrighteous, than by a wise, good and just Governor, when they see things in such disorder as if the Devil had, as he pretends, the whole power of the world delivered to him *: and God had left all care of it to his will. *Quest.* 2. * *Luk.* 4. 6.

Ans. This consideration has heightned the minds of many against a providence. It was the notion of many Heathens, when they saw many who had acted with much gallantry for their Countreys afflicted, they questioned *whether there were a superintendent power over the world.* This hath also been the stumbling-block of many taught in a higher School than that of nature, the *Jews*, *Mal.* 2. 17. *Ye say* *See instances in* Jackson. vol. 1. 8. chap. 4. Sect. 3.

every one that doth evil is good in the ſight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them, and where is the God of judgment? Yea, and the obſervation of the outward felicities of *vice*, and the oppreſſions of *goodneſs*, have cauſed fretting commotions in the hearts of Gods people, the *Pſal.* 73, is wholly deſigned to anſwer this caſe. *Jeremy* though fixed in the acknowledgment of Gods righteouſneſs, would debate the reaſon of it with God, *Jer.* 12. 1. *Righteous art thou, oh Lord, yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked proſper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherouſly? thou haſt planted them, yea, they have taken root, they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit.* He perceiving it a univerſal caſe [*wherefore are all they happy*, &c.] did not know how to reconcile it with the righteouſneſs of God. Nor *Habbakkuk* with the holineſs of God. *Hab.* 1. 14. [*thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, wherefore holdeſt thou thy tongue, when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?* In point of Gods goodneſs too, *Job* expoſtulates the caſe with God, *Job* 10. 3. *Is it good unto thee that thou ſhouldeſt oppreſs, that thou ſhouldeſt deſpiſe the work of thy hands, and ſhine upon the counſel of the wicked?* You ſee upon the account of Holineſs, Righteouſneſs, Goodneſs, the three great Attributes of God, it hath been queſtioned by good men, and upon the account of his Wiſdom by the wicked *Jews.*

Anſw. 1. 1. Anſwer in general, *Is it not a high preſumption for ignorance to judg Gods proceedings?* In the courſe of providence ſuch things are done that men could not imagine could be done without injuſtice; yet when the whole connexion of their end is unravelled, they appear highly beautiful, and diſcover a glorious wiſdom and righteouſneſs. If it had entered into the heart of man to think that God ſhould ſend his Son in a very low eſtate to die for ſinners, would it not have been judged an unjuſt and unreaſonable act, to deliver up his Son for rebels, the innocent for the criminals, to ſpare the offender and puniſh the obſerver of his Law? Yet when the deſign is revealed and acted, what an admirable connexion is there of juſtice, wiſdom, mercy, and holineſs? which men could not conceive of. It will be known to be ſo at laſt in Gods dealing with all his members. We are incompetent judges of the righteouſneſs and wiſdom of God, unleſs we were infinitely righteous and wiſe our ſelves; we muſt be Gods, or in another ſtate, before we can underſtand the reaſon of all Gods actions. We judge according to the law of ſenſe and ſelf, which are inferior to the rules whereby God works. *Judge nothing* then *before the time* *. It is not a time for us to paſs a judgment upon things. A falſe judgment is eaſily made, when neither the Counſels of mens hearts, nor the particular Laws of Gods actions are known to us. In general it is certain, God doth righteouſly order his providences; he may ſee ſome inward corruptions in good men to be demoliſhed by afflictions, and ſome good moral affections, ſome uſeful deſigns, or ſome ſervices he employs wicked men in to be rewarded in this life.

* 1 *Cor.* 4. 5.

Secondly. 2. *God is Soveraign of the World.* He is *ſui juris*, *The Earth* is his, *and the fulneſs thereof*, may he not do what he will with his own? * Who ſhall take upon them to controul God, and preſcribe Laws to him how to deal with his Creatures? Why ſhould a finite underſtanding preſcribe meaſures and methods to an infinite Majeſtie?

* *Mat.* 15.

Thirdly: 3. *God is wiſe and juſt, and knows how to diſtribute:* If we queſtion his providence, we queſtion his wiſdom. Is it fit for us who are but of yeſterday, and know nothing, to ſay to an infinite Wiſdom, what doſt thou? and to direct the only wiſe God to a method of his actions? His own wiſdom will beſt direct him to the time when to puniſh the inſolence of the wicked, and relieve the miſeries of his people: We ſee the preſent diſpenſations, but are we able to underſtand the internal motives? May there not be ſome ſins of righteous mens Parents that he will viſit upon their Children? ſome virtues of their Anceſtors, that he will reward even in their wicked poſterity? He may uſe wicked men as inſtruments in ſome ſervice. 'Tis part of his diſtributive juſtice to reward them. They aim at theſe things in their ſervice, and he gratifies them according to their deſires. Let not then his righteouſneſs be an argument againſt his providence; 'tis righteous with God not to be in arrears with them. Sometimes God gives them not to them as rewards of any moral virtue, but puts pow-

er

er into their hands, that they may be inſtruments of his juſtice upon ſome offenders againſt him, *Iſa.* 10. 5. The ſtaff in the *Aſſyrians* hand was Gods indignation.

4. *There is a neceſſity for ſome ſeeming inequality at leaſt in order to the good government of the world.* Can all in any community of men be of an equal height? A houſe hath not beams and rafters of an equal bigneſs, ſome are greater, and ſome leſs. 'The world is Gods Family. 'Tis here as in a family, all cannot have the ſame office, but they are divided according to the capacities of ſome perſons, and the neceſſities of others: Providence would not be ſo apparent in the beauty of the world, if all men were alike in their ſtations. VVhere would the beauty of the body be, if all the members had one office, and one immediate end? Man would ceaſe to be man, if every member had not ſome diſtinct work, and a univerſal agreement in the common profit of the Body. All mankind is but one great body conſtituted of ſeveral members, which have diſtinct offices, but all ordered to the good of the whole; the Appoſtle argues this excellently in a parallel caſe of the diverſities of gifts in the Church, 1 *Cor.* 12. 19. *If all were one member, where were the body?* ver. 23. *thoſe members of the body which we think to be leſs honourable, upon thoſe we beſtow more abundant honour,* ver. 24. *God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lackt.* VVhat harmony could there be, if all the voices and ſounds were exactly the ſame in a conſort? VVho can be delighted with a Picture that hath no ſhadows? The afflictions of good men are a foyl to ſet off the beauty of Gods providence in the world. *Fourthly.*

5. *Unequal diſpenſations do not argue careleſneſs.* A Father may give one Child a gayer Coat than he gives another, yet he extends his fatherly care and tenderneſs over all: According to the ſeveral imployments he puts his Children upon, he is at greater expence, and yet loves one as well as another, and makes proviſion for all. As the Soul takes care of the loweſt member, and communicates Spirits to every part for their motions: So though God place ſome in a higher, ſome in a lower condition, yet he takes care of all, *God divides to every man as he will*.* Every man hath a ſeveral ſhare according to Gods pleaſure, of a goodneſs in the world, as well as of gifts in the Church. *Fifthly.* * 1 *Cor.* 12. 11.

6. *Yet upon due conſideration the inequality will not appear ſo great as the complaint of it.* If the wants of one, and the enjoyment of another were weighed in the ballance, the Scales might not appear ſo uneven; we ſee ſuch a mans wealth, but do you underſtand his cares? A running ſore may lye under a purple Robe. Health, *the ſalt of bleſſing*, as one calls it, is beſtowed upon a Labourer, when many that wallow in abundance, have thoſe torturing deſeaſes which imbitter their pleaſures. If ſome want thoſe worldly ornaments which others have, may they not have more wiſdom than thoſe that injoy them, (the nobleſt perfection of a rational Creature)? *Pro.* 3. 13, 14. *The merchandize of it is better than the Merchandize of Silver, and the gain thereof than fine Gold. Pro.* 15. 16. *better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treaſure, and trouble therewith.* As ſome are ſtript of wealth and power, ſo they are ſtript of ther incumbrances they bring with them. One hath that ſerenity and tranquility of mind, which the cares and fears of others will not ſuffer them to injoy, and a grain of contentment is better than many pounds of wealth. 'Tis not a deſirable thing to be a great Prince, attended with as many cares and fears as he hath ſubjects in his Empire. He made a true eſtimate of his greatneſs, that ſaid he would not ſtoop to take up a Crovvn if it lay at his feet. But more particularly to the parts of the caſe. *Sixthly.* * *Pro.* 15. 16.

I. *It is not well with bad men here.*

1. *Is it well with them who are tortured by their own luſts?* VVhat peace can vvorldly things beſtovv upon a Soul filled vvith impurity? in 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. Sin is called filthineſs, can it be vvell vvith them that have naſty Souls? Is it vvell vvith them vvho are rakct by pride, ſtung vvith cares, gnavvn vvith envy, diſtracted by unſatiable deſires, and torn in pieces by their ovvn fears? Can it be vvell vvith ſuch vvho have a multitude of vipers in their breaſts, ſticking all their ſtings into them, though the Sun ſhine, and the ſhovvers drop upon them? You are Spectators

tators of their felicity, but do you underſtand their inward gripes? *Pro.* 14. 13. *even in laughter the heart is ſorrowful.* Can ſilken Curtains or purple Clothes confer a happineſs upon thoſe who have a mortal plague-ſore poyſoning their bodies, and are ready to expire? Sin is their plague, whatever is their happineſs*. Their inſolent luſts are a far greater miſery than the poſſeſſion of all the Kingdoms in the World can be a happineſs.

* 1 *King.* 8. 38. *Sin is called the plague of the heart.*

II. *Is it well with them who have ſo great an account to make, and know not how to make it?* Thoſe that enjoy much, are more in Gods debt, and therefore more accountable. The account of wicked men is the greater, beca uſe of their abundance; and their unfitneſs to make that account is the greater, becauſe of their abuſe. Would any reckon themſelves happy to be called upon to give an account of their Stewardſhip for Talents, and know not how to give a good account of one farthing? *Luk.* 16. 2. *give an account of thy Stewardſhip.*

III. *Is it well with them who are the worſe for what they have?* Is it a happineſs to command others, and be more ſlaves to the worſt of Creatures, than any can be to them? The wicked mans well-ſpread table ſometimes proves his ſnare, * *Pſal.* 69. 22.* and his deſtruction is bound up in his very proſperity: *Pro.* 1. 32. and the *proſperity of fools ſhall deſtroy them.* Proſperity falling upon an unregenerate heart, like the Sun and rain upon bad ground, draws forth nothing but weeds and vermin. Would you think it your happineſs to be Maſters of their concerns, and ſlaves to their pride? Is a ſtubbornneſs againſt God ſo deſirable a thing, which is ſtrengthened by thoſe things in the hands of the wicked?

IV. *Is it well with them who in the midſt of their proſperity are reſerved for juſtice?* Can that Traytor be accounted happy that is fed in priſon by the Prince with better diſhes than many a loyal ſubject hath at his table, but only to keep him alive for his Tryal, and a publick Example of juſtice? God raiſes ſome for greater falls: Miſerable was the felicity of *Pharaoh*, to be raiſed up by God for **Exod.* 9. 16. a Subject to ſhew in him the power of his Wrath. *'Tis but a little time before they ſhall be *cut down as graſs, and wither as the green herb. Pſal.* 37. 2. None would value the condition of that Souldier who leaping into a River to ſave a Kings Crown, and putting it upon his own head, that he might be enabled to ſwim out with it, was rewarded for ſaving it, and executed for wearing it. God rewards wicked men for their ſervice, and puniſhes them for their inſolence.

Secondly. 2. *Neither is it bad here with good men, if all be well conſidered.* Others mens judgment of a good man is frivolous, they cannot rightly judge of his ſtate and concerns, but he can make a judgment of theirs. 1 *Cor.* 2. 15. *a ſpiritual man judgeth all things, but he himſelf is judged of no man.* No man can make a ſound judgment and eſtimate of a righteous mans ſtate in any condition, unleſs he hath had experience of the like in all the circumſtances, the inward comforts as well as the outward Croſſes. For,

I. *Adverſity cannot be called abſolutely an evil, as proſperity cannot be called abſolutely a good.* They are rather indifferent things, becauſe they may be uſed either for the honour or diſhonour of God. As they are uſed for his honour, they are good, and as uſed for his diſhonour they are evil. The only abſolutely bad thing in the world is ſin, which cannot be in its own nature, but a diſhonour to God. The only abſolutely good thing in the world is holineſs, and a likeneſs to God, which cannot be in its own nature, but for his glory. As for all other things, I know no true ſatisfaction can be in them, but as they are ſubſervient to Gods honour, and give us an advantage for imitating ſome one or other of his perfections. Croſſes in the Scripture are not excluded from thoſe things we have a right to by Chriſt, when they may conduce to our good, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22. *Life and Death*, things *preſent*, and things *to come*, are yours, and you are Chriſts. Since the Revelation of the Goſpel, I do not remember that any ſuch complaint againſt the Providence of God fell from any holy man in the new Teſtament; for our Saviour had given them another proſpect of thoſe things. The holy men in the Old Teſtament comforted themſelves againſt this objection by the end of * *Pſal.* 73. *Rom.* 8. the wicked which ſhould happen, and the rod ceaſe *. In the New Teſtament we are more comforted by the certain operation of croſſes to our good and ſpiritual advantage. Our Saviour did not promiſe wealth and honour to his followers

lowers, nor did he think it worth his pains of coming and dying, to beſtow ſuch gifts upon his Children: He made Heaven their happineſs, and the Earth their Hell; the Croſs was their badge here, and the Crown their reward hereafter; they ſeemed not to be a purchaſe congruous to ſo great a price of Blood. VVas Gods Providence to Chriſt the more to be queſtioned becauſe he was poor? Had he the leſs love to him becauſe he was *a man of ſorrows*, even while he was a God of glory? Such groundleſs conceits ſhould never enter into Chriſtians, who can never ſeriouſly take up Chriſts yoke without a proviſo of afflictions, who can never be Gods Sons, without expecting his corrections.

2. *God never leaves good men ſo bare, but he provides for their neceſſity*, Pſal. 84. 11. *the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly.* If any thing be good, an upright man may expect it from God's providence; if it be not good, he ſhould not deſire it: Howſoever grace, which is neceſſary for preparing thee for happineſs, and glory, which is neceſſary for fixing thee in it, he will be ſure to give, we have *David's* experience for it * in the whole courſe of his life.

* *Pſal* 37. 5.

3. *The little good men have, is better than the higheſt enjoyments of wicked men. Pſal.* 37. 16. *a little that a righteous man hath, is better then the riches of many wicked*, not better then many riches of the wicked, but better then the riches of many wicked, better then all the treaſures of the whole Maſs of the wicked world; others have them in a providential way, good men in a gracious way. *Pro.* 16. 8. *better is a little with righteouſneſs then great revennes without right*, without a Covenant right. VVicked proſperity is like a ſhadow that glides away in a moment, whereas a righteous mans little is a part of Chriſt's purchaſe, and part of that inheritance which ſhall endure for ever, *Pſal.* 37. 18. *their inheritance ſhall be for ever, i. e.* God regards the ſtate of the righteous, whether good or evil, all that befals them. God doth all with a repect to his everlaſting inheritance. No man hath worldly things without their wings. And though the righteous have worldly things with their wings, yet that love whereby they have them, hath no wings ever to fly away from them; how can thoſe things be good to a man that can never taſt them, nor God in them?

4. *No righteous man would in his ſober wits be willing to make an exchange of his ſmarteſt afflictions for a wicked mans proſperity, with all the circumſtances attending it.* It cannot therefore be bad with the righteous in the worſt condition. VVould any man be ambitious of ſnares, that knows the deceit of them? Can any but a mad man exchange Medicines for poyſon? Is it not more deſirable to be upon a Dunghil with an intimate converſe with God, then upon a Throne without it? They gain a world in proſperity, a righteous man gains his Soul by afflictions, and poſſeſſes it in patience; is the exchange of a valuable conſideration? God ſtrips good men of the enjoyment of the VVorld, that he may wean them from the love of it; keeps them from Idolatry by removing the fuel of it; ſends afflictions that he may not loſe them, nor they their Souls. VVould any man exchange a great goodneſs laid up for him that fears God, for a leſſer goodneſs laid out upon them that are Enemies to him *?

* *Pſal.* 31.19.

VVho would exchange a few outward comforts with God's promiſe, inward comforts with aſſurance of Heaven, Godlineſs with contentment, a ſweet and Spiritual life, Soveraignty over himſelf and luſts, though attended with ſufferings, for the Government of the whole VVorld?

5. *It is not ill with the righteous in afflictions, becauſe they have high advantages by them. That cannot be abſolutely evil, which conduceth to a greater good.*

As, Firſt, *Senſible experiments of the tender providence of God over them.* If the righteous had not afflictions in this life, God would loſe the glory of his providence, and they the ſweetneſs in a gracious deliverance from them in ways which makes the affliction the ſweeter, as well as the mercy; they would loſe the comfort of them in not having ſuch ſenſible evidences of God's gracious care.

The ſweetneſs of the promiſes made for times of trouble would never be taſted. *Pſal.* 37. 19. *They ſhall not be aſhamed in the evil time*; that is, they ſhall be mightily encouraged and ſupported. God's people do beſt underſtand God's ſtrength,

ſtrength, when they feel the ſmart of mens malice. 2 *Tim.* 4. 17. [*the Lord ſtood with me and ſtrengthened me.*] he had never felt ſo much of God's ſtrength, if he had not taſted much of mans wickedneſs in forſaking him, *Pſal* 37. 39. [*he is their ſtrength,*] when in times of trouble they experiment more of his care in preſerving them, and his ſtrength in ſupporting them, than at other times. Abundance of conſolations are manifeſted in abundance of ſufferings *. A greater ſence of *joy* and *glory* lights upon them in a ſtorm of perſecutions. Men ſee the ſufferings of the godly, but they do not behold that inward peace which compoſeth and delights their Souls, worth the vvhole Maſs of the Worlds goodneſs, and pleaſures of the unrighteous.

* 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. 1 *Pet.* 4. 13, 14.

2. *Inward improvements.* Opportunities to manifeſt more love to God, more dependance on him, the perfection of the Soul. 1 *Tim.* 5. 5. Now *ſhe that is a Widow indeed, and deſolate, truſts in God, and continues in Supplications and Prayers night and day*; there is a ground of more exerciſe of truſt in God, and ſupplication to him. The poor and deſolate have an advantage for the actual exerciſe of thoſe graces, which a proſperous condition wants: God changeth the metal by it: what was Lead and Iron, he makes come forth as Gold. *Job* 23. 10. *when he hath tried me, I ſhall come forth as Gold.* Croſſes and ſufferings which fit good men for ſpecial ſervice here, and eternal happineſs hereafter, can no more be ſaid to be evil, then the fire which refines the gold, and prepares it for a Prince's uſe. If there were not ſuch evils, what ground could you have to exerciſe patience? what Heroick acts of faith could you put forth without difficulties? how could you believe againſt hope, if you had not ſometimes ſomething to contradict your hopes? And if a good man ſhould have a confluence of that which the ignorant and pedantical world calls happineſs, he might undervalue the pleaſures of a better life, deface the beauty of his own Soul, and withdraw his love from the moſt gratifying, as well as the moſt glorious object, unto that which is not worth the leaſt grain of his affection.

3. *Future glory.* The great enquiry at the day of Chriſt's appearing, will be how good men bare their ſufferings, what improvements they had; and the greater their purity by them, the greater will be their praiſe and honour. 1 *Pet.* 1. 7. *That the tryal of your faith* [viz. by manifold Temptations] *may be found to praiſe, and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt.* For a good improvement by them, they will have a Publick praiſe from God's mouth, and a Crown of Honour ſet upon their heads. Providence ſends even light afflictions as ſo many Artificers, to make the Crown more Maſſy and more bright, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17. [*Works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.*] They are at work about a good man's Crown, while they make him ſmart. They prepare him for heaven, and make it more grateful to him when he comes to poſſeſs it. A Chriſtian carriage in them prepares for greater degrees of Glory. Every ſtroke doth but more beautifie the Crown.

6. *Sufferings of good men for the Truth highly glorifies the Providence of God.* This is a matter of glory and honour, 1 *Pet.* 4. 16. *If any man ſuffer as a Chriſtian, let him not be aſhamed, but let him glorifie God on this behalf.* They thereby bare a Teſtimony to the higheſt Act of Providence that God ever exerciſed, even the redemption of the world by the blood of his Son. And the Church which is the higheſt object of his Providence in the world, takes the deeper root, and ſprings up the higher; the foundation of it was laid in the blood of Chriſt, and the groweth of it is furthered by the blood of Martyrs. The carriage of the righteous in them, makes the Truth they profeſs more valued. It enhanceth the excellency of Religion, and manifeſts it to be more amiable for its beauty than for its dowry; ſince they ſee it deſirable by the ſufferers, not only without vvorldly enjoyments, but vvith the ſharpeſt miſeries. This conſideration hath vvrought upon many to embrace the Religion of the Sufferers. If it reaches as far as death, they are but diſpatched to their Fathers houſe, and the day of their death is the day of their Coronation; and vvhat evil is there in all this?

To

To conclude, this argument is ſtronger (upon the infallible righteouſneſs of God's nature) for a day of Reckoning after this life, than againſt Providence. 'Tis a more rational concluſion, That God will have a time to juſtifie the Righteouſneſs and Wiſdom of his Providential Government, and repair the honour of the righteous, oppreſſed by the injuſtice of the wicked. And indeeed, unleſs there be a retribution in another world, the queſtion is unanſwerable, and all the reaſon in the world knows not how to ſalve the Holineſs and Righteouſneſs of God in his Providential Diſpenſations in this life; ſince we ſee here Goodneſs unrewarded, and debaſed to the dunghill, Vice glorying in impunity, and ranting to the firmament. We cannot ſee how it can conſiſt with the nature of God's Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, if there were not another life wherein God will manifeſt his Righteouſneſs in the puniſhing ſin, and rewarding goodneſs: For it is impoſſible that a God of Infinite juſtice ſhould leave ſin unpuniſhed, and Grace unrewarded here or hereafter. The Scripture gives us ſo full an account of a future ſtate, that may ſatisfie all Chriſtians in this buſineſs.

The wicked rich man is in his Purple, and *Lazarus* in his rags, yet *Abraham*'s Boſom is prepared for the one, and an endleſs Hell for the other. *Jeremy* reſolves the caſe in his diſpute with God about it, *Jer.* 12. 3. *Pull them out like ſheep to the ſlaughter, and prepare them for the day of ſlaughter.* They are but fattening for the knife of Juſtice, and the day will come when they ſhall be conſum'd, like the fat of Lambs in the Sacrifice, which ſhall wholly evaporate into ſmoke, ſo the Pſalmiſt reſolves it in *Pſal.* 37. 20. a Pſalm written for the preſent caſe. God laughs at their ſecurity in a way of mockery, *Pſal.* 37. 13. *The Lord ſhall laugh at him, for he ſees that his day is coming.* God's day for the juſtification of his proceedings in the world, and the wicked man's day for his own deſtruction, wherein they ſhall all be deſtroyed together, *Pſal.* 37. 38. The whole maſs of them in one bundle. Who then will charge God with unequal diſtributions at that day, which is appointed for the clearing up of his righteouſneſs, which is here maskt in the world? who can be fond of the State of the wicked? Who would be fond of dead mans condition, becauſe he lies in State, whoſe Soul may be condemned, whilſt his body vvith a pompous ſolemnity is carried to the Grave, and both body and Soul joyned together at the reſurrection, adjudged to eternal miſery?

Qu. 2. What hath been ſaid in this, vvill alſo anſvver another Queſtion, *Why God doth not immediately puniſh notorious offenders*, ſince the beſt Governments in the vvorld are ſuch as call the violaters of the Lavv to a ſpeedy account, to keep up the honour of Juſtice? Thus the *Epicures* charge God vvith neglects of providenee, becauſe if he doth puniſh vvicked men, it is later than is fit and juſt, *becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not executed ſpeedily, therefore the heart of the ſons of men is fully ſet in them to do evil.* Eccleſiaſtes 8. 11. Delay of Juſtice is an encouragement to Sin.

Anſw. 1. *This is an argument for Gods patience, none againſt his providence.* ſhould he make ſuch quick vvork, vvhat vvould become of the vvorld? Could it have held out to this day? If God had inſtantly taken revenge upon thoſe that thus diſparage his providence, the frame of ſuch an objection had not been alive. No man is ſo perfectly good, but he might fall under the revenging ſtroke of his ſword, if he pleaſed to draw it. Suffer God to evidence his patience here, ſince after the winding up of the world, he will have no time to manifeſt it. God doth indeed ſometimes ſend the ſharp arrow of ſome judgment upon a notorious offender, to let him underſtand that he hath not forgotten how to govern; but he doth not alwayes do ſo, that his patience may be glorified in bearing with his rebellious Creature.

2. *God is juſt in that wherein the queſtion ſuppoſeth him unjuſt*; he ſuffers wicked men to continue to be the plagues of the places where they live, and

the executioners of his Juſtice upon offenders againſt him. *Pſal.* 17. 13. The wicked are God's *Sword. Jeremiah* 47. 6. Thoſe that God would ſtir up againſt the *Philiſtines*, are called the *Sword* of the Lord, *Iſa.* 10. 5. *Aſſur* is ſaid to be the *Rod* of his anger; would it conſiſt with his wiſdom to drop the inſtruments out of his hand, as ſoon as he begins to uſe them? To caſt his Rods out of his hand as ſoon as he taks them up? The rules of juſtice are as much unknown to us, as the communications of his goodneſs to his people are unknown to the world.

3. Let me ask ſuch a one, *whether he never injur'd another man, and whether he would not think it very ſevere, if not unjuſt, that the offended perſon ſhould preſently take revenge of him?* If every man ſhould do the like, how ſoon would mankind be diſpatcht, and the World become a ſhambles, men running furiouſly to one anothers deſtruction for the injuries they have mutually received? Do we praiſe the lenity of parents to their Children, and diſpraiſe the mercy of God, becauſe he doth not preſently uſe his right? Is then forbearance of revenge accounted a virtue in a man, and ſhall it be an imperfection in God? With what reaſon can we thus blame the eminent patience of God, which we have reaſon to adore, and which every one of us are monuments of? The uſe is.

Uſe. 1. Of *Information*,

1. *How unworthy and abſurd a thing is it to deny Providence?* Some of the Heathens fancyed, that God walked his Circuit in Heaven, or ſat with folded arms there, taking no cognizance of what was done in the World; Some indeed upon ſome great emergencies have acknowledged the mercies and juſtice of God, which are the two arms of his providence. The *Barbarians*, *his juſtice*, when they ſaw a Viper leap upon *Paul*'s hand, *Act.* 28. 4. they ſay among themſelves, *no doubt this man is a murderer, whom though he hath eſcapt the ſea, yet vengeance ſuffers not to live.* The Mariners in *Jonah* implored *his mercy* in their diſtreſs at Sea, yet they generally attributed affairs to blind chance, and worſhipped Fortune as a Deity: For this vain conceit, the Pſalmiſt calls the Atheiſt fool, *Pſal.* 14. 1. *The fool hath ſaid in his heart, there is no God. Potiphar* acknowledged it, he ſaw that the Lord was with *Joſeph*, and favoured his deſigns, *Gen.* 39. 3. *And his Maſter ſaw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all things that he did to proſper in his hand.*

It will not be amiſs to conſider this, For the root of denial of providence is in the hearts of the beſt men, eſpecially under affliction: *Aſah* was a holy man, *Pſal.* 73. 13. ſaith he, Verily *I have cleanſed my heart in vain, and waſhed my hands in inocency.* He had taken much pains with his heart, and had been under much affliction. *V.* 14. *All the day long have I been plagued and chaſtened every morning.* And the conſideration of this, that he ſhould have ſo much affliction with ſo much holineſs, ſo ſtrangely puzled him, that he utters that dreadful Speech, as if he had a mind to caſt off all cares about the worſhip of God, and ſanctifying his heart, and repent of all that he had done in that buſineſs, as much as to ſay, had I been as very a villain as ſuch, or ſuch a man, I might have proſpered as well a they, but I was a fool to have any fear of God.

Therefore we will conſider,

1. *The evil of denying Providence.*

2. *The grounds of the denial of it by the heathen*, which we ſhall find in our own hearts.

3. *The various wayes wherein men practically deny providence.*

1. *The evil of denying it.*

Firſt. 1. *It gives a liberty to all ſin.* It gives an occaſion for an unbounded licentiouſneſs; for what may not be done, where there is no government? The *Jews* tell us, * That the diſpute between *Cain* and *Abel* was this: *Cain* ſaid, becauſe his ſacrifice was not accepted, that there was no Judge, no reward of good works, or puniſhment of bad, which when *Abel* oppoſed, *Cain* ſlew him; they ground it upon the diſcourſe of God with *Cain*, *v.* 7. which had been about his providence and acceptation of men, if they did well, and puniſhment of men if they did ill; whence they gather, the diſcourſe, *v.* 8. *Cain* had with his brother, vvas about the ſame ſubject, for *Cain* talked vvith *Abel*, and upon that diſcourſe roſe up

* *Targum Hieroſolymit Mercer in Gen.* 4. 7.

* *Gen.* 4. 7, 8.

up againſt him, and ſlew him. And his diſcourſe afterwards with God, *v.* 9. ſeems to favour it, *Am I my Brothers keeper?* Thou doſt ſay, thou art the Governour of the World, it is not my concern to look after him. Their conjecture is not improbable. If it were ſo, we ſee how early this opinion began in the World, and what was the horrid effect of it, the firſt ſin, the firſt murder that we read of after the Sin of *Adam*. And what confuſion would grow upon the entertainment of ſuch a notion.

Indeed the Scripture every where places ſin upon this root. *Pſal.* 10. 11. [*God hath forgotten, he hides his face, he will never ſee it.*] He hath turned his back upon the World. This was the ground of the oppreſſion of the poor by the wicked which he mentions, *v.* 9, 10. So *Iſa.* 26. 10. [The wicked *will not learn righteouſneſs*, he will deal *unjuſtly*; the reaſon is, he will not *behold the Majeſty of the Lord*; he will not regard God's government of the World, though *his hand be liſted up to ſtrike*. There is no ſin, but receives both its birth and nouriſhment from this bitter root. Let the notion of Providence be once thrown out, or the belief of it faint, how will ambition, Covetouſneſs, neglect of God, diſtruſt, impatience and all other bitter gourds grow up in a night? 'Tis from this Topick all iniquity will draw arguments to encourage it ſelf; for nothing doth ſo much diſcountenance thoſe riſing corruptions, and put them out of heart, as an actuated belief, that God takes care of humane affairs. Upon the want of this actuated knowledg, God charges all the ſin of *Ephraim*, *Hoſea.* 7. 2. *They conſider* * *not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedneſs.* As if God were blind and did not ſee, or ſtupid and did not concern himſelf, or of a very frail memory ſoon to forget.

* *Pſal.* 10. 11.

* Heb. *they ſpeak not to their hearts.*

2. *It deſtroys all Religion.* The firſt Foundation of all Religion is, firſt the Being, Secondly the Goodneſs of God in the Government of the World. *Heb.* 11. 6. *he that comes to God, muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* He is the object of Religion, as he is the Governour of the World. This denial would ſhut up Bibles and Temples, and bring irreligious diſorder into all Societies.

1. *All Worſhip.* He that hath not deſign to govern, is ſuppoſed to expect no homage; if he regards not his Creatures, he cares for no worſhip from them. How is it poſſible to perſuade men to regard him for God, who takes no care of them? Who will adore him, who regards no adoraton?

2. *Prayer.* To what purpoſe ſhould they beg his directions, implore his aſſiſtance in their calamities, if he had no regard at all to his Creatures? What favour can we expect from him who is regardleſs of diſpenſing any?

3. *Praiſe.* Who would make acknowledgments to one, from whom they never received any favour, and hath no mind to receive any acknowledgments from them, becauſe he takes no care of them? If the Deity have no relation to us, how can we have relation to him? To what purpoſe will it be either to call upon him, or praiſe him, which are the prime pieces of Religion, if he concern not himſelf with us?

4. *Dependance, Truſt and Hope.* What reaſon have we to commit our concerns to him, and to depend upon him for relief? Hence the Apoſtle ſaith, *Epheſ.* 2. 12. The Gentiles were *without hope*, and *without God in the World.* The reaſon they were without hope, was becauſe they were without God, they denied a ſettled Providence, and acknowledged a blind Chance, and therefore could have no ſound hope; ſo ſome underſtand it of denial of God's government. It might well give occaſion to people to utter *Pharaoh*'s Speech, *Exod.* 5. 2. *Who is the Lord that I ſhould obey his voice to let Iſrael go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Iſrael go.* What is God that I ſhould ſerve him? I have no ſuch notion of a God that governs the World. The regardleſneſs of a Creature diſobligeth the Creator from any ſervice to him.

3. *It is a high diſparagement of God.* To believe an impotent, ignorant, negligent God, without care of his works, is as bad or worſe than to be-

lieve no God at all. The denial of his Providence is made equal with the denial of God. *Pſal.* 14. 1. *The fool hath ſaid in his heart there is no God.* He denied God, *Elohim*, which word notes Gods providence; Not, there is no *Jehovah*, which notes his eſſence; he denied not God, *quoad Eſſentiam*, but *quoad Providentiam*, whereupon the Pſalmiſt dubs the Atheiſt fool. It ſtrips God of his judicial power. How ſhall he judge his Creatures, if he know not what they think, and regards not what they do? How eaſie will it be for him to be impoſed upon by the fair pretences and lying excuſes of men? 'Tis Diabolical. The Devil denies not God's right to govern, but he denies Gods actual government, for he ſaith, *Luk.* 4. 6. *the power and glory of the World is delivered* unto him, *and to whomſoever* ſaith he, *I will, I give it.* God had caſt off all care of all things, and made the Devil his Deputy. He that denies Providence, denies moſt of Gods attributes, he denies at leaſt the exerciſe of them; he denies his Omniſcience, which is the eye of Providence; Mercy and Juſtice, which are the arms of it; Power, which is the life and Motion of Providence; Wiſdom, which is the rudder of Providence, whereby it is ſteered; and Holineſs, which is the compaſs and rule of the motion of Providence.

4. *It is clearly againſt natural light.* *Socrates* an Heathen could ſay, Whoſoever denied providence, did δαιμονιᾶν, was poſſeſſed with a Devil*. Should God create a man anew with a ſound judgment, and bring him into the World, when he ſhould ſee the harmony, multitude, vertues and operations of all Creatures, the ſtated times and ſeaſons; muſt he not needs confeſs that ſome inviſible, unconceivable wiſdom did both frame, and doth govern all the motions of it? And it is a greater crime in any of us to deny providence either in opnion or practice, than it was or could have been in Heathens; becauſe we have not only that natural reaſon which they had, ſufficient to convince us; but ſupernatural revelation in the Scripture wherein God hath declared thoſe methods of his Providence which reaſon could not arrive to. As to deny the Creation of his the World, is a greater crime in a man that knows the Scripture, than in a Heathen, becauſe that hath put it out of doubt. And the aſſerting of this, being the end of all Gods judgments in the World, *Wrath brings the puniſhment of the Sword, that you may know there is a judgment, i. e.* Providence; the denial of it is a ſin againſt all paſt or preſent judgements, which God hath or doth exerciſe. The Scripture frequently declaring the reaſon of ſuch and ſuch judgments to be, that men may *know* that the *Lord is God.*

* Montague *againſt* Selden. *p.* 525.

* *Job* 19. 29.

Secondly. 2. The ſecond thing is, the *grounds of the denial of providence.* This Atheiſm has been founded,

1. *Upon an overweening conceit of mens own worths*; when men ſaw themſelves fruſtrated of the rewards they expected, and ſaw others that were inſtruments of Tyranny and Luſt, graced with the favours they thought due to their own vertue, they ran into a conceit, that God did not mind the actions of men below. So that it was pride, intereſt, ſelf-conceit and opinion of merit, rather than any well-grounded reaſon introduced this part of Atheiſm into the World; for upon any croſs this opinion of merit ſwelled up into blaſphemous ſpeeches againſt God. When we have any thoughts, (as we are apt to have) by our religious acts to merit at Gods hand, we act againſt the abſoluteneſs of his Providence, as though God could be obliged to us by any other than his own promiſe. Methinks *Job* hath ſome ſpice of this in ſpeaking ſo often of his own integrity, as though God dealt injuriouſly with him in afflicting him. God ſeems to charge him with it, *Job* 40. 8. [*Wilt thou alſo diſannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me that thou mayeſt be righteous?* As though in ſpeaking ſo much of his own integrity, and in complaining expreſſions he would accuſe God of injuſtice, and condemn him as an unrighteous Governour; and in *Job*'s anſwer you find no ſyllable or word of his integrity to God, but a ſelf-abhorrency, *Job* 42. 26. *Wherefore I abhor my ſelf in duſt and aſhes.* I doubt that from this ſecret root ariſe thoſe Speeches which we ordinarily have among men, *What have*

have I done that God ſhould ſo afflict me? Though in a ſerious vvay it is a uſeful queſtion tending to an enquiry into the ſin that is the cauſe of it. But I doubt ordinarily there is too much of a reflection upon God, as though they had deſerved other dealing at his hands. Take heed therefore of pride and conceits of our own worth, we ſhall elſe be led by it to diſparaging conceits of God, which indeed are the roots of all actions contradictory to God's Will.

2. *It is founded upon pedantical and ſenſual notions of God.* As though it might detract from his pleaſures and delight, to look down upon this World; or, as though it were a moleſtation of an infinite power, to buſie himſelf about the cares of ſublunary things. They thought it unſutable to the felicity of God, that it ſhould interrupt his pleaſure, and make a breach upon his bleſſedneſs. As though it were the felicity of a Prince not to take care of the Government of his Kingdom, nor ſo much as provide for the well-being of his Children. I doubt that from ſuch, or as bad conceptions of God, may ſpring ordinarily our diſtruſt of God upon any diſtreſs; take heed therefore of entertaining any conceptions of God, but what the Scripture doth furniſh you with.

3. Or elſe, this ſort of Atheiſm was uſher'd *in by a flattering conceit of the Majeſty of God.* They thought it unbecoming the excellency of the divine Majeſty to deſcend to a regard of the petty things of the World; this ſeems to be the fancy of them, *Pſal.* 37. 11. *How doth God know? is there knowledge in the moſt high?* They think him too high to know, too high to conſider. How unreaſonable is it to think God moſt high in place, and not in perfection; and if in perfection, not in knowledge and diſcerning? They imagined of him as of a great Prince, taking his pleaſure upon the battlements of his palace, not beholding the Worms upon the ground; muffled with Clouds, as *Job* 22. 13, 14. *how doth God know? Can he judge through the dark Clouds? thick Clouds are a covering to him, that he ſees not, and he walks in the circuit of Heaven.* We cannot indeed have too high apprehenſions of Gods Majeſty and excellency: But muſt take heed of entertaining ſuperſtitious conceits of God, and ſuch as are diſhonourable to him, or make the grandeur and ambition of men, the meaſures of the greatneſs and Majeſty of God. Upon this root ſprung Superſtition and Idolatry, and the Worſhip of *Dæmons*, who according to the Heathens fancy, were Mediators betwen God and men. And I doubt ſuch a conceit might be the firſt ſtep to the introducing the Popiſh Saint-worſhip into the Chriſtian World: and this lies at the root of all our omiſſions of duty, or neglects of ſeeking God. Let us therefore have raiſed thoughts of God's Majeſty, and admiring thoughts of his condeſcention, who notwithſtanding his greatneſs, humbles himſelf to behold what is done upon the Earth. The Pſalmiſt ſets a pattern for both, *Pſal.* 113. 5, 6. * *Pſal.* 113. 5, 6.

4. *From their wiſhes upon any gripes of conſcience.* They found guilt ſtaring them in the face, and were willing to comfort themſelves with the embraces of this Doctrine, wherein they might find a ſecurity and eaſe to their proſtituted conſciences, and unbounded liberty in the ways of ſin. Thoſe in *Zephaniah*, were firſt ſettled upon their lees, and then to drive away all fears of puniſhment, deny Gods Government, *Zeph.* 1. 12. *the Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.* A brave liberty for a City to be without a Magiſtrate, a houſe without a Governour, a Ship without a Pilot, expoſed to the mercy of Winds and Waves; A man to be without reaſon, that paſſion and luſt ſhould act their pleaſure; a Liberty that Beaſts themſelves would not have, to be without a Shepherd, and one to take care of them. Such wiſhes certainly there are in men upon a ſenſe of guilt: they vviſh for their ovvn ſecurity there vvere no providential eye to inſpect them. Take heed therefore of guilt vvhich vvill dravv you to vviſh God deprived of the government of the World, and all thoſe attributes vvhich qualify him for it. The readineſs to entertain the motions of Satan, rather than the motions of the Spirit, implies a vvillingneſs in them that Satan might be the God of the World,

World, who favours them in Sin, rather than the Creator who forbids it. But indeed the fears of conſcience evidence a ſecret belief in men of a juſt providence, whatever means they uſe to ſtifle it; elſe why is man upon the commiſſion of ſome notorious ſinful act, afraid of ſome evil hap to betide him? Why is he reſtleſs in himſelf? There is no ſinner unleſs extreamly hardned, but hath ſome ſecret touch of conſcience upon notorious enormities: While the work of the Law is written in their heart, their conſcience will bear witneſs and accuſe them. * In the moſt flagitious courſes which the Apoſtle reckons up, * they cannot put off the knowledge of the judgment of God, that they which commit ſuch things are worthy of death, that is, worthy of death by the judgment of God, which judgment is diſcovered in the Law of Nature.

* *Rom.* 2. 14.

* *Rom.* 1. 29, 30, 31, 32.

Thirdly. 3. The third thing is, *The various wayes wherein men practically deny providence, or abuſe it, or contemn it.*

1. *When we will walk on in away contrary to checks of providence,* when we will run againſt the will of God manifeſted in his providence, we do deny his government, and refuſe ſubjection to him; when we will be peremptory in our reſolves againſt the declaration of God's will by his checks of providence, we contend with him about the government of us and our actions. Such a diſpute had *Pharaoh* with God, notwithſtanding all the checks by the plagues poured out upon him, he would march againſt *Iſrael* to take them out of God's hand into his own ſervice again, *Exod.* 15. 9. *The enemy ſaid, I will overtake, I will divide the ſpoil, my luſt ſhall be ſatisfied upon them, I will draw my ſword, my hand ſhall deſtroy them.* Here is the will of man vaunting againſt the Governour of the World, reſolved to diſpute God's Royalty with him in ſpight of all the blaſtings of his deſigns, and the ſmart blows he had had from that powerful arm, which coſt him and his ſubjects their lives; they would not underſtand the taking off their wheels, but would run headlong into the Red Sea: A remarkable example of this is in a good man not ſo peremptory in words, but againſt the revelations of God's mind both by the Prophet, and his Providence; *Jehoſaphat* had made a League with *Ahab*, * and God had ordered *Micajah* to acquaint him with the ill ſucceſs of the affair they went about, *verſ.* 16, 19. which *Jehoſaphat* found true, for his own life was in danger, he was hardly beſet by the Enemy upon a miſtake, *verſ.* 31, 32. he had an eminent anſwer of prayer, for upon his cry he had a quick return; God engaged his providence over his Enemies hearts for him, *verſ.* 13. the Lord helped him, and God moved them to depart from him. And for this conjunction and continuance in it againſt *Micajah*'s propheſie, God ſends a Prophet to reprove him, 2 *Chron.* 19. 2. *ſhould thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from the Lord*; he reproves him ſharply for this confederacy, yet *Jehoſaphat* after had a ſignal providence in delivering him from another army, 2 *Chron.* 20. 24. Yet after this he goes on in this way, 2 *Chron.* 20. 35. *after this, i. e.* after a reproof by a prophet, after ill ſucceſs in his league, after eminent care of God in his deliverance, after a ſignal freeing him from a dangerous invaſion in a miraculous way, he enters into a league with *Ahab*'s Son, as wicked as his Father, *verſ.* 36. he joyned himſelf with him to make ſhips to go to *Tarſhiſh*, and after that a third Prophet is ſent to reprove him, and the Ships were broken, *verſ.* 37. Here is a remarkable oppoſition to checks of providence, and manifeſt declarations of God's will, as if he would be the Commander of the World inſtead of God. *Abner*'s action is much of the ſame kind, who would make the houſe of *Saul* ſtrong againſt *David*, though he knew and was ſatisfied that God had promiſed the Kingdom to *David*.

* 2 *Chro.* 18. 1, 2, 3.

2. *In omiſſions of Prayer.* One reaſon to prove the fools denying God's government of the world, is, that they call not upon the Lord. *Pſal.* 14. 1, 4. *The Lord looked down from Heaven to ſee if there were any that did underſtand and ſeek God.* 'Tis certainly either a denying of God's ſufficiency to help us, when we rather beg of every Creature, than ask of God; or a charging

ging him with a want of Providence, as though he had thrown off all care of worldly matters, 2 *King.* 1. 3. *Is it not becauſe there is not a God in Iſrael, that you go to enquire of Baalzebub the God of Ekron?* Seeking of any thing elſe with a neglect of God, is a denying the care of God over his Creature. Do we not in this caſe make our ſelves our own governours and Lords, as though we could ſubſiſt without him, or manage our own affairs without his aſſiſtance? If we did really believe there was a watchful Providence, and an infinite powerful goodneſs to help us, he would hear from us oftener then he doth. Certainly thoſe who never call upon him, diſown his government of the World, and do not care whether he regards the Earth or no. They think they can do what they pleaſe without any care of God over them. The reſtraining prayer is a caſting off the fear of God. *Job.* 15, 4. *Thou caſteth off fear, why? and reſtraineſt Prayer before God.* The neglect of Prayer ariſeth from a conceit of the unprofitableneſs of it. *Job* 21. 15. *What profit ſhould we have if we pray unto him?* Which conceit muſt be grounded upon a ſecret notion of God's careleſneſs of the world; ſuch fruit could not ariſe, but from that bitter root. But the Prophet *Malachi* plainly expreſſes it, *Malach.* 3. 14. *Ye have ſaid it is in vain to ſerve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance?* Whence did this ariſe, but from a denial of Providence upon the obſervation of the outward happineſs of the wicked? *verſ.* 15. *And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedneſs are ſet up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.* Sometimes it ariſeth from an apprehenſion that God in the way of his Providence dealeth unjuſtly with us. A good Prophet utters ſuch a ſinful ſpeech in his paſſion, 2 *King.* 6. 33. *Behold, this evil is of the Lord, what ſhould I wait for the Lord any longer?*

3. *When men will turn every ſtone to gain the favourable aſſiſtance of men in their deſigns, and never addreſs to God for his direction or bleſſing.* When they never deſire God to move the hearts of thoſe whoſe favour they court, as though Providence were an unuſeful and unneceſſary thing in the World. It was the caſe of thoſe *Elihu* ſpeaks of, *Job* 35. 9, 10. *They cry out by reaſon of the arm of the mighty, but none ſaith, where is God my Maker, who gives ſongs in the night?* &c. none in the midſt of their oppreſſions and cryes under them, did conſider either the power of God in the Creation, as he was their Maker, nor his Providence in the government of the World, as he raiſed up men from low eſtates, and gave matter of chearfulneſs even in a time of darkneſs. This was the charge God by his Prophet brought againſt *Aſa*, 2 *Chron.* 16. 7. (before the text) *Thou haſt relyed on the King of Syria, and not relyed on the Lord thy God, herein thou haſt done fooliſhly, v.* 9. where he ſets a reliance on the creature, and a reliance on God, in direct oppoſition. In ſeveral caſes men do thus deny and put a contempt on God as the governour of the World, when we will caſt about to find out ſome Creature-refuge rather than have recourſe to God for any ſupply of our neceſſities. Doth not he ſlight his fathers care that will not ſeek to him in his diſtreſs? This was *Aſah*'s Sin, 2 *Chron.* 16. 12. *in his diſeaſe he ſought not to the Lord, but to the Phyſicians.* The *Jews* think, that one reaſon why *Joſeph* continued two years in Priſon, was his confiding too much upon the Butler's remembrance of him, and intereſt for his deliverance, which they ground upon the requeſt he makes to him, *Gen.* 40. 14. *but think on me when it ſhall be well with thee, and ſhew kindneſs to me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this houſe.* I muſt confeſs the expreſſions are very urgent, being ſo often repeated, and ſeems to carry a greater confidence at preſent in the arm of fleſh, than in God. We do not read that *Joſeph* prayed ſo earneſtly to God, though no doubt but being a good man he did: Methinks the ſetting down his requeſt with that repetition in the Scripture, ſeems to intimate a probability of the *Jews* conceit. Or alſo when we do ſeek to him, but it is out of a general belief of his Providence and ſufficiency, not out of an actuate conſideration, or when we ſeek to him with colder affections than we ſeek to Creatures, as

if

if vve did half deſpair of his ability or vvill to help us: as vvhen a man thinks to get learning by the ſagacity of his ovvn vvit, his indefatigable induſtry, and never deſires vvith any ardent affection the bleſſing of God upon his endeavours. When we lean to our own Wiſdom, we diſtruſt the Providence of God, *Pro.* 3. 5. *Truſt in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own undeſtanding.* Truſt in God, and leaning to our own Wiſdom, are oppoſed to one another as inconſiſtent; or when a man hath ſome great concern, ſuppoſe a ſuit at Law, to think to carry his cauſe by the favonr of friends, the help of his money, the eloquence of his Advocate, and never intereſt God in his buſineſs: This is not to acknowledge God in thy ways, which is the command, *Pro. 6. In all thy ways acknowledg him*; as though our works were not *in the hand of God*, *Eccleſ.* 9. 1. This is to take them out of God's hand, and put them into the hands of men. To truſt in our wealth, it is to make God a dead and a ſtupid God, and diſown his Providence in the beſtowiug it upon us. The Apoſtle ſeems to intimate this in the oppſition which he makes between *uncer-*
* 1 Tim. 6. 17. *tain riches*, and the *living God**. Theſe and many more actions ſuitable to them, are virtual denials of God's ſuperintendency, as though God had left off the Government of the World, to the wits, or rather follies of men. Theſe are to magnifie the things we ſeek to, above God, as the chief Authors of all our good. 'Tis to imagine him leſs careful than man, more inſufficient than man. 'Tis a departure from a full fountain to a ſhallow ſtream; not to deſire God's aſſiſtance, is either from ſome check of conſcience that our buſineſs is ſinful, that we dare not intereſt him in it, or a diſowning God's care, as if we could hide our counſels from him, (*Iſa.* 29. 15. *Wo unto them that ſeek deep to hide their Counſel from the Lord, and they ſay, who ſeeth us, and who knoweth us?*) and bring our buſineſs to paſs before he ſhall know of it; At leaſt it is a ſlighting God's government, ſince we will not engage God by prayer in the exerciſe of it on our behalf, and diſdain to acquaint him with our concerns. 'Tis a reflection upon God's wiſdom to do ſo, which the Prophet mentions with a wo, *Iſa.* 31. 1,2. *Wo unto them that go down to Egypt for help, but they look not to the holy one of Iſrael, yet he alſo is wiſe.* It is a diſparagement to God's Providential wiſdom, not to look to him in our concerns, yea, and of his righteouſneſs too, *they look not to the holy one of Iſrael.* In this they neither regard his holineſs, nor his wiſdom. When we conſult not with him upon emergent occaſions, we truſt more to our own Wiſdom, Counſel and Sufficiency, than to God's; and ſet up our ſelves as our own Lords, and independent upon him, as though we could manage things according to our pleaſure.

4. *When upon the receiving any good, they make more grateful acknowledgment to the inſtruments, than to God the principal Author of it.* As if God had no hand in beſtowing thoſe bleſſings upon them, as if the inſtruments had diſpoſſeſſed God of his governing-Providence, and engroſt it in their own hands. This men are guilty of when they aſcribe their Wealth to their own wit and fortune, their health to their own care, or the Phiſician's skill; their learning to their own induſtry, their proſperity to their friends or merits. When men thus return their thank-offering to ſecond cauſes, and aſcribe to them what is due to God, they give the glory of his Providence to a miſerable Creature. Thus was the fooliſh boaſting of the *Aſſyrian*, *Iſa* 10. 13, 14. *By the ſtrength of my hand I have done this, and by my wiſdom: for I am prudent, for I have removed the bounds of the People*, &c. *Belſhazzar's* offence alſo, *Dan.* 5. 23. *Thou haſt lifted up thy ſelf againſt the Lord of Heaven, and praiſed the gods of ſilver*, as though they were the authors of all thy greatneſs: ſo *Hab.* 1. 16. *they ſacrifice to their net, and burn incenſe to their drag, becauſe by them their portion is fat.* Alluding to thoſe that then worſhipped their warlike weapons, and the tools whereby they had got their wealth, in the place of God, as the
* Dought *Analect. Sacr. Excurs.* 182 Heathen uſed to do*. How baſe a uſage is this of God to rifle him of all his glory, and beſtow it upon the unvvorthieſt inſtruments, inanimate Creatures? 'Tis as high Idolatay as that of the Heathens, in as much as it is a ſtripping God of the glory of his Providential care, though the object to

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which we direct our acknowledgments, is not ſo mean as their's which was a ſtock or ſtone. But is it not the ſame injury to a perſon to rifle him of his goods to beſtow it upon a begger, as to give it to a Prince? 'Tis a depriving a man of his right: Yet, is not this ordinary! Do not men aſcribe more to the Phyſician that ſaves an eye in danger of being loſt by a defluxion, than to God who hath given them both with the enjoyment of the light of the Sun; yea more to the Medicine, than to that God, who hath a witneſs of his Deity in every Drug? 'Tis as if the kindneſs a Prince ſhews to his Subjects ſhould be attributed to a Scullion in his Kitchin rather than to himſelf. This is to be-ly God and ſay it is not he: * 'Tis applicable to the caſe of mercies as well as afflictions and judgments, of which it is properly meant. And this contempt is the greater by how much the greater mercy we have received in a way of Providence, *Hoſ.* 2. 8. *ſhe did not know that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, and multiplyed her Silver and Gold, which they prepared for Baal.* She that had moſt reaſon to know, becauſe ſhe had enjoyed ſo much, ſhe that had experience how by a ſtrong and mighty hand I brought her out of *Egypt* into the Land now poſſeſſed by her. She would not know that I gave her thoſe good things ſhe prepared for *Baal.* It would be a natural conſequence from this Scripture, that thoſe that employ the good things they enjoy upon their luſts, do deny the Providential goodneſs of God in their poſſeſſion and enjoyment of them, becauſe they prepare God's goodneſs for their ſinful pleaſures, as though their own luſts had been the Authors of them; and alſo their inſtruments, that receive too high and flattering thanks of this nature, are much like *Herod*, that tickled himſelf with the Peoples applauſe, that his voice was the voice of God and not of man.

* *Amirant de les religions.*

* *Jer.* 5. 12.

5. *When we uſe indirect courſes, and diſ-honeſt waies to gain wealth or honour.* This is to leave God, to ſeek relief at Hells gates, and adore the Devil's Providence above God's: When God doth not anſwer us, like *Saul* we will go to the witch of *Endor*, and have our ends by Hell when Heaven refuſeth us. 'Tis a covenanting with the Devil, and ſtriking up a bargain and agreement with Hell, and acknowledging Satan to be the God of the World. No man will doubt but in expreſs Covenants with the Devil, as Witches and Conjurers are reported to make, that the Devil ſhall give them ſuch knowledge, ſuch wealth, or bring them to ſuch honour; 'tis no doubt, I ſay, but ſuch do acknowledge the Devil the God of the world, becauſe they agree by articles to have thoſe things conferred upon them by Satan, which are only in the power of God abſolutely to promiſe or beſtow. So when a man will commit Sin to gain the ends of his ambition or covetouſneſs, does he not implicitely covenant with the Devil who is the head of ſinners, and ſet up his ſin in the place of God, becauſe he hopes to attain thoſe things by ſinful means which are only in the hand of God, and on whom he only can have a dependance? This is the Divil's deſign out of an enmity to Providence. He tempted Chriſt to be his own Carver, thereby to put him upon a diſtruſt of his Father's care of him, *Mat.* 4. 3. *Command that theſe ſtones be made Bread*, as though God would not provide for him; which deſign of the Devil is manifeſt by our Saviour's anſwer. This is to proſtitute Providence to our own luſts, and to pull it down from the Government of the World, to be a Lacky to our ſinfull pleaſure; to uſe means which God doth prohibit, is to ſet up Hell to govern us, ſince God will not govern our affairs in anſwer to our greedy deſires. 'Tis to endeavour that by God's curſe which we ſhould only expect by God's bleſſing: For when God hath forbid ſinful waies, ſeverely threatned them, perhaps curſed them in Examples before our eyes, what is it but to ſay, that we will rather believe God's curſe will further us than his bleſſing? 'Tis to diſparage his bleſſing, and prefer his curſe, to ſlight his wiſdom and adore our folly. When we go out of God's way, we go out of God's protection, we have no Charter for the bleſſing of providence without that condition, *Pſal.* 37. 3. *truſt in the Lord, and do good, ſo ſhalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily*

verily thou ſhalt be fed, to do evil then is not to truſt in God, or have any regard to his Providential care.

6. *When we diſtruſt God when there is no viſible means.* A diſtruſt of God renders him impotent, or falſe and mutable, or cruel and regardleſs, and what not? We detract from his power, as if it depended upon Creatures, or that he were like an Artificer that could not act without his Tools: As if God were tyed to means, and were beholding to Creatures for his operating power; as if that God who created the World without inſtruments, could not providentially apply himſelf to our particular exigencies without the help of ſome of his Creatures. If he cannot work without this or that means you did expect your mercy by. It ſupoſeth that God hath made the Creature greater then himſelf, and more neceſſary to thy well-being, than himſelf is; or elſe we conceit him falſe or fooliſh, as if he had undertaken a task of government too hard for him, as if he were grown weary of his labour, and muſt have ſome time to recruit his ſtrength, or as if he were unfaithful, not walking by rules of unerring goodneſs; or if we acknowledge him wiſe and able and faithful, yet it muſt then be a denyal of his gracious tenderneſs, which is as great as his power and wiſdom, and a perfection equal with any of the reſt. If his caring for us be a principal argument to move us to caſt our care upon him, as it is, 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. *caſting all your care upon him, for he careth for you*: Then if we caſt not our care upon him, it is a denial of his gracious care of us, this is to imagine him a tenderer governour of beaſts than men, as though our Saviour had ſpoke a palpable untruth, when he told us, not an hair of our heads doth fall without his leave; as if he regarded Sparrows only, and not his Children; or elſe it implies that God cannot mind us in a crowd of buſineſs in ſuch multitudes in the World, which he hath to take care of. But certainly, as the multitude of things doth not hinder his knowledge of them, ſo neither do they hinder his care. The arms of his goodneſs are as large to embrace all Creatures, as the eyes of his omniſcience are to behold them. From this root do all our fears of the power of men grow, *Iſa.* 51. 12, 13. *who art thou that art afraid of a man that ſhall dye*, &c. *and forgetteſt the Lord thy Maker, that hath ſtretched forth the Heavens*, &c. our forgetfulneſs at leaſt, if not a ſecret denial of God's power in the works of Creation and Providence, uſhers in diſtruſt of him, and that introduceth a fear of man. If they that know his name, will put their truſt in him, *Pſal.* 9. 10. *for thou, Lord, haſt not forſaken them that ſeek thee*; Then a diſtruſt of him diſcovers an ignorance and inconſideration of his name and his wales of working, and implies his forſaking of his Creature. He that truſts in any thing elſe beſides God, denies all the powerful operations of God, and conceives him not a ſtrength ſufficient for him, *Pſal* 52. 7. that man doth not *make God his ſtrength, who truſts in the abundance of his riches.* How groſs is it not to truſt God under the very ſence of his powerful goodneſs, but queſtion whether he can or will do this or that for us? When we will have jealouſies of him when he doth compaſs us round about with mercy, and encircle us with his beams, 'tis to queſtion whether the Summer Sun will warm me, though it ſhine directly upon me, and I feel the vigor of its beams upon my Body: much more baſe is this, then to diſtruſt him when we have no means: What doth this imply, but that he cares not what becomes of his Children, that no advantage can be expected from him, that his intentions towards us are not gracious even whiles we feel him?

7. *Stoutneſs under God's afflicting or merciful hand, is a denyal or contempt of Providence.* This was the aggravation of *Belſhazzar's* Sin, *Dan.* 5. 23. *and the God in whoſe hand thy breath is, and whoſe are all thy wales, haſt thou not glorified*; he glorified not God in the way of his providence, but was playing the Epicure, and was ſacrilegiouſly quaffing in the veſſels of the Temple when the City was beſieged; he ſeemed to dare the providence of God upon a preſumption that the City was impregnable by reaſon of *Euphrates*, and the proviſion they had within their walls, which, *Xenophon* ſaith, was enough for Twenty years, yet was taken that night when the hand-writing was. And by how much God's judgments have been more viſible to us, and upon ſome well known

known by us, or related to us, so much the greater is the contempt of his providential government, as *v.* 22. *and thou his Son Belshazzar hast not humbled thy heart, though thou knewest all this*, &c. he had known God's judgments upon his Grandfather *Nebuchadnezzar*, a Domestick example of God's vindicating his government of the World, and yet went in the same steps, so *Jer.* 5. 3, 4. *thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction, they have made their faces harder then a rock*: what is the reason? the Prophet renders it, *v.* 4. *they are foolish, for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God.* Correction calls for submission, but those like a Rock under God's hand, were correction-proof, they would not consider the ways of God's Providence, and the manner of them; 'tis as if by our peevishness we would make God weary of afflicting us, which is the worst case can happen. This is God's complaint of the ten Tribes, *Hos.* 7. 9. *gray hairs* are upon them, and *they know it not, strangers have devoured his strength*, &c. there was a consumption of their strength, the *Assyrians* and *Egyptians* to whom they gave gifts, had drained their treasure, but they would not consider God as the Author, or acknowledge whence their misery came, *they would not seek God for all this*, *v.* 10. 'Tis like a mans picking a pocket, or cutting a Throat under the Gallows in contempt of Justice*; whereas good men are both affected with, and remember God's judgments. *Eber* called his Son *Peleg*, division, because in his dayes the Earth was divided, that in the dayly sight of the Sun he might remember that sharp Providence in scattering of the *Babel* builders. Judgments affect us when they are before our eyes, as the Thunder and Plagues did *Pharaoh*; but when they are removed, men return to their beloved ways, as tho God had shot a way all his arrows, and was departed, to mind them no more. Take heed of this, 'tis a sin highly provoking: God is so tender that his Providence should be minded and improved, that a sin of this nature he follows with his displeasure in this life at least, *Isa.* 22. 12, 13. *And in that day did the Lord God of Hosts call to weeping and mourning, and behold joy, and gladness, eating Flesh, and drinking Wine, let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die.* When God in any judgment shews himself to be Lord *God of Hosts*, and calls us to weeping, and we behave our selves jollily in spight of his government, it is a sin he will remember, and bind the guilt upon us, *v.* 14. *and it was revealed in my Ears by the Lord of Hosts, surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till you die.*

* *Jenkin.*

8. *Envy also is a denial of Providence.* To be sad at the temporal good, or the gifts of another, as counting him unworthy of them, it is a reflection upon the Author of those gifts, an accusing providence of an unjust or unwise distribution *. Since God may do what he will with his own; if our eye be evil, because God is good, we intrench upon his Liberty, and deny him the disposal of his own goods, as if God were but our Steward, and we his Lords. 'Tis a temper we are all subject to, *Psal.* 37. 1. *Fret not thy self because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.* 'Tis peculiarly the product of self-love, which affects the principality in the World, and particularly affects the conduct of God in distributing his goods, that he must not give but to whom they please. It ariseth indeed from a sence of our wants; but the language of it is, God is unjust in his Providence to me, because he bestows not upon me that good which he gives to another. 'Tis such a sin that it seems to be a companion of our first parents pride, which was the cause of their fall. They envied God a felicity by himself, for they would be like him, *they would be as Gods.* Hence prehaps, the *Jews* say *Cain* denied the Providence of God, as envying his Brother, because God accepted *Abel*'s sacrifice and not his. *Jonah*'s passion arose from this pride, for fear he should be accounted a false Prophet, whereupon he envies God the glory of his mercy, and the poor *Ninivites* the advantage of it, he would have God conform the way of his Providence to his pleasure and reputation. Indeed it is to envy God the honour of his Providence in those gifts or good things another possesses, whereby he is instrumental to glorifie God and advantage others. Thus we would direct God what instruments he should employ, when no Artificer in his own Art would endure to be directed by any ignorant person what tools he should use in his work.

* *Cajetan Summal. P.* 4. 28.

9. *Impatience under croſs providences is a denial and contempt of God's government.* Men quarrel with God's revealed will, and therefore no wonder that they quarrel with his providential will; whereby we deny him his right of governing, and ſlight his actual exerciſe of his right. As if God were accountable to us for his diſpenſations, and muſt have only a reſpect to us or our humor in his government, *Job* 18. 4. *he teers himſelf in his anger, ſhall the Earth be forſaken for thee? and ſhall the rock be removed out of his place?* Muſt God alter the ſcene of his affairs according to our model and platform? and becauſe he doth not obſerve our rules and methods, muſt we tear our ſelves in anger? This is a ſecret curſing of God, and flying in his face when we ſee providence ſo croſs, that there ſeems to be no help at any time either in Heaven or Earth, *Iſa.* 8. 21, 22. *they ſhall fret themſelves and curſe their King and their God, and look upwards, and they ſhall look unto the Earth, and behold trouble and darkneſs.* Take heed of fretting at God's management of things in the world, or thy own particular concerns; this may lead to a curſing of God, and is indeed an initial ſecret ſwelling againſt him, and curſing of him. Man is ambitious to become a God. *Adam*'s poſterity have in one ſort or other imitated him. This

1. *Is a wrong to the Soveraignty of Providence.* 'Twas a good admonition of *Luther*'s to *Melanction* when he was troubled much about the affairs of the Church, *monendus eſt* Philippus *ut deſinat eſſe rector mundi.* By this temper we uſurp God's place, and ſet our ſelves in his Throne, we invade his ſupremacy by deſiring every thing to be at our beck, and are diſpleaſed with him, becauſe he doth not put the reins of the worlds government into our hands. As if we would command his will, and become his Soveraigns. 'Tis a ſtriving with our maker for the ſuperintendency, when we will ſit Judge upon him, or cenſure his acts, and preſume to direct him. *Iſa.* 45. 9. *Wo to him that ſtrives with his Maker, ſhall the clay ſay to him that faſhions it, what makeſt thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?* How do men ſummon God to the bar of their intereſt, and expoſtulate with him about his works, why he did not order them thus and thus; and if he doth ſo, to tell him he hath no hand, no hand of Providence in the World? The deſign of that place is to ſtop ſuch peeviſhneſs and invaſions of God's right; I will not have my Soveraign Will diſputed, as if I were but the Creatures Servant; I am content you ſhould *ask of me things to come, v.* 11. and pray to me, but notwithſtanding yet to ſubmit to my pleaſure without a peeviſh endeavouring to wreſt the Soveraignty out of my hand, and pull the Crown from my head.

2. *'Tis a wrong to the goodneſs and righteouſneſs of Providence.* 'Tis a charging God with ill management, and an implicit language, that if we were the Commanders of Providence, things ſhould be managed more juſtly and righteouſly; as it was *Abſalom's* pretence in wiſhing to be the King of *Iſrael* in *David*'s ſtead, 2 *Sam.* 15. 4. If patience be a giving God the honour of his righteouſneſs in his judgments, *Pſal.* 119. 75. *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulneſs haſt afflicted me.* Impatience muſt be a charge againſt God for unrighteouſneſs in his judicial proceedings, and a ſaying *the way of the Lord is not equal, Ezek.* 18. 25. 'Tis implied in that complaint, *Iſa.* 58. 2, 3. *They ask of me the ordinances of Juſtice,* &c. *wherefore have we faſted and thou ſeeſt not? wherefore have we afflicted our Souls, and thou takeſt no knowledge?* We demand juſtice of thee, ſince thou doſt not ſeem to do that which is fit and righteous, in not regarding us in our ſuits, and not beſtowing that which we have faſted for. God governs the World according to his will, our murmuring implies that God's will is not the rule of righteouſneſs. We affront the care of God towards his Creatures, as if the products of our ſhallow reaſons were more beautiful and juſt than God's contrivances for us, who hath higher and more glorious ends in every thing, both for our ſelves and the World, of which we are members, and for his own Glory, to which we ought to ſubject our ſelves, when perhaps our projects tend immediately to gratifie ſome ſenſual or ſpiritual luſt in us. 'Tis the commendation the Holy Ghoſt gives of *Job*, *Job.* 1. 22. *in all this Job ſinned not, neither*

charged

charged God foolishly, as a Character peculiar to him, implying that most men in the World do, upon any emergency, charge God with their crosses, as dealing unjustly with them, in inflicting punishment when they think they have deserved rewards: *Jeremiah* is not innocent in this case, *Jerem.* 20. 7. *O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived*, in the ill success of his prophecy, as though an immense goodness would, and a Soveraign power needed to deal in a fraudulent way with his creatures to bring his ends about.

3. *'Tis a wrong to the wisdom of Providence.* We would degrade his Omniscience and Wisdom, and sway him by our foolish and purblind dictates; 'tis as if we would instruct him better in the management of the World, and direct him to a reformation of his methods, *Job* 40. 2. *shall he that contends with the Almighty, instruct him? He that reproves God, let him answer it*: 'Tis a reproving God, and reproofs imply a greater authority, or righteousness, or wisdom in the person reproving; we reprove God as if God should have consulted with us, and asked our advice; 'tis to take upon us to be God's counsellors, and to conclude the only wise God by our imperfect reason, *Rom.* 11. 34. *Who hath been his Counsellor?* 'Tis a secret boasting of some excellency in our selves, as if God did not govern well, or we could govern better: Shall a silly passenger, that understands not the use of the compass, be angry that that the skilful Pilot will not steer the Vessel according to his pleasure? Must we give out our orders to God, as though the Counsels of infinite wisdom must roul about according to the conceits of our fancy? Is not the language of our hearts in our fits of impatience, as prodigiously proud against God's Providence as the Speech of that monster was against the creation, who said if he had been by God at the Creation of the World, he could have directed him to a better platform? all this and much more is vertually in this sin of impatience.

10. *In charging our sins and miscarriages by them, upon Providence*, in this we contemn it. Some think *Cain* doth so, *Gen.* 4. 9. *am I my Brother's keeper?* Thou art the keeper and governor of the World, why didst thou not hinder me from killing my Brother? 'Tis certain the first man did so, *Gen.* 3. 12. *the woman thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree*; thy gift is the cause of my sin and ruine. 'Tis as certain *David* laid the Sin of *Uriah*'s murder at the door of Providence, 1 *Sam.* 11. 25. when he heard that *Uriah* was dead, *the sword, saith he, devours one as well as another*. Man conjures up trouble to himself, when by his folly he brings himself into sin, and from thence to misery, and then *his heart frets against the Lord*, and layes the blame both of his sin and following mischiefs upon him, *Pro.* 19. 3. *the foolishness of man perverts his way, and his heart frets against the Lord.* There are many other wayes wherein we deny or slight Providence.

1. *When we do things with a respect to the pleasure of men, more than of God.* As though God were careless both of himself and his own honour, and regarded not the principles and ends of our actions.

2. *In vain boasting and vaunting of our selves.* As *Benhadad* would have such a multitude of men in his army as that there should not be dust enough in *Samaria* to afford every man a handful; * wherein he swaggers with God, and vaunts as if he were the Governor of the World; yet this man with his numerous Host was routed by a troop of Lacquies, *v.* 15, 20. they are called the young men of the Princes; such is the folly of men against the orders of God, when they boast in their hearts that their house shall continue for ever *.

* 2. *King.* 20. 10.

* *Psal.* 49. 11.

3. *Oppression. They slay the fatherless*, and say, the God of *Jacob* shall *not regard it* *. Their denial of Providence was the cause of their oppression of the poor, and where this is found in any, it is an argument it ariseth principally from a like cause; this is also made the cause why they eat up God's people as they eat bread *.

* *Psal.* 94. 6, 7.

* *Psal.* 14. 1. 4.

4. *Misinterpretations of Providence.*

Such cursed jealousies had the *Jews* of God. *Numb.* 14. 3. and *wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land to fall by the sword? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?* As though God in that mighty deliverance had cheated them

them with a deſign to deſtroy them in the wilderneſs, when one of thoſe plagues poured out upon *Pharaoh* being turned upon their heads, had deſtroyed them in *Egypt*. So fooliſh are they to think that God would ruine them upon dry Land, who might have drowned them as well as their enemies in the Red Sea: ſo unreaſonable is man in his diſputes againſt God.

5. *In limiting providence.* In bounding it to time, manner, and other circumſtances, as they did, *Pſal.* 78. 41. *they limited the holy one of Iſrael, for they remembred not his hand.* As though God muſt manage every thing according to the will of a ſimple Creature. It was a forgetfulneſs of Providence, at leaſt, that was the cauſe of it.

The Second *Uſe* is of *Comfort.* As the juſtice and righteouſneſs of God is the higheſt comfort to a good man, ſince the Evangelical diſpenſation: In that he hath to deal with a righteous God, who can as ſoon deny himſelf as his righteouſneſs. So it is none of the meaneſt comforts, that we acknowledge and worſhip that God, who exerciſeth himſelf in a conſtant government of the World, and leaves not any thing to the capriciouſneſs of that which we call fortune and chance. What ſatisfaction can any man in his ſober wits have to live in a World caſt off from all care of the Creator of it? Wiſdom without Providence would make any man mad, and the greateſt advantage would be to be a ſtupid and ſenſleſs fool: Can there be any worſe News told to men than this, that let them be as religious as they will, there is no eye above takes notice of it? What can be bitterer to a rational man than that God ſhould be careleſs of the World? What a door would be opened by it for all ſin in the wicked, and deſpair in the godly; 'Tis as great a matter of joy to the godly, that God reigns, as it is of terror to the wicked, *Pſal.* 97. 1. *The Lord reigns, let the Earth rejoice, Pſal.* 99. 1. *The Lord reigns, let the people tremble.*

It was an excellent Speech of a Stoick, ἐκ 'εςὶ ζῆν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ κακῷ βιῶν καὶ προνοίας.

'Tis a comfort, That,

1. *Man is a ſpecial object of Providence.* God provides for all Creatures, even thoſe that are the works of his hands, much more for man, who is more peculiarly the work of his head, in whoſe Creation he took Counſel, *Gen.* 1. 26. *let us make man in our Image, after our likeneſs.* The work of his heart in being made according to his Image, and intended as a ſubordinate end of his whole Creation next to the principal, that of God's Glory, he is the preſerver of man and beaſt: of man principally, of beaſts in ſubſerviency to mans good, and preſervation.

2. *Holy men, a more ſpecial object of it.* God preſerves and provides for all things, and all perſons: But his eye is more peculiarly fixed upon thoſe that fear him. *Pſal.* 33. 18. *behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy,* ſo fixed, as if he had no regard to any thing elſe. If God hath a care of man created after his own Image, tho his Image be depraved, much more of thoſe wherein his Image is reſtored. If God loves himſelf, he loves his Image and his works. A man loves the works which he hath made of ſome external matter, much more doth a Father love his Son, much more doth God love his own, and therefore will work their good, and diſpoſe of them well. God exereiſeth a ſpecial Providence over the actions of a good man, as well as his perſon, *Pſal.* 37. 23. *the ſteps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his wayes*; 'tis a ſpecial, becauſe a delightful Providence, he delights in his way; how highly may it cheer a man to be in covenant with that God, which rules the World, and hath all things at his beck, to be under not only the care of his wiſdom, but of his goodneſs? The Governour of the World, being ſuch an only friend, will do him no hurt, being ſuch an only Father will order all things to his good out of a Fatherly affection; he is the Worlds Soveraign, but a good mans Father: He rules the Heavens and the Earth, but he loves his holy ones. Other things are the objects of his Providence, and a good man is the end of it. For, *his eyes run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong for him whoſe heart is perfect toward him.*

3. Hence

3. Hence it will follow, that the *Spirits of good men have ſufficient grounds to bear up in their innocent ſufferings and ſtorms in the World; Innocent ſufferings,* There is a righteous Governor, who orders all, and will reward them for their pains, as well as their ſervice, *Heb.* 6. 10. *for God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love*; there is one that preſides in the World, who ſees all their calamities, and cannot be miſtaken in their cauſe, who hath as much power and wiſdom, as will to help them. It would be an affliction indeed, if there were no ſoveraign power to whom they might make their moan in their diſtreſs, to whom they might eaſe their conſciences, if there were no Governor to whom they might offer up their petitions.

In the ſtorms they meet with in the world. How doth the preſence of a skilful Pilot in a weather-beaten Ship cheer the hearts of the fearful Paſſengers? What a dread would it be to them to have the veſſel wherein their lives and all are concerned, left to the fury of Winds and Waves, without an able hand to manage it? God hath a bridle to check the paſſions of men, to marſhal them according to his pleaſure; they are all but his inſtruments in the government, not the Lords of it: God can lay a Plot with more wiſdom for a good mans ſafety, than the Enemy can for his deſtruction; he can countermine their Plots with more power than they can execute them; he can out-wit their craft, over-power their ſtrength, and turn their deſigned cruelty againſt them, as a knife into their own breaſts.

4. *Hence follows a certain ſecurity againſt a good mans want.* If God take care of the hairs, the ornamental ſuperfluities, why ſhould we doubt his care of our neceſſary ſupply? If he be the guardian of our hairs which fall off without our ſence of their departure, ſhall he be careleſs of us when we are at a pinch for our all? Will God reach out his care to Beaſts, and deny it to his Children? What would you judge of that Father, who ſhould feed his Servants and ſtarve his Sons? He ſupplies his Enemies, and hath he no bowels for his Friends? The very unjuſt as well as the juſt are enlightened by his Sun, and refreſht by his rain, and ſhall he not have a Providence for thoſe that have a ſpecial intereſt in that Mediator, whoſe interpoſition kept up thoſe ſtanding mercies after our forfeiture of them by ſin? If he bleſs with thoſe bleſſings, thoſe who are the objects of his curſe, will he not bleſs thoſe that are in his ſpecial favour with them, ſo far as they may prove bleſſings to them? *Pſal.* 34. 10. *the young lions do lack and ſuffer hunger, but they that ſeek the Lord, ſhall not want any good thing, v.* 9. *for there is no want to them that fear him.* A good man ſhall have what he needs, not alwaies what he thinks he needs. Providence intends the ſupply of our neceſſities, not of our deſires; he will ſatisfie our wants, but not our wantonneſs. When a thing is not needful, a man cannot properly be ſaid to want it; when it is needful, a good man ſhall not be without it; what is not beſtowed upon us, may not be ſo beautiful at that time wherein we deſire it, for every thing is *beautiful in its ſeaſon**. He that did not want God's kindneſs to renew him, ſhall never want God's kindneſs to ſupply him; his hand ſhall not be wanting to give, where his heart hath been ſo large in working. Others live that have an intereſt only in common Providence, but good men have Providence cabineted in a promiſe, and aſſured to them by a deed of covenant-conveyance; he was a provider before, he hath made himſelf now your Debtor. You might Pray for his providential care, before, with a common faith, now with a more ſpecial expoſtulation: For in his promiſe he hath given a good man the key of the Cheſt of his Providence, becauſe it is *the promiſe of this life and that which is to come**; of this life not to our deſires, but neceſſities; of the life to come to both, wherein they ſhall have whatſoever they can want, and whatſoever they can deſire.

* *Eccleſ.* 9. 11.

* *1 Tim.* 4. 8.

Again conſider, God doth exerciſe a more ſpecial Providence over men, as cloathed with miſerable circumſtances, and therefore among his other Titles, this is one, to be a helper of the Fatherleſs*. 'Tis the argument the Church uſed to expreſs her return to God, *Hoſ.* 14. 3. *for in thee the fatherleſs find mercy.* Now what greater comfort is there than this, that there is one preſides in the World, who is ſo wiſe he cannot be miſtaken, ſo faithful he cannot deceive,

* *Pſal.* 10. 14.

ceive, ſo pitiful he cannot neglect his people; and ſo powerful, that he can make ſtones even to be turned into bread, if he pleaſe?

Further, take this for a comfortable conſideration,

God doth not govern the World only by his will as an abſolute Monarch, but by his wiſdom and goodneſs as a tender Father. 'Tis not his greateſt pleaſure to ſhew his Soveraign power, or his unconceivable wiſdom, but his immenſe goodneſs, to which he makes the other attributes ſubſervient. What was God's end in creating, is his end in governing, which was the communication and diffuſion of his goodneſs; we may be ſure from hence, that God will do nothing but for the beſt, his wiſdom appointing it with the higheſt reaſon, and his goodneſs ordering it to the moſt gracious end; and becauſe he is the higheſt good, he doth not only will good, but the beſt good in every thing he acts.

What greater comfort can there be, than that we are under the care of an infallible unwearied and righteous Governor? infallible becauſe of his infinite wiſdom, unwearied becauſe of his incomprehenſible omnipotency, and righteous becauſe of his unbounded goodneſs and holineſs.

3. *Uſe* of *Exhortation.*

The duties ariſing from hence, will run as a thread through the web of our whole lives, and all the motions of them. This doctrine hath an influence upon our whole courſe, there is nothing we meet with, but is an act of Providence; and there is no act of Providence, but calls for ſome particular duty. Is there any good we want, we muſt ſeek it at his hands, we muſt depend upon him for it, we muſt preſcribe no methods to him, but leave the conduct of it to his own wiſdom. Is it a croſs Providence, and contrary to our deſires and expectations? Murmur not at it. Is it afflictive and troubleſom? Submit to it: Is it either good or bad, and preſent, we muſt ſtudy to underſtand it: Is it a good, and preſent? give God the Glory of it.

1. *Seek every thing you need at the hands of God.* 'Tis not only the skilfulneſs of the Pilot, but a favourable gale from Heaven, which muſt conduct the Ship to the intended port. As his Providence is the foundation, ſo it is the encouragement of all prayer. The end of the Lords prayer is, *for thine is the Kingdom, the power and the Glory:* the providential Kingdom belongs to God, Power he hath to manage it, and his Glory is the end of all; ſeek to him therefore for the exerciſe of his power in thy concerns, and for his directing them to his glory in his providential adminiſtrations. Every one of our daies, and both the mercy and the miſery of them depend upon him, *Pro.* 27. 1. *thou knoweſt not what a day may bring forth*, but God foreſees all events; have recourſe therefore to his care for every dayes ſucceſs; what are our contrivances without the leave and bleſſing of Providence? Like the bubbles blown up from a nut-ſhell, eaſily broken by the next puff Our labour will be as fruitleſs as *Peter's* with all his toyl, and catch nothing, till God ſpeaks the word, and ſends the fiſh into our net *. The way of man is not in himſelf *. *O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himſelf, it is not in man that walk's to direct his ſteps.* Dangers are not within the reach of our eye to foreſee, nor within the compaſs of our power to prevent. Humane prudence may lay the platform, and God's power blaſt the execution, when it ſeems to be grown up neareſt to maturity. *Hezekiah* was happy in his affairs, becauſe he was aſſiſted by God; *Ahaz* unhappy, becauſe he is deſerted by God. If we would have a Clock go well, we muſt look chiefly to the motion of the chief Wheel; a failure in that makes an error in all the reſt: nothing can terminate its motion to our benefit without Providence. Coloured glaſs can reflect no beams without the Sun's light, nor fruits be ripened without its influence. Our dependance on God is greater than theirs on the Sun. God lets men play with their own wit and ſtrength, and come to the brink of execution of their deſigns, and then blows upon them that they may know there is a God in the Earth. *Pythagoras* could ſay, it was γελοῖον a ridiculous thing, to ſeek that which is brave and virtuous any where elſe than of God *. *Cyrus* is a brave pattern, who is mentioned in Scripture, and repreſented by *Xenophon* calling upon God when he was firſt choſen General; and in his Speech to his Captains to encourage them to hope for a good ſucceſs

* *Luk.* 5. 5
* *Jer.* 10. 13.

* *Jamblich. vita.* Pithag. *lib.* 1. *cap.* 18. *p.* 89.

Xenophon περὶ κύρου παιδ. *lib.* 1. *p.* 23.

ſucceſs of the expedition, tells them they might expect it, becauſe I have begun with God, which you know, ſaith he, is my cuſtom, not only when I attempt great matters, but alſo the τὰ μικρὰ things of leſſer concernment. The ſeeking of God ſhould be the prologue to all our affairs; we are enjoyned firſt to pray, and then determine, *Job* 22. 27. *Thou ſhalt make thy prayer unto him, thou ſhalt alſo decree a thing, and it ſhall be eſtabliſhed unto thee.* The intereſſing Providence in our concerns, is the high way to ſucceſs. The reaſon we miſcarry, is becauſe we conſult not God, but determine without him; and thenwe have no reaſon to complain of him for not proſpering our way, when we never commended our affairs to his conduct. It hath been the practice of holy men. *Nehemiah* firſt petitioned God before he would uſe his intereſt in the Kings favour, *Nehem.* 2. 4. *then the King ſaid unto me, for what doſt thou make requeſt? So I prayed to the God of Heaven, and I ſaid unto the King*, &c. So *Abraham*'s Steward puts up his requeſt to God, before he would put the buſineſs he came upon, in execution, *Gen.* 24. 12. *David* frequently in particular caſes. 1 *Sam.* 23. 9. 2 *Sam.* 2. 1. 2 *Sam.* 19. 23. God only doth what he pleaſes in Heaven and in Earth; He only can bleſs us, He only can blaſt us. Shall we be careleſs in any undertaking, whether we have his favour or no? 'Tis a ridiculous madneſs to reſolve to do any thing without God, without whoſe aſſiſting and preſerving of us, we had not been able to make that reſolution.

2. *Truſt Providence.* To truſt God when our Ware-houſes and Bags are full, and our Tables ſpread, is no hard thing; but to truſt him when our purſes are empty, but a handful of meal and a cruſe of Oil left, and all wayes of relief ſtopt, herein lies the wiſdom of a Chriſtians Grace. Yet none are exempted from this duty; all are bound to acknowledge their truſt in him by the dayly prayer for dayly bread; even thoſe that have it in their Cupboards as well as thoſe that want it; The greateſt Prince as well as the meaneſt beggar. Whatever your wants are, want not faith, and you cannot want ſupplies. 'Tis the want of this binds up his hand from doing great works for his Creatures: The more we truſt him, the more he concerns himſelf in our affairs. The more we truſt our ſelves, the more he delights to croſs us; for he hath denounced ſuch an one curſed that maketh Fleſh his arm *, though it be the beſt Fleſh in the World, becauſe it is a departing from the Lord. No wonder then that God departs from us, and carries away his bleſſing with him: while we truſt our ſelves, we do but trouble our ſelves, and know not how to reconcile our various reaſons for hopes and fears; but the committing our way to the Lord renders our minds calm and compoſed, *Pro.* 16. 3. *commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts ſhall be eſtabliſhed.* Thou ſhalt have no more of thoſe quarrelling diſturbing thoughts, what the ſucceſs ſhall be. * *Jer.* 17. 5.

1. *Truſt Providence in the greateſt extremities.* He brings us into ſtraits, that he may ſee the exerciſe of our faith. *Zeph.* 3. 12. *I will leave in the midſt of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they ſhall truſt in the name of the Lord.* When we are moſt deſolate, we have moſt need of this exerciſe, and have the fitteſt ſeaſon to practiſe it: he is alwaies our refuge and our ſtrength, but in time of trouble a preſent help, *Pſal.* 46. 1. *Daniel*'s new advancement by *Belſhazzar* but a day before the City was taken by the Enemy *, the King ſlain, and (no doubt) many of his Nobility, and thoſe that were neareſt in Authority with him, it being the intereſt of the Enemy to diſpatch them, was a danger; yet God by wayes not expreſſed, preſerved *Daniel*, and gave him favour with the Conqueror. God ſometimes leads his people into great dangers, that they may ſee and acknowledge his hand in their preſervation. *Daniel* had not had ſo ſignal an experience of God's care of him, had he been in the lower condition he was in before his new preferment. God's eye is alwaies upon them that fear him; not to keep diſtreſs from them, but to quicken them in it, and give them as it were a new life from the dead, *Pſal* 33. 18, 19. *To deliver their Soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.* God brings us into ſtreights, that we may have more lively experiments of his tenderneſs in his ſeaſonable relief: If he be angry, *he will repent himſelf for his Servants, when he ſees their power is gone*; becauſe then the glory of his Providence is appropriated to himſelf, * *Dan.* 5. 29.

Deut. 32. 36, 39. *See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no God with me: I kill, and I make alive.* No Creature can have any pretence to ſhare in it; He delights thereby to blow up both our affections to him, and admirations of him, and ſtore up in us a treaſure of experiments to encourage our truſting in him in the like ſtreights. We ſhould therefore repoſe our ſelves in God in a deſart, as well as in the Cities: with as much faith among Savage beaſts, as in the beſt company of the moſt ſociable men *. And anſwer the greateſt ſtreight with *Abraham*'s Speech to *Iſaac*, *God will provide.* For we have to do with a God who is bound up to no means, is at no expence in miraculous ſuccors, who delights to perfect his ſtrength in the Creatures weakneſs. We have to do with a God, who only knows what may further our good, and accordingly orders it; what may hinder it, and therefore prevents it. He can ſet all cauſes in ſuch a poſture, as ſhall conſpire together as one link to bring about ſucceſs, and make even contrary motions meet in one gracious end; as the Rivers which run from *North* and *South*, the contrary quarters of the World, agree in the ſurges of one Sea. Though providences may ſeem to croſs one another, they ſhall never croſs his word and promiſe, which he hath magnified above all his names. And his Providence is but a ſervant to his Truth.

Durant de Tentat. p. 168.

2. *Truſt it in the way of means.* Though we are ſure God hath decreed the certain event of ſuch a thing, yet we muſt not encourage our idleneſs, but our diligence. Though *Moſes* was aſſured of the victory, when *Amalek* came armed againſt him, yet he commands *Joſhua* to draw up the valiant men into a body, himſelf goes to the Mount to pray, and is as diligent in the uſe of all means, as if he had been ignorant of God's purpoſe, and had rather ſuſpected the rout of his own than his Enemies forces. Neither doth *Joſhua* afterwards, though ſecured by promiſe in his conqueſt of *Canaan*, omit any part of the duty of a wiſe and watchful General; he ſends ſpies, diſciplines his forces, beſiegeth Cities, and contrives ſtratagems. Providence directs us by means; not to uſe them, is to tempt our Guardian; where it intends any great thing for our good, it opens a door, and puts ſuch circumſtances into our hands, as we may uſe without the breach of any Command, or the neglect of our own duty. God could have ſecured Chriſt from *Herod*'s fury, by a miraculous ſtroke from Heaven upon his Enemy, but he orders *Joſeph* and *Maries* flight into *Egypt* as a means of his preſervation. God rebukes *Moſes* for praying, and not uſing the means in continuing the Peoples march, *Exod.* 14. 15. *Wherefore crieſt thou unto me? ſpeak unto the Children of Iſrael, that they go forwards.* To uſe means without reſpect to God, is proudly to contemn him; to depend upon God without the uſe of means, is irreligiouſly to tempt him; in both we abuſe his Providence. In the one we diſobey him in not uſing the means he hath appointed; in the other, preſumptuouſly impoſe upon him for the encouragement of our lazineſs. Diligence on our part, and the bleſſing on God's, *Solomon* joyns together, *Pro.* 10. 4. *The hand of the diligent makes rich*; but *v.* 22. *The bleſſing of the Lord maketh rich.* So *Eccleſ.* 9. 1. *Our works are in the hand of God*; our works, but Gods bleſſing; God's bleſſing, but not without our works. It was the practice of good men. *Jacob* wraſtles with God to divert his Brother's fury, yet ſends a Preſent to his Brother to appeaſe him *. *David* truſts in the name of the Lord his God in his duel with *Goliab*, but not without his ſling: Our labour ſhould rather be more vigorous than more faint, when we are aſſured of the bleſſing of Providence by the infallibility of the promiſe.

Gen. 32. 9, 13.

3. *Truſt Providence in the way of the precept.* Let not any reliance upon an ordinary Providence induce you into any way contrary to the command. *Daniel* had many inducements from an appearance of Providence to eat the Kings meat, his neceſſity of compliance in his captivity, probability of preferment by learning the wiſdom of the Countrey, whereby he might both have advanced himſelf, and aſſiſted his Countrey-men, the greatneſs of the conſideration for a Captive to be fed from the Kings Table, the ingratitude he might be accuſed of for deſpiſing ſo kind a treatment; but none of theſe things moved him againſt a command, becauſe the Law of God forbad it, he would not eat of the King's meat. *Daniel* might have argued, I may wind my

Dan. 1. 8, 9, 10. &c. *but Daniel purpoſed in his heart that he would not defile himſelf with the portion of the Kings meat.*

my ſelf in to the King's favour, do the Church of God a great ſervice by my intereſt in him, which may be daſht in pieces by my refuſal of this kindneſs; but none of theſe things wrought upon him. No Providences wherein we have ſeeming circumſtances of glorifying God, muſt lead us out of the way of duty; this is to rob God one way, to pay him another. God brought *Daniel's* ends about, he finds favour with the Govenour, his requeſt is granted, the ſucceſs is anſwerable, and all thoſe ends attained, which he might in a ſinful way by an ill conſtruction of Providence have propoſed to himſelf, all which he might have miſſed of, had he run on in a carnal manner: This, this is the way to ſucceſs, *Pſal.* 37. 5. *Commit thy way unto the Lord, truſt alſo in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs.* Commit thy way to the guidance of his Providence, with an obedience to his precept, and relyance on his promiſe, and refer all ſucceſs in it to God. If we ſet up our golden Calfs made of our own ear-rings, our wit and ſtrength and carnal prudence, be cauſe God ſeems to neglect us, our fate may be the ſame with theirs, and the very duſt of our demoliſht Calf may be abitter Spice in our drink, as it was in theirs.

3. *Truſt him ſolely without preſcribing any methods to him*; Leave him to his wiſe choice, wait upon him becauſe he is a God of judgement *, who goes judiciouſly to work, and can beſt time the executions of his will. The wiſe God obſerves particular periods of time for doing his great works. *John* 2. 4. *my hour is not yet come, woman, what have I to do with thee?* Which man is no competent judge of: I will do this Miracle, but the ſeaſon is not yet come wherein I will be moſt beautiful. God hath as much wiſdom to pitch the time of performance of his promiſe, as he hath mercy at firſt to make it. How preſumptuous would it be for the ſhallow world, a thing worſe than nothing, and vanity, to preſcribe rules to the Creator? Much more for a ſingle perſon, a lirtle Atome of duſt, infinitely worſe than nothing, and vanity, to do it. Since we had no hand in Creating the world or our ſelves, let us not preſume to direct God in the government of it, *Job* 38. 4. *Where waſt thou when I laid the foundation of the Earth, declare if thou haſt underſtanding?* Would it not be a diſparagement to God to ſtoop to thy fooliſh deſires? yea, would you not your ſelves have a lower conceit of him, if he ſhould degrade his wiſdom to the wrong biaſs of your blind reaſon?

* *Iſa.* 30. 18.

Thirdly, *Submit to Providence.* 'Tis Gods right to govern the World, and diſpoſe of his Creature; 'tis his Glory in Heaven to do what he will *, let us not by our unſubmiſſive carriage deprive him of the ſame glory on earth; he brings to paſs his will by wayes the Creature cannot underſtand. 'Tis the wiſeſt ſpeech in the medley of fooleries, the *Turkiſh Alcoran* *. We muſt walk by the rule of reaſon which God hath placed in us for our guide; yet if Providence brings to paſs any other event contrary to our rational expectations, becauſe it is a clear evidence of his will, we muſt acquieſce. As when a Traveller hath two wayes to come to his journeys end, the one ſafe, and the other dangerous, reaſon perſwades him to chuſe the ſafeſt way, wherein he falls among thieves; now having uſed his reaſon, which in that caſe was to be his director, he muſt acquieſce: Gods Providence bringeth forth an event, which he could not without violence to his reaſon avoid. And therefore it is a great vanity, when a man hath reſolved the moſt probable way in a buſineſs, and fails in it, to torment himſelf; becauſe though our conſultations depend upon our ſelves, yet the iſſues of them are ſolely in the hand of God. It concerns us therefore to ſubmit to Gods diſpoſal of us and our affairs, ſince nothing can come to paſs but by the will of God effecting it, or permitting it. If the fall of a Sparrow is not without his Will *, much leſs can the greater events which befall men, the nobler Creatures, be without the ſame concurrence of Gods pleaſure; therefore ſubmit: For,

* *Pſal.* 115. 3. *But our God is in the Heaven: he hath done whatſoever he pleaſed.* * *Deus triumphat in ſua cauſa, &c.*

* *Math.* 10. 29.

1. *Whatſoever God doth, he doth wiſely.* His acts are not ſudden and raſh, but acts of Counſel; not taken up upon the preſent poſture of things, but the reſolves of Eternity. As he his the hiegheſt wiſdom, ſo all his acts reliſh of it, and he guides is will by counſel, *Eph.* 1. 11. [*Who worketh all things after the Counſel of his own will*]. If God took Counſel in Creating the World, much more in laying a platform of government, much more in the act of government; for men can frame models of government, that can never reduce them into

practice. Now God being infinitely wiſe, and his will infinitely good, it muſt needs be that goodneſs and wiſdom are the rules whereby he directs himſelf in his actions in the world. And what greater motive can there be to perſwade our ſubmiſſion, than Wiſdom and Goodneſs tranſacting all things? Gods counſel being the firmeſt, as well as the wiſeſt, it is a folly both ways to reſiſt it.

2. *God diſcovers his mind to us by Providences.* Every work of God being the reſult of his Counſel; when we ſee it actually brought forth into the World, what elſe doth it diſcover to us, but that Counſel and will of his? Every ſingle Providence hath a language wherein Gods mind is ſignified, much more a train and contexture of them, *Luk.* 7. 22. *Tell John what things you have ſeen and heard how that the blind ſee, the Lame walk, the Lepers are cleanſed, the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed to life, to the poor the Goſpel is preached.* Our Saviour informs *John*'s Diſciples from acts of Providence, he gives him no other anſwer, but turns him over to interpret and conſtrue his works in the caſe. Providence therefore muſt not be reſiſted, when Gods mind in it is diſcovered: 'Tis diſingenuous to act againſt his pleaſure and manifeſt mind; 'tis the Devils ſin. *Aaron* when he loſt his two Sons, in ſo judicial a manner by Fire from Heaven, yet held his peace *; becauſe God had declared his mind poſitively, *I will be glorified.* 'Tis dangerous to reſiſt the mind of God, for the word of his Providence ſhall proſper in ſpight of men and Devils, *Iſa.* 55. 11. *My word that goes forth of my mouth, ſhall not return unto me void; it ſhall proſper in the thing whereto I ſent it*; and therefore a reſiſting of it is termed θεομαχεῖν a fighting againſt God by *Gamaliel*, no great friend to the Church, *Acts.* 5. 38, 39.

* *Levit.* 10. 1. 2. 3.

4. *Murmur not at Providence.* Though we do not clearly reſiſt it, if there be a repining ſubmiſſion, it is a partial oppoſition to the Will of God. We might as well murmur at God's creation, as at his Providence; for that is as arbitrary as this; he is under no Law but his own righteous will: we ſhould therefore leave the government of the world to God's wiſdom, as we acknowledge the frame of it to be an act of his power. If God ſhould manage his wayes according to our preſcriptions, what ſattisfaction would God have? what ſatisfaction would the World have? He might be unjuſt to himſelf, and unjuſt to others. Your own complaints would not be ſtilled, when you ſhould feel the ſmart of your own Counſels; yet if they were, what ſatisfaction could there be to the complaints of others, whoſe intereſts and therefore judgments and deſires lye croſs to yours? Man is a croſs Creature. The *Iſraelites* exclaimed to God againſt *Pharaoh*, and when the Scene was changed, they did no leſs murmur againſt *Moſes* in the wilderneſs. They were as troubleſome when they were delivered, as when they were afflicted. In *Egypt* they would have their liberty, and in the Wilderneſs their ſtomachs turn, and they long for the Onyons and Garlick, though attended with their former ſlavery. Let God govern the World according to his own Wiſdom and Will, till all mankind can agree in one method to offer to him, and that I think will never be, though the World ſhould laſt for ever. Murmur not therefore; whatſoever is done in the World, is the work of a wiſe Agent, who acts for the perfection of the whole univerſe; and why ſhould I murmur at that which promotes the common happineſs and perfection, that being better and more deſirable, than the perfection of any one particular perſon? Muſt a Lutineſt break all his ſtrings becauſe one is out of tune? And muſt God change his courſe becauſe things are out of order with one man, though in regard of divine Providence things are not out of order in themſelves, or without any care, for God is a God of order? This temper will hinder our prayers; with what face can we pray to that God whoſe wiſdom we thus repine at? If God doth exerciſe a Providence in the World, why do we murmur? if he doth not take care of thoſe things, why do we pray to him? 'tis a contradiction. It alſo hinders us from giving God the glory, and our ſelves the comfortable ſight of his Providence. God may have taken ſomething from us, which is the matter of our ſorrow, and give another thing to us, which might be the matter of our joy. *Jacob* loſt a joint, and got a bleſſing *: What advantage can it be to murmur? Can all your cryes ſtop the motions of the Heavens, when a ſtorm reaches you? Can your

* *Gen.* 23. 29, 31.

your clamours make the clouds move the faſter, or perſwade the ſhowers from drenching us? Murmuring at any afflictive Providence, is the way to make the Rod ſmarter in it ſelf, and ſharper to us.

5. *Study Providence.* 'Tis a part of *Atheiſm* not to think the acts of God in the World worth our ſerious thoughts. And if you would know the meaning of his adminſtrations, grow up in the fear of God. *Pſal.* 25. 14. *The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him.* God is highly angry with thoſe that mind him not, *Pſal.* 28. 5. *becauſe they regard not the operation of his hands, he ſhall deſtroy them, and not build them up*: He ſhall utterly root them out.

1. *Study Providence univerſally.* The *darkeſt*; God brings order out of the Worlds confuſion, even as he framed a beautiful Heaven and Earth out of a rude Maſs. The *terribleſt*; theſe offer ſome thing worth our obſervation; the dreadful Providence of God makes *Sodom* an example to after ages. *Jude* 7. *They are ſet forth for an example, ſuffering the vengeance of eternal fire*, &c. The *ſmalleſt*; God is a wiſe Agent, and ſo the leaſt of his actions are ſignificant. There is nothing ſuperfluous in thoſe acts we account the meaneſt; for to act vainly and lightly, argues imperfection, which cannot be attributed to God. The wiſdom of God may be much ſeen in thoſe Providences the blind World counts ſmall; as a little picture is oft times of more value, and hath more of the workman's skill than a larger which an ignorant perſon might prize at a higher rate; the Lilies, Flowers, Sparrows, our Saviour raiſes excellent obſervations from.

2. *Regularly.* By the word; compare Providence and the promiſe together; God's manner of adminiſtrations, and the meaning of them is underſtood by the word, *Pſal.* 77. 13. *Thy way, O God, is in the Sanctuary.* By faith; we many times correct our ſence by reaſon, when we look through a blew or green glaſs, and ſee all things blew or green; though our ſenſe repreſents them ſo, yet our reaſon diſcovers the miſtake; Why ſhould we not correct reaſon by faith? Indeed our purblind reaſon ſtands in as much need of a regulation by faith, as our deceitful ſence doth of a regulation by reaſon. We may often obſerve in the Goſpel, that the holy Ghoſt taking notice of the particular circumſtances in the bringing Chriſt into the World, and in the courſe of his life, often hath thoſe expreſſions, *as it was written, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.* There is not a Providence happens in the World, but there are ſome general rules in the Word, whereby we may apprehend the meaning of it. From God's former work diſcovered in his word, we may trace his preſent foot-ſteps: Obſerve the timings of Providence wherein the beauty of it appears, ſince *God hath made every thing beautiful in its time.*

3. *Intirely.* View them in their connexion. A harſh touch ſingle would not be pleaſing, but may rarely affect the conſort: The Providences of God bear a juſt proportion to one another, and are beautiful in their intire Scheme; but when regarded apart, we ſhall come far ſhort of a delightful underſtanding of them. As in a piece of Arras folded up, and afterwards particularly opened, we ſee the hand or foot of a man, the branch of a tree; or if we look on the outſide, we ſee nothing but knots and threads, and uncouth ſhapes that we know not what to make of; but when it is fully opened, and we have the whole Webb before us, we ſee what Hiſtories and pleaſing characters are interwoven in it. View them in their end; there is no true judgment to be made of a thing in motion, unleſs we have a right proſpect of the end to which it tends. Many things which may ſeem terrible in their motion, may be exellent in their end. Providence is crowned by the end of it. *Aſaph* was much troubled about the proſperity of the wicked, and affliction of the Godly, but he was well ſatisfied when he underſtood their end, which was the end of Providence too, *Pſal.* 73. 16, 17. *When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me, until I went into the Sanctuary, then underſtood I their end.* *Moſes* his Rod was a Serpent in its motion upon the ground; but when taken up, it was a Rod again to work miracles. God ſet us a pattern for this in the Creation. He views the Creatures as they came into being, and pronounced them

them *good*, he takes a review of them afterward in their whole frame, and the ſubordination of them to one another, and the ends he had deſtined them to, and then pronounceth them *very good*; The merciful Providences of God if ſingly looked upon, will appear good, but if reviewed in the whole web, and the end of them, will commence very good in our apprehenſions.

4. *Calmly.* Take heed of paſſion in this ſtudy, that is a miſt before the eye of the mind; ſenſual pleaſures alſo diſturb and ſtifle the nobler operation of the intellective part, and all improving thoughts of Gods Providence, *Iſa.* 5. 12. *And the Harp, and the Viol, and Wine, are in their feaſts, but they regard not the work of the Lord, nor conſider the operations of his hands*; All thoughts of them are choaked by the pleaſures of ſenſe. Paſſions and ſenſual pleaſures, are like flying Clouds in the night, interpoſing themſelves between the ſtars and our eyes, that we cannot obſerve the motions of them. Turbulent paſſions, or Swiniſh pleaſures prevailing, obſcure the Providence of God. Our own humour and intereſt we often make the meaſures of our judgment of Providence: *Shimei*, when *Abſalom* rebels againſt his Father, looks no further than his own intereſt, and therefore interprets it as a judgment of God in revenging the houſe of *Saul*, 2 *Sam.* 16. 7, 8. *The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the houſe of Saul, in whoſe ſtead thou haſt reigned.* Therefore the Spirit of God takes particular notice that he was of the houſe of *Saul*, *v.* 5. when indeed this judgment was quite another thing, for *David's* ſin in the matter of *Uriah* was written in the forehead of it.

5. *Seriouſly.* 'Tis not an eaſie work; for the cauſes of things are hid as the ſeminal virtues in plants, not viſible till they manifeſt themſelves. Providence is God's Lanthorn in many affairs; if we do not follow it cloſe, we may be left in the dark, and loſe our way. With much Prayer, For we cannot of our ſelves find out the reaſon of them; being ſhallow Creatures, we cannot find our thoſe infinite wiſe methods God obſerves in the managing of them; but if we ſeriouſly ſet to work, and ſeek God in it, God may inform us, and make them intelligible to us. Though a man may not be able of himſelf to find out the frame and motions of an Engine, yet when the Artificer hath explained the work, diſcovered the intent of the Fabrick, it may be eaſily underſtood; If it be dark, whilſt you ſeriouſly muſe on it, God may ſend forth a light into you, and give you an underſtanding of it, *Mat.* 1. 20. *Joſeph thought* of thoſe things, and whilſt he thought on them, *The Angel of the Lord appeared to him* in a dream; God made them known to him. The *Iſraelites* ſaw God's acts in the bulk of them, but *Moſes* ſaw his way and the manner how he wrought them, *Pſal.* 103. 7. *He made known his wayes unto Moſes, his acts unto the Children of Iſrael. Moſes* had more converſe with God than they, and and therefore was admitted into his ſecrets.

6. *Holily.* With a deſign to conform to that duty Providence calls for. Our motions ſhould be according to the Providence of God, when we underſtand the intent of them. There is a call of Providence, *Iſa.* 22. 12. *In that day the Lord called to weeping and mourning*; Sometimes to ſorrow, ſometimes to joy. If it be a Providence to diſcover our ſin, let us comply with it by humiliation; if it be to further our grace, ſuit it by lively and freſh actings. As the ſap in plants deſcends with the Sun's declination, and aſcends at the return of the Sun from the Tropick; there are ſeveral graces to be exerciſed upon ſeveral acts of Providence; either publick to the Church and Nation, or particular to our own perſons. Sometimes faith, ſometimes joy, ſometimes patience, ſometimes ſorrow for ſin. There are ſpiritual leſſons in every Providence, for it doth not only offer ſomething to be underſtood, but ſome things to be practiſed, *Mark* 10. 15. A Child is brought to Chriſt, and Chriſt from thence teaches them a leſſon of humility. *Luk.* 13. 1, 2, 3. When Chriſt diſcourſes of that ſad Providence of the blood of the *Galileans*, and the Tower of *Siloa*, he puts them upon the exerciſe of repentance. The Ruler enquired the time when his Son began to recover, that his faith in Chriſt might be confirmed, for upon that circumſtance it did much hang; and in doubtful caſes after a ſerious ſtudy of it, and thou knoweſt not which way to determine, conſider what makes

moſt

moſt for God's glory and thy ſpiritual good, for that is the end of all: Let us therefore ſtudy Providence; not as Childre n do Hiſtories, to know what men were in the World, or to pleaſe their fancy only; but as wiſe men, to underſtand the motions of States, and the intrigues of Councels; to enrich them with a knowledge whereby they might be ſerviceable to their Countrey. So let us enquire into the Providence of God, to underſtand the mind of God, the intereſt of the Church, the wiſdom and kindneſs of God, and our own duty in comformity thereunto.

6. *Aſcribe the Glory of every Providence to God.* *Abraham*'s Steward petitioned God at the beginning of his buſineſs, *Gen.* 24. 12. and he bleſſes God at the ſucceſs of it, *ver* 26, 27. We muſt not thank the tools which are uſed in the making an engine, and aſcribe unto them what we owe to the Workmans skill: Man is but the inſtrument, God's Wiſdom is the Artiſt. Let us therefore return the Glory of all where it is moſt rightly placed: We may ſee the difference between *Rachel* and *Leah* in this reſpect, when *Rachel* had a Son by her maid *Bilhah*, ſhe aſcribes it to God's care, and calls his name *Dan*, which ſignifies judging, *Gen.* 30. 6. *God hath judged me, and heard my voice.* That the very Name might put her in remembrance of the kindneſs of God in anſwering her prayer. And the next *Naphali*, ſhe eſteems as the fruit of prayer, *verſ.* 8 Whereas *Leah* takes no notice of God, but vaunts of the multitude of her Children, *ver.* 11. behold *a troop comes.* She impoſeth the name of *Gad* upon them, which alſo ſignifies *fortune* or *good luck.* And the next *Aſher*, *verſ.* 13. which is fortunate or bleſſed. And we find *Leah* of the ſame mind afterward, *verſ.* 17. It is ſaid God hearkned unto her, ſo that her Son *Iſſachar* was an anſwer of Prayer; but ſhe aſcribes it to a lower cauſe which had moved God; becauſe ſhe had given her maid to her Husband, *verſ.* 18. *Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but to thy name be the Glory.*

Doct. 2. *All the motions of Providence in the World are ultimately for the good of the Church; of thoſe whoſe heart is perfect towards him.* Providence follows the rule of Scripture. Whatſoever was written, was written for the Churches comfort *. Whatſoever is acted in order to any thing written, is acted for the Churches good. All the Providences of God in the World are conformable to his declarations in his word. All former Providences were ultimately in order to the bringing a Mediator into the World, and for the glory of him; then ſurely all the Providences of God ſhall be in order to the perfecting the Glory of Chriſt in that myſtical body, whereof Chriſt is head, and wherein his affection and his Glory are ſo much concerned. See the Proof of this by a Scripture or two *Pſal.* 25. 10. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto ſuch as keep his Covenant and his Teſtimonies.* Not one path, but [*all*] the works and motions; not one particular act or paſſage of providence, but the whole tract of his proceedings; not only thoſe which are more ſmooth and pleaſant, but thoſe which are more rugged and bitter. All [*mercy and truth*] ſutable to that affection he bears in his heart to them, and ſutable to the declaration of that affection he hath made in his promiſe. There is a contexture and a friendly connexion of kindneſs and faithfulneſs in every one of them. They both kiſs and embrace each other in every motion of God towards them. As mercy made the Covenant, ſo truth ſhall perform it. And there ſhall be as much mercy as truth in all Gods actings towards thoſe that keep it, *Rom.* 8. 28. *We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpoſe*; [*we know*] we do not conjecture or gueſs ſo, but we have an infallible aſſurance of it. [*All things*] even the moſt frightful, and ſo thoſe that have in reſpect of ſenſe, nothing but Gall and Wormwood in them; [*work together*] they all conſpire with an admirable harmony and unanimous conſent for a Chriſtians good. One particular act may ſeem to work to the harm of the Church, as one particular act may work to the good of wicked men: but the whole ſeries and frame of things combine together for the good of thoſe that are affectionate to him. Both the Lance that makes us bleed, and the plaiſter which refreſheth the Wounds. Both the griping purges, and the warming Cordials

* *Rom.* 15. 4

dials combine together for the Patients cure [*to them who are called according to his purpoſe.*] Here the Apoſtle renders a reaſon of this poſition; becauſe they are called not only in the general amongſt the reſt of the world, to whom the Goſpel comes; but they are ſuch that were in Gods purpoſe and counſel from Eternity to ſave, and therefore reſolved to encline their will to Faith in Chriſt. Therefore all his other Counſels about the affairs of the world ſhall be for their good. Another reaſon of this, the Apoſtle intimates, *verſ.* 27. *The Spirit makes interceſſion for the Saints according to the will of God.* The interceſſions of the Spirit, which are alſo according to Gods will and purpoſe, will not be fruitleſs in the main end, which both the interceſſions of the Spirit and purpoſe of God, and the will and deſire of the Saints, do aim at, which is their good. Indeed where any is the object of this grand purpoſe of God, he is the object of God's infinite and innumerable thoughts, *Pſ.* 40. 5. *Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou haſt done, and thy thoughts which are to us ward, they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee; If I would declare and ſpeak of them, they are more than can be numbred.* The Pſalmiſt ſeems to intimate, that in all the wonderful works which God hath done, his thoughts are toward his people. He thinks of them in all his actions; and thoſe thoughts are infinite, and cannot be numbered, and reckoned up by any Creature. He ſeems to reſtrain the thoughts of God towards his people in all thoſe works of wonder which he doth in the World, and which others are the Subjects of: But his thoughts, or purpoſes, and intentions in all (*for the word ſignifies purpoſes too*) are chiefly, next to his own glory, directed toward his people, thoſe that truſt in him, which *verſ.* 4. he had pronounced bleſſed. They run in his mind as if his heart was ſet upon them, and none but them.

Here I ſhall premiſe two things as the ground-work of what follows.

1. *God certainly in all his actions has ſome end*, that is without queſtion, becauſe he is a wiſe Agent; to act vainly and lightly, is an evidence of imperfection, which cannot be aſcribed to the only wiſe God. The Wheels of Pro-
* *Ezek.* 1.18. vidence are full of Eyes *. There is motion, and a knowledge of the end of that motion. And Jeſus Chriſt, who is Gods Deputy in the providential govern-
* *Revel.* 5. 6. ment, hath Seven Eyes, as well as Seven Horns *. A perfect ſtrength, and a perfect knowledge how to uſe that ſtrength, and to what end to uſe it. Seven being the number of perfection in Scripture.

2. *That certainly is Gods end which his heart is moſt ſet upon, and that which is laſt in execution.* What doth God do at the folding up of the World, but perfect his people, and welcome them into Glory? Therefore God principally next to himſelf loves his Church. The whole Earth is his, but the Church is his treaſure, *Exod.* 19. 5. *If you will keep my Covenant, then ſhall you be a peculiar treaſure unto me above all people, for all the Earth is mine*; *Segullah* ſuch a treaſure, that a Man, a King will intruſt in no hands but his own; *all the Earth is mine*, is not a reaſon why the Church was his treaſure, but an incentive of thankfulneſs, that when the whole Earth was his, and lay before him, and there were many people that he might have choſen and loved before them, yet he pitched upon them to make them his choiceſt treaſure. And when the bleſſed God hath pitched upon a people, and made them his treaſure, what he doth for them is with his whole heart, and with his whole Soul, *Jer.* 32. 41, 42. ſpeaking of making an everlaſting Covenant, he adds, *yea I will rejoyce over them to do them good*, &c. *aſſuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole Soul.* As though God minded nothing elſe but thoſe people he had made an everlaſting Covenant with; which is the higheſt ſecurity, and moſt pregnant expreſſion of his affection that can be given to any; not to give them a parcel or moiety of his heart, but the whole infinite intire piece, and to engage it all with the greateſt delight in doing good to them. That infinite heart of God, and all the contrivances and workings of it, center in the Churches welfare. The world is a Wilderneſs, but the Church is a Garden. If he water the Wilderneſs, will he not much more dreſs his Garden? If the flights of Birds be obſerved by him, ſhall not alſo the particular concernments

of

of the Church? He hath a repoſitory for them, and all that belong to them; He hath a Book of Life for their Names *, a book of Record for their members *, a Note-book for their Speeches, *Mal.* 3. 16. *A book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord*; And a book of Providence for their preſervation, *Exod.* 32. 32. In the proſecution of this, I ſhall ſhew,

* *Luk.* 10. 20.
* *Pſal.* 139. 16

1. That it is ſo *de facto*, and hath been ſo. *First.*
2. That according to the ſtate of things, and Gods Oeconomy, it muſt be ſo. *Secondly.*
3. The improvement of it, By way of *Uſe*. *Thirdly.*

1. That all Providence is for the good of the Church *de facto*, and has been ſo. *First.*

1. It will appear by an enumeration of things. *Reaſon firſt.*

Firſt, All good things.

Secondly, All bad things are for their good.

Firſt, All good things

I. The World.

II. Gifts and common graces of men in the World.

III. Angels.

I. The World. The whole World was made and ordained for the good of the Church, next to the glory of God. This will appear in three things. *First.*

1. *The continuance of the World is for their ſakes.* God would have deſtroyed the World becauſe of the ignorance and wickedneſs of it, before this time, but he overlooked it all, and had reſpect to the times of Chriſt, and the publiſhing faith in him, and repentance, *Act.* 17. 30. *And the times of this ignorance God winked at*, God overlooked *, he looked not ſo upon them, as to be provoked to deſtroy the World; but his eyes were fixed on the times of Chriſtianity; therefore would not take notice in the extremity of his juſtice of the wickedneſs of thoſe foregoing ages. Believers are the Salt of the Earth *. which makes the World ſavoury to God, and keeps it from corrupting. 'Tis meant not only of the Apoſtles, but of Chriſts Diſciples, of all Chriſtians, for to them was that Sermon made, *v.* 1. *If the Salt have loſt his ſavour*, if the Salt be corrupted, and Chriſtianity overthrown in the World, wherewith ſhall the World be ſalted? how can it be kept from corruption? If they that perſecuted the Prophets before you in *Judea*, (which is ſometimes called the Earth in Scripture) cannot reliſh you, and find nothing grateful to their Palates in your Doctrine and Converſation, wherewith ſhall they be ſalted? How ſhall they be preſerved from corruption? The Land will be good for nothing but to be given as a prey to the *Romans* to be trod under their feet, as being caſt out of Gods protection. They are the foundation of the world, *Pro.* 10. 25. *the righteous are an everlaſting foundation. Maimonides* underſtands it thus, that the World ſtands for the righteous ſakes. When God had *Noah* and his Family lodged in the Ark, he cares not what deluge and deſtruction he brings upon the reſt of the World. When he had conducted *Lot* out of *Sodom*, he brings down that dreadful ſtorm of fire. He cares for no place, no nor for the whole World, any longer than whilſt his People are there, or he hath ſome to bring in, in time. For the meaneſt believer is of more worth than a World; therefore when God hath gathered all together, he will ſet fire upon this frame of the Creation: For what was the end of Chriſts coming and dying, but to gather all things together in one? *Eph.* 1. 10. *That in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of time he might gather together in one all things in Chriſt.* When Chriſt hath ſummed up all together, he hath attained his end. And to what purpoſe then can we imagine God ſhould continue the World any longer? for his delight is not ſimply in the World, but in the Saints there. *Pſal.* 16. 3. *But to the Saints that are in the Earth, in whom is all my delight*; not in the Earth, but in the Saints there, which are the only excellent things in it, which Chriſt ſpeaks (of whom that Pſalm is meant) who knew well what was the object of his Father's pleaſure. The ſweet ſavour God ſmelt in *Noah*'s ſacrifice, was the occaſion of God's declaration for the Worlds ſtanding, *Gen.* 8. 21. *and the Lord ſaid in*

* ὑπεριδὼν.
* *Mat.* 5. 13.

Grotius *on the place.*

in his heart, I will not curſe the ground any more for mans ſake. That he would no more ſmite it with a totally deſtroying judgment. It was his reſpect to Chriſt repreſented in that ſacrifice, and to the faith and grace of *Noah* the ſacrificer. What ſavour could an infinitely pure Spirit ſmell in the blood and flames of beaſts?

2. *The courſe of natural things is for the good of the Church, or particular members of it.* God makes articles of agreement with the Beaſts and Fowls, whoſe nature is raging and ravenous, and binds them in ſure bonds for the performance of thoſe articles, *Hoſea* 2. 18. *And in that day will I make a Covenant for them with the Beaſts of the field, and with the fowls Heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground, and will make them to lye down ſafely.* As upon our ſin God can arm them againſt us; ſo upon our obedience he can make them ſerviceable even againſt their Natures; as if he had made a Covenant with them, and they had both the reaſon and virtue to obſerve it I do not remember any inſtance in Scripture, that God went out of the uſual tract of his Providence, and acted in an extraordinary manner, but where his people were one way or other concerned. It was for *Joſhua's* and the *Iſraelites* ſake that the Sun was arreſted to ſtand ſtill in the Valley of *Ajalon*, that they might have light enough to defeat their Enemies, and purſue their victory *. The Sea ſhall, againſt its natural courſe, ſtand in heaps like walls of Braſs to aſſiſt the *Iſraelites* eſcape *. The fire is reſtrained in the operation of its nature, even whilſt it retains its burning quality, when the lives of the three valiant believing Children are in danger. The mouths of Lyons are muzled, when the ſafety of his beloved *Daniel* is concerned *. And the ſhadow goes back upon the Dyal for *Hezekiah's* ſake *. When God would at any time deliver his people, He can muſter up Lightnings and Thunders for their aſſiſtance *; He can draw all the Regiments of Heaven into Battel-array, and arm the Stars to fight againſt *Siſera*, when *Iſraels* condition needs it; and make even the loweſt Creatures to liſt themſelves as *Auxiliaries* in the ſervice. God hath not a diſpleaſure with ſenſleſs Creatures, neither is tranſported with ſtrains of fury againſt ſuch objects, when he alters their natural courſe. *Hab.* 3. 8. *Was the Lord diſpleaſed againſt the Rivers? was thy wrath againſt the Sea, that thou didſt ride upon thy horſes and chariots of ſalvation?* No, but he made thoſe Creatures the Horſes and Chariots to ſpeed aſſiſtance and ſalvation to his people, which the Pſalmiſt elegantly deſcribes, *Pſal.* 114. All Creatures are his Hoſt; and that God that created them, hath ſtill the Soveraign command over them, and can imbodie them in an Army to ſerve his purpoſe for the deliverance of his people, as he did againſt *Pharaoh.*

* *Joſh.* 10. 12, 13.

* *Exod.* 14. 22.

* *Dan.* 6. 22.

* 2 *King.* 20. 11.

* 1 *Sam.* 7. 10.

3. *The intereſt of Nations is ordered as is moſt for the Churches good.* He orders both the courſe of natural things, and of civil affairs, for their intereſt. He alters the ſtate of things, and changeth Governours and Governments for the ſake of his people. For theſe cauſes God ſent *Eliſha* to Crown *Jehu* King, 2 *King.* 9. 6, 7. *I have anointed thee King over the people, the Lord,* &c. *that I may avenge the blood of my Servants the Prophets, and the blood of all the Servants of the Lord at the hand of Jezabel.* For the ſakes of the Godly in that Nation, and the revenging the blood of the Prophets which had been ſhed, was he raiſed up by the Lord. He ſent ſuch judgments upon *Egypt*, that it was as much the intereſt of that Nation to let *Iſrael* go, as it was before to keep them their vaſſals. God orders the intereſt and affairs of Nations for thoſe ends; and according to this diſpoſition of affairs, Chriſt times his interceſſions for his Church. The Angels had been ſent out to view the ſtate of the World, and found it in peace, *Zach.* 1. 11. *behold, all the earth ſits ſtill, and is at reſt.* There had been Wars in *Artaxerxes* and *Xerxes* his time, but in the time of *Darius*, that part of the World had an univerſal peace, which was the fitteſt time for the reſtoration of the *Jews*, and building the Temple; becauſe it could not be built, but by the Kings coſt, whoſe treaſure in the time of War was expended another way; nor would it conſiſt with their policy to reſtore the *Jews* to their Government at ſuch a time when they had Wars with the

* Neighbour-

Neighbour-parts of *Egypt*. See how God orders the ſtate of the World in ſubſerviency to his gracious intentions towards his Church. The time of the *Jewiſh* captivity was now out, according to the promiſe of God, and God gives that part of the World a general peace, that the reſtauration of the *Jews*, and the rebuilding of the Temple might be facilitated, and the truth of his promiſe in their deliverance accompliſhed. Upon the news of this general peace in that part of the World, Chriſt expoſtulates with God for the reſtauration of *Jeruſalem*, *verſ.* 12. *How long, O Lord, wilt thou not have mercy on Jeruſalem, and on the Cities of Judah, againſt which thou haſt had indignation theſe threeſcore and ten years?* The time of the Captivity determined by God, was now expired. The firſt reformation in *Germany* was back'd by Reaſons of State as it was then altered; it being the intereſt of many Princes of that Countrey to countenance *Luther*'s Doctrine, for the putting a ſtop to the growing greatneſs of *Charles* the fifth, who had evident deſigns to enſlave them. I might mention many more, only by the way let me adviſe thoſe that have an inclination to read hiſtories of former tranſactions, to which men naturally are addicted, to make this your end, to obſerve the ſtrange Providences of God in the World, and how admirably he hath made them ſubſervient to the intereſt of the Church; which will be the moſt profitable way of reading them, whereby they will not only ſatisfie your curioſity, but eſtabliſh your Chriſtianity. *Calvin* underſtands that place, *Deut.* 32. 8. *He ſets the bounds of the people according to the number of the Children of Iſrael*, that in the whole ordering of the ſtate of the World, God propoſeth this as his end, to conſult for the good of his people, and his care extends to the reſt only in order to them; and though they are but a ſmall number, yet he orders his whole Government of the Worlds affairs as may beſt tend to their Salvation. Therefore God ſets the people bounds, or enlargeth them according as they may be ſerviceable one way or other to this end. And the reaſon is rendered, *v.* 9. *For the Lords portion is his people, and Jacob is the Lot of his inheritance.* Therefore God orders all the reſt of the World in ſubſerviency to the maintaining and improving his portion and inheritance.

2. *As the World, ſo the gifts and common graces of men in the World are for the good of the Church*, which is a great argument for providence in general; ſince there is nothing ſo conſiderable in government as the diſpoſing of places to men according to their particular endowments and abilities for them. And the beſtowing ſuch gifts upon men, is none of the meaneſt arguments for Gods providential Government of the World. As, *Secondly.*

1. *The gifts of good men.* The gifts conferred upon *Paul* were depoſited in him, not only to be poſſeſſed by him, but uſed and laid out for the good of the Church, *Col.* 1. 25. *Whereof I am made a Miniſter according to the diſpenſation of God which is given to me for you:* The manifeſtation of the Spirit to any man is given to profit withal, 1 *Cor.* 12. 7. And this is the great end for which men ſhould ſeek to excel, *viz.* for the edifying of the Church, 1 *Cor.* 14. 12. *For as much as you are zealous of Spiritual gifts, ſeek that you may excel to the edifying of the Church.*

2. *The gifts and common graces of bad men.* There is ſomething that is amiable in men, though they have not grace. As in Stones, Plants and Flowers, though they have not ſenſe, there is ſomething grateful in them, as colour, and ſmell, &c. And all thoſe things that are lovely in men, are for the Churches good, the beſt life, and the worſt death, things preſent, let who will be the poſſeſſor, all things between Life and Death are for the good of Believers, becauſe they are Chriſts, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22. *Whether Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the World, i. e.* [Whether the gifts of the prime lights in the Church, or the common gifts of the world] *are all yours, and ye are Chriſts, and Chriſt is Gods.* God is the diſpenſer of them, Chriſt is the Governour of them, and all for your ſakes. As the medicinal qualities of waters are not for the good of themſelves, but the accommodation of the indigencies of men. By the common works of the Spirit God doth keep men from the evil of the World. For it cannot be ſuppoſed, that the Spirit, whoſe miſſion is principally for the Church, ſhould

give ſuch gifts out of love to men which hate him, and are not the objects of his eternal purpoſe; but he hath ſome other ends in doing it, which is the advantage of his Church and People: And this God cauſes by the preaching of the Goſpel, which when it works gracious works in ſome, produceth common works in others for the good of thoſe gracious ones. As a ſeed of corn hath ſtraw husks and Chaff come up with it, which are ſhelters to that little ſeed which lies in the midſt; ſo in the preaching of the Goſpel there are ſome husks come up among natural men, which God makes to be ſhelters to the Church, as thoſe common works, and reſtraining men through the knowledge of Chriſt. God gives gifts to them, not out of love to them, but love to his Church. As Nurſes of great mens Children are fed with better meat than the other Servants, not out of any particular perſonal reſpect to them, but to their office, that the milk whereby the Child is nouriſhed, may be the ſweeter and wholſomer; were it not for that Relation, ſhe muſt be content with the Diet allowed to the reſt of the Servants. Some ſtinking plants may have medicinal virtues, which the Phyſician extracts for the cure of a diſeaſe, and flings the reſt upon the Dunghil. God beſtows ſuch qualities upon men otherwiſe unſavoury to him, which he draws forth upon ſeveral occaſions for the good of thoſe that are more peculiarly under his care, and then caſts them away. Theſe gifts are indeed the ruine of bad men, becauſe of their pride; but the Churches advantage in regard of their excellency, and are often ſa profitable to others, as dangerous to themſelves. As all that good which is in plants and animals, is for the good of man; ſo all the gifts of natural men are for the Churches good, for they are for that end as the principal, next the glory of God; becauſe every inferior thing is ordained to ſomething ſuperior as its end. Plants are ordained for the nouriſhment of Beaſts, and both Plants and Beaſts, for Men. The inferior men for the ſervice of higher, and all for the community; yet ſtill there is a higher end beyond thoſe, *viz.* the Glory of God, to which they are ultimately ordained, which is ſo connected with the Churches good, that what ſerves one, ſerves the other.

3. *Angels*, the top-Creatures in the Creation, are ordered for the good of the Church. If the Stars are not Cyphers in the World only to be gaz'd upon, but have their influences both upon Plants and Animals; As the Sun in impregnating the Earth, and enlivening the Plants, and aſſiſting the growth of fruits for the good of mankind: If the Stars have thoſe natural influences upon the ſenſible world, the Angels which are the morning Stars, have no leſs intereſt as inſtruments in the government of it. The Heathens had ſuch a notion of *Demons* working thoſe things which were done in the World, but according to the will and order of the ſupream God. The Angels are called watchers, *Dan.* 4. 13. *a Watcher, and an holy one, verſ.* 17. *this is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones*: they watch for Gods orders, and watch for Gods honour, and the Churches good. There are orders of ſtate among them, for we read of their decree; 'tis called their decree *miniſterially*, as they execute it; *approbativè* as they ſubſcribe to the equity and goodneſs of it. As the Saints are ſaid to judge the World, not *authoritativè*, as in commiſſion with Chriſt, but as they approve of Chriſts ſentence. They ſeem to requeſt thoſe things of God which may make for his glory; and they decree among themſelves what is fit to be preſented to God in order to his glory. They cannot endure that men ſhould trample upon Gods authority, deſpoil him of his right, and tread down his inheritance; and therefore they ſend ſuch requeſts to God to act ſo as men may acknowledg him and his government, *to the intent that the living may know that the moſt high rules in the Kingdoms of men.* Their care therefore muſt be for the Church, ſince God rules all things in order to that, and ſince that is Gods portion and inheritance; ſo that as they have a care of Gods glory, they muſt alſo have a care of Gods portion, and his peculiar treaſure. The inward part of the Temple was to be adorned with Cherubims, to note the ſpecial attendance of the Holy Angels in the aſſemblies of the Saints: As evil Angels plot againſt the Church, ſo good Angels project for it. Though in the Scripture we find Angels ſometimes employed in affairs

By way of approbation.
By way of Authority.
Exod. 25. 1.
Trap. *on Numb. P.* 58.

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of common Providence, and doing good to them that are not of the Church; as one is ſent to comfort *Hagar*, and relieve *Iſhmael* upon his cry, though he had ſcoffed at *Iſaac* the heir of the covenant, when he was in *Abraham's* Family *; yet for the moſt part they were employed in the concerns of ſome of his ſpecial Servants. Angels thruſt *Lot* out of *Sodom* *. An Angel ſtopt the Lyons mouths when *Daniel* was in the Den, *Dan.* 6. 18. *My God hath ſent his Angel, and hath ſhut the Lyons mouths.* God emploies Angels in the preſerving and ruining of Empires, which is clear in the prophecy of *Daniel*, and ſome underſtand *Iſa.* 10. 34. *And Lebanon ſhall fall by a mighty one*, of an Angel. As the Soul ſends forth a multitude of Spirits ſwiftly into the nerves for the ſupply of the loweſt member, which runs thither upon the leaſt motion: So do the Angels which are Gods Miniſters, run at the appointment of God, and are employed in all the wheels of Providence. The Spirit of the living Creatures was in the wheels of Providence *.

* *Gen.* 21. 17.

* *Gen.* 19. 25, 16.

* *Ezek.* 1. 20.

1. *The higheſt orders among them are not exempted from being officers for the Church.* Though they are called Gods Angels in reſpect of their immediate attendance on God; yet they are called mans Angels in reſpect of the ſervice they do for them, *Matth.* 18. 10. *Their Angels do alwaies behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven.* They are not the ordinary ſort of Angels only which attend upon thoſe little ones, upon young converts, humble Souls, thoſe little ones in the Kingdom of Heaven; but they are the higheſt Courtiers there, ſuch as ſee the face of God, and ſtand before him. A King hath many Servants, but not every Servant, only the chief of the Nobility, ſtand before him; ſo they are not Angels of the meaneſt order and rank in Heaven, that are ordered to attend the loweſt Chriſtian. The Apoſtle makes no doubt of this, *Heb.* 1. 14. *are they not all miniſtring ſpirits* [there is no queſtion but they are] *ſent forth to miniſter for them who ſhall be heirs of Salvation?* He aſſerts confidently that not one of them is blotted out of the Liſt for this employment. *Are they not all?* none are exempted from the ſervice of God, ſo none are exempted from the end of that ſervice, which is the good of Believers. They are Gods ſervants, but for the Churches good, for them which ſhall be heirs, [*are they not all?*] it is irrational to deny it. And they are ſent forth, every one of them hath his commiſſion ſign'd by God for this purpoſe, and not only for the Church in general, but for every member in particular [*for the heirs of Salvation.*] And not only for them which are already called and enrolled, but for them who ſhall be called, whoſe names are written in the Book of Gods election [*who ſhall be heirs.*] And they are not only faintly ſent, as if they might go if they will, but they have a ſtrict charge to look after them well, not in one or two of their works, or ways, but in all, *Pſal.* 91. 11. *He ſhall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy wayes, to bear thee up in their hands, leſt thou daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone*; they are to uſe all their ſtrength to this purpoſe, *to bear them up in their hands.* As the elder Children are appointed by Parents to have a care of the younger in their works and motions, and to uſe both their wiſdom and ſtrength for them. The Angels are a guard to ſecure them here, and at laſt to convey them to their Fathers houſe, *Luk.* 16. 22. when a man is in favour with a Prince, all the Courtiers will be obſervant of him.

2. *Armies of them are employed upon this occaſion.* There are great multitudes of them, as *Bildad* ſpeaks, *Job* 25. 3. *Is there any number of his armies?* that is, of his Angels: when *Joel* ſpeaks of the heathens gathering together; *thither*, ſaith he, *Lord, cauſe thy mighty ones to come down* *. A whole ſquadron of them ſhall attend upon a gracious man according to the circumſtances he is involved in. *Gen.* 32. 1, 2. *And Jacob went on his way, and the Angels of God met him; and when Jacob ſaw them, he ſaid this is Gods hoſt.* Regiments of Angels, enough to make up an Army (for ſo *Jacob* terms them) met him upon the way to ſecure his Brother *Eſau*, and to encourage him in his journey. So ſome interpret, 2 *Sam.* 5. 24. *the ſound of going in the tops of the mulberry-trees.* The ſign of the marching of a Brigade of Angels, with the Lord, in the head of them, for the diſcomfiture of *David's* Enemies; *then ſhall the Lord go*

* *Joel* 3. 11.

out

out before thee to ſmite the hoſt of the Philiſtines: And this they do not of their own heads, but by the pleaſure of God, not only by a bare will, but a delight, *Pſal.* 103. 21. *Bleſs the Lord all ye his hoſts, ye Miniſters of his that do his pleaſure.* רצונו his choiceſt pleaſure, he delights to ſee this his Militia upon action.

3. *Chriſt hath the government of them to this end for his Church.* Angels are all put in ſubjection to him, *Heb.* 2. 7, 8. *In that he put all in ſubjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him.* He is exalted above all principality and power, God hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, *Eph.* 1. 21, 22. all things, even principalities and powers are put under his feet, to be commiſſioned and influenced by him for the good of his Church *; they are ordered by the Spirit of Chriſt to this purpoſe, *Zach.* 1. 10. *Thoſe are they whom the Lord hath ſent to walk to and fro through the Earth.* They are his faithful meſſengers diſpatcht into the World by him, as ſcouts and ſpies to take notice of the ſtate of the World, and to give him intelligence, and an exact account of affairs, and *v.* 11. they give an account to Chriſt. Chriſt is the Head and General of them, *Col.* 2. 10. They are his Hoſt, alwaies in a warlike poſture, with Chriſt in the Head of them, *Zac.* 1. 8. upon their *Horſes*, which notes readineſs to move and ſpeed in motion: And as an Hoſt they are ſaid to pitch their tents round about them that fear him; and are in a continual conflict with the evil Angels to prevent their deſigns in the behalf of Chriſt, whom they acknowledge as their head by their worſhip of him *. Chriſt orders them to take care to ſeal his Servants in the foreheads, that they may be preſerved in the ſtorms which ſhall happen in the World at the time of the ruine of the *Romiſh* Papacy, *Revel.* 7. 2, 3. An Angel comes that had the ſeal of the living God (commiſſion of God) ſaying, *hurt not the Earth, nor the Sea, nor the trees, till we have ſealed the Servants of our God in the foreheads.*

* *Ezek.* 1. 12. *Whither the Spirit was to go, they went.*

* *Heb.* 1. 6.

4. *The great actions which have been done in the World, or ſhall be done for the Church, are performed by them.* Angels were ſent as expreſſes by God with his great decrees concerning the revolutions of times *. An Angel was ſent to *Daniel* with the meſſage of a Redeemer, and the cleareſt prophecy of Chriſt, which the *Jews* are not able to anſwer to this day, which they moſt ſtartle at: Part of the diſcovery of the Revelation to *John*, which is as a ſtanding Almanack to the Church, was made us by an Angel *. And when by the courſe of time thoſe turnings are to happen in the World, the Angels muſt have their ſhare of ſervice in them. The Trumpets are ſounded by Angels, and the Vials which are filled with the cauſes of ſuch alterations, are poured out by the hands of Angels. Some indeed by the Angels there mentioned, underſtand the viſible inſtruments of reformation, not excluding the Angels who are the inviſible Miniſters in the affairs of the World *.

* *Dan.* 7. 16. *Dan.* 8. 16. *And I heard a mans voice which called and ſaid, Gabriel, make this man to underſtand the viſion.*
* *Dan.* 9. 21. *Revel.* 10. 8, 9. *Revel.* 22. 8, 9.

5. *They engage in this work for the Church with delight,* They act as Gods Miniſters in his Providence with a unanimous conſent †. So that they perform their office with the ſame ſwiftneſs, and with the ſame affection, without emulation, to go one before another, which makes many actions ſucceed ill among men; but they go hand in hand. They do it with affection; both in reſpect of the kind diſpoſition of their natures, and as they are fellow-members of the ſame body, for they are parts of the Church, and of the Heavenly *Ieruſalem*, *Heb.* 12. 22. *Te are come to the Heavenly Jeruſalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general aſſembly and Church of the firſt born,* and therefore act out of affection to that which is a part of their body, as well as out of obedience to their head. They do it in reſpect of their own improvement too, and increaſe of their knowledge (which is the deſire of all intellectual Creatures.) For they compleat their underſtandings by the ſight of the methods of infinite wiſdom in the perfecting his gracious deſigns. And it is Gods intent that they ſhould grow in the knowledge of his great myſtery by their employment, *Eph.* 3. 10. *To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in Heavenly places might be known by the church the mani fold wiſdom of God, i. e.* By the gracious works

* Light foot. *Temple. Chap.* 38. *P.* 253, 256.
‡ *Ezek.* 1. 9. *Their wings were joyned one to another.*

works of God towards the Church, and in the behalf of it, for the ſecurity and growth of the Church, and in the executions of thoſe decrees which as inſtruments they are imployed in. For I do not underſtand, how it can be meant of the knowledge of Chriſt, for that they know more than the Church below can acquaint them with; for without queſtion they have a clear inſight into the offices of Chriſt who is the Head, and whom they are ordered to worſhip. They underſtand the ſum of his death, and reſurrection, and can better explain the dark predictions of Scripture, than purblind man can. But by obſerving the Methods which God uſes in the accompliſhment of them, they become more intelligent, and commence Maſters of knowledg in a higher degree, which it is probable is one reaſon of their joy, when they ſee Gods infinite Wiſdom and Grace in the converſion of a ſinner; without affection to them, and their employment about them, they could not rejoice ſo much: And their rejoicing in their firſt bringing in to God, argues their joy in all their employments, which concerns their welfare.

2. *As all good things, ſo all bad things are ordered by providence for the good of the Church.* That which in its own nature is an injury, by Gods ordering puts on the nature of a mercy; and what is poyſon in it ſelf, by the Almighty art becoms a Soveraign medicine. Are Gods diſpenſations in their own nature deſtructive? That wiſe Phyſician knows how to make poyſons work the effect of purges: Are they ſharp? It is to humble and purge the Church? As ſhadows ſerve to ſet out the pictures, ſo the darkeſt paſſages of Providence are made by God to commend the beauty of thoſe glorious things he works for his Church. We may ſee this in *Secondly.*

1. *Bad perſons.* As,

1. *The Devil.* God manageth him for his own glory, and the ſtrengthning of Believers *. The Devils deſired to enter into the herd of ſwine, with an intent, probably, not only to deſtroy the ſwine, but to inceníe the *Gadarens* againſt him, out of whom they had been caſt, to do him ſome conſiderable miſchief. But what is the iſſue? As they diſcover their malice, ſo they inhance the value of Chriſts kindneſs to the diſtreſſed man, whom he had freed from this tyranny: Hereby alſo was the Law of God juſtified, in commanding the *Jews* to abſtain from Swines Fleſh, which the *Gadarens*, being Apoſtate *Jews*, had broken; he magnified his own power in the routing ſuch a number of unclean Spirits, which had not been ſo conſpicuous in the turning them out of one man, had not this regiment diſcovered themſelves among the Swine, and brought ſuch a loſs upon the *Gadarens*; whereby as they ſhewed their own ſtrength and malice, ſo they diſcovered occaſionally the greatneſs of Chriſts charity, and his power over them; ſo that in granting the malicious petition of this exaſperated Legion, the Law of God is juſtified, our Saviours love glorified, his power manifeſted. And a foundation laid for the gaining Proſelytes in that Country (to which purpoſe he left the man he had cured *.) and to ſtrengthen the faith of thoſe poor Believers, which then followed him. God makes uſe of the Devils by the Soveraignty of Providence, to bring about ends unknown to themſelves for all their wiſdom. The malice of the Devil againſt *Job* hath rendered him a ſtanding miracle of patience for ever. They are *the rulers of the darkneſs of this World* *. Not of the light of the World; they are the rulers of the wicked, and the ſcullions of the Saints, to ſcour and cleanſe them. They are the rulers of the World, but ſubordinate to ſerve the Providence of God; wherein God declares his wiſdom by ſerving himſelf of the worſt of his Enemies. The Devil thought he had brought a total deſtruction upon mankind, when he perſwaded our firſt Parents to eat of the forbidden fruit; but the only wiſe God ordered it to bring about a greater glory to himſelf, and a more firm ſtability to his people, in introducing an everlaſting covenant which could not be broken, and eſtabliſhing their happineſs upon ſurer terms than it was ſetled in Paradiſe. And afterwards in filling the heart of *Judas* to betray Chriſt, and the hearts of the *Jews* to crucifie him. Even by that way whereby he thought to hinder the good of mankind, he occaſionally promotes their perpetual redemption: And I do not

* *Math.* 8. 31, 32.

* *Luk.* 8. 39.

* *Eph.* 6. 12.

not much queſtion but thoſe very principles which the Devil had diſtilled into the Gentile World, of ſhedding humane blood in ſacrifices, for expiation of guilt; and the Gods converſing with men in humane wayes, and the imagination of the interceſſion of *Dæmons* for them; the firſt out of rage againſt mankind, and both that and the other to induce them to Idolatry, might facilitate the entertainment of Chriſt as the great expiatory ſacrifice, and the receiving of him as the Son of God, though in an humane ſhape, and the belief of his interceſſion. God over-reaches the Devil, and makes him inſtrumental for good, where he deſigns hurt and miſchief.

2. *Wicked men.* All the wicked in the midſt of the Church are for the good of it, either for the exerciſe of their grace, or ſecurity of their perſons, or intereſt, *Pro.* 16. 7. *When a mans wayes pleaſe the Lord, He will make his enemies to be at peace with him.* Sometimes he will incline their hearts intentionally to favour, or order even their actions againſt them to procure their peace, contrary to their intentions. Sometimes God makes them his Sword to cut his people, ſometimes Phyſick to purge them, ſometimes Fire to melt and refine them, ſometimes Hedges to preſerve them, ſometimes a ranſom to redeem them *. A Traveller makes uſe of the mettle of a head-ſtrong Horſe to carry him to his journeys end. That wind which would overturn a little Boat, the ſkilful Pilot makes uſe of to drive his Ship into the Harbour, and the Husbandman to cleanſe his Corn from the Chaff. Though the ends of the workers, *viz.* God and wicked men, are different; yet the end of the work is but one, which is ordered by Gods Soveraign pleaſure. It was promiſed in the promiſe of the Goſpel to the Gentiles, *Gen.* 9. 27. *God ſhall enlarge Japhet, and he ſhall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan ſhall be his ſervant.* God ſhall allure *Japhet*, the Gentiles of *Europe*, to dwell in the tents of *Shem*, and *Canaan* the head of the curſed poſterity, ſhall be Servants to the Church beſide their will, and ſometimes againſt it, by an over-ruling hand. And Chriſt hath bought them to be his Servants, 2 *Pet.* 2. 1. *denying the Lord that bought them*, and therefore hath the diſpoſing of them, whether they voluntarily give up themſelves to him or no. He is a Lord by purchaſe over them, who own him not as a Saviour. The hatred of the Churches enemies ſometimes conduceth more to her good, than the affections of all her worldly Friends. Now this appears,

* *Pro.* 21. 18.

Helvicus contra Judæos.

1. *In furthering the Goſpel.* The *Jews*, who ſpeak not of Chriſt among themſelves, but with opprobrious terms, have been the exact preſervers of the Old Teſtament, even to the very number of the letters; wherein Chriſtians have ſufficient to confirm them in the belief of Chriſts being the *Meſſiah*, and unanſwerable arguments againſt their adverſaries; Whereupon St. *Auſtin* terms them *capſarios Eccleſiæ*, ſuch that carry the Books of the Children of great men after them to School. When the Authority of the *Revelation* was anciently queſtioned, the Church of *Rome* was inſtrumental to keep it in the number of the Canonical books, not thinking they ſhould find their own Church ſo plainly Deciphered in it, to be the Mother of abominations. To this we may refer the action of *Ptolemy Philadelphus* King of *Egypt*, in cauſing the Scripture to be tranſlated about three hundred years before the coming of Chriſt; through which the Nations * might better diſcern (as it were through a proſpective glaſs) the new Star of *Jacob* which was ſhortly to ariſe: No doubt but many of the *Gentiles* by comparing the old Scripture-Prophecies, which they now could read in the *Greek* language, might be more eaſily induced to an embracing the Goſpel, and ackno wledging Chriſt to be the *Meſſiah*, when it came to be divulged among them. *Herod* is the cauſe of the conſultation about the place of Chriſts birth; not for any good-will he had to him, whom he intended to murther, but God makes uſe of this to clear up the truth of the prophecy concerning *Bethlehem*, the place of his birth, *Mat.* 5. 6. *Out of thee ſhall come a Governour that ſhall rule my people Iſrael.* And they certainly were not very good, who preached Chriſt out of envy, and propagated the Goſpel, wherein *Paul* rejoyced not in their ſin, but in the providential fruit of it, *Phil.* 1. 15, 18. *Some indeed preach Chriſt*

Jakſon *vol.* * *1. Pol.* 1. P. 62.

*

even

even of envy and ſtrife; what then! Notwithſtanding every way, whether in pretence or truth, Chriſt is preached, and I therein do rejoyce, yea, and will rejoyce.

2. *In furthering the temporal good of the Church;*

1. *In its preſervation.* Wicked men are often ſerviceable to the Church, as the filthy Raven was to holy *Elijah*, or as the Lyon which would have devoured *Sampſon*, is a ſtore-houſe to provide him food; for in his hunger he finds a table ſpread in the belly of his Enemy. *Pharaoh*'s deſign was to deſtroy *Iſrael*, and the Daughter of that irreconcilable Enemy, is directed by God to preſerve *Moſes*, who was to be the ruine of her family, the deſtruction of the *Egyptian* glory, and the Deliverer of the Church. She ſaves him out of charity, and God out of a wiſe deſign; She by his Education in the *Egyptian* learning, fits him for the Court, and God for the deliverance of his Church. *Egypt* had corn to relieve firſt *Abraham* *, afterward *Jacob* in a time of famine; the family wherein the Church of God was only then bound up. *Herod* lies in wait for Chriſts deſtruction, and *Egypt*, the moſt Idolatrous Country in the World, and an ancient Enemy to Gods Church, affords him ſhelter. God makes *Moab to hide his out-caſts, and be their covert from the face of the ſpoiler* *. Some think, Gods deſign in ſending *Jonah* to *Nineveh*, to work ſo remarkable a change by repentance, was to ſoften ſome of their hearts, and the hearts of their poſterity, to deal more tenderly with thoſe gracious *Iſraelites*, who in the captivity of the ten Tribes, ſome years after, ſhould be their gueſts. God making thereby proviſion for his own people in that common judgment which ſhould come upon the Nation. This God doth ſometimes by reviving the law of nature, and the common ſentiments of Religion in the hearts of natural men; whereby their own conſciences bearing witneſs to the innocency and excellency of the Church of God, put them upon thoughts for its ſecurity. Sometimes it is above their own Sphere, and beſides their own intentions. The Whale which ſwallowed *Jonah*, intended him as a morſel to quell his hunger, but proves his ſecurity, and diſgorgeth him upon the ſhoar: They underſtand their own aim, but not the deſign of God. The Leech that ſucks the Patients blood, knows not the Chyrurgeons deſign, who uſeth it for the cure of a diſeaſe. Sometimes their rage proves their own ruine, and the Churches ſafety; as the Leech burſts it ſelf ſometimes, and ſaves the Patient. The very Earth, whereby is meant the carnal world, is ſaid to help the Woman, the Church, by ſwallowing up the flood which the Dragon caſts out of his mouth againſt her *. Juſt as the old rags were the inſtruments whereby *Jeremiah* was drawn out of the Dungeon.

* *Gen.* 12. 12.

* *Iſa.* 16. 3. 4.

* *Revel.* 12. 16.

2. *In the advancement of the Church, or perſons eminent.* *Abner* had a Plot for bringing *Iſrael* to *David*'s Scepter, which concurred both with Gods purpoſe and promiſes, but ſprung from an ill cauſe, a diſdain to be checked by *Iſhboſheth*, though his King, for an unjuſtifiable act, for having too much familiarity with one of *Sauls* Concubines *. And from this animoſity he contrives the depoſing of *Iſhboſheth*, and the exaltation of *David*; yet diſſembles the ground, and pretends the promiſe of God to *David*, *v.* 18. *For the Lord hath ſpoken of David, by the hand of my ſervant David I will ſave my people Iſrael out of the hand of the Philiſtines.* He is the firſt Engine that moves in this buſineſs, and by him and his correſpendents after his death, *v.* 17. the buſineſs is brought about by Gods over-ruling hand, wherein Gods promiſe is accompliſhed, and *David* a type of Chriſt, and the great Champion for the Church againſt its enemies round about, is advanced. Very remarkable is the advancement of *Mordecai*, in order to the advancing the *Jews* as well as preſerving them, when the necks of all the viſible Church God had in the World, were upon the block. *Haman* ignorantly is the cauſe of this preferment of *Mordecai*, and at that time too, when he came to petition for his death, *Eſther* 6. 4. *He was come to ſpeak to the King to hang Mordecai upon the Gallows which he had prepared for him*: The King asks him, what ſhould be done to the man whom the King delights to honour, *v.* 16. He imagineth that the Kings queſtion did reſpect himſelf, lays out a Scheme of what honour he was

* *2Sam.* 3. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

ambitious of, *v.* 8, 9. which was by the King deſigned for *Mordecai*, and *Haman* made the Herald to proclaim him: Here *Haman*, not only a wicked man in himſelf, but the greateſt Enemy *Mordecai* and the whole Church of God had, is made unwittingly an inſtrument to exalt *Mordecai*, and in him the whole Church of God.

3. *In enriching the Church, or ſome perſons in it, whereby it may become more ſerviceable to God.* How wonderful was it, that when the *Iſraelites* were abominated by the *Egyptians*, God ſhould ſo order their hearts, that the *Egyptians* ſhould lend them Gold and Jewels *, and diſmiſs them with wealth as well as ſafety; and not ſo much as one perſon moleſt them, till they arrived at the Red Sea? The very gain and honour of the Enemies is ſometimes conſecrated to the Lord of the whole Earth, *Micah* 4. 13. *Ariſe and threſh, oh Daughter of Sion, I will make thy horn Iron, and thou ſhall beat in pieces many people, and I will conſecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their ſubſtance to the Lord of the whole Earth*: This was when many Nations were gathered againſt *Sion*, *v.* 11. the wealth of the Sinner is laid up for the juſt, *Pro.* 13. 22. And God ſometimes makes the wicked unwittingly to themſelves, in their carking, be the factors for good men, into whoſe lap Providence pours the fruit of their labour. God gave *Cyrus* the ſpoils of *Babylon*, and the treaſures of *Cræſus*, to enable him to furniſh the *Jews* with materials for building the Temple, *Iſa.* 45. 3, 4. *and I will give thee the treaſure of darkneſs, and hidden riches of ſecret places*, (ſpeaking of *Cyrus*) *that thou mayeſt know, that I the Lord which call thee by thy Name, am the God of Iſrael, for Jacob my Servants ſake, &c.* That he might acknowledge him the God of *Iſrael*, and lay his wealth out in the ſervice of God, and the ſervice of *Jacob* his ſervant.

* *Exod.* 12. 35, 36.

Iſa. 45. 3, 4.

2. As bad perſons, *ſo bad things are ordered to the good of the Church*, whether they be *ſinful* evils, or *afflictive*.

1. *Sin.*

1. *A mans own ſin.* *Oneſimus* runs from his Maſter, and finds a ſpiritual Father; his being a runnagate, is the occaſion of his being a convert. By flying from his Maſter, he becomes a Brother in the Lord *. What *Joſeph's* brethern ſinfully intended for revenge againſt their brother, and ſecurity from their Fathers checks, (who acquainted *Jacob* with their miſcarriages) God ordered for the preſervation of them who were the only viſible Church in the World. Their ſin againſt their Brother, contrary both to their intentions and expectations, became the means of their ſafety. God makes the remainders of ſin in a good man, an occaſion to exerciſe his grace, diſcover his ſtrength, and ſhew his loyalty to God.

* *Phil.* 10. 12, 16.

2. *Other mens ſins.* That might be in *Sarah* but a heady paſſion, for hearing her Son mocked by *Iſhmael*, that made her ſo deſirous to have the bondwoman and her firſt ſon thruſt out *; but God makes uſe of it to make a ſeparation between *Iſaac* the heir of the Covenant, and *Iſhmael*, that he might not be corrupted by any evil example from him: God orders *Abraham* to hearken to her voice, becauſe in *Iſaac* his ſeed ſhould be called *: And the revengeful threatning of *Eſau* was the occaſion of *Jacob's* flight, whereby he was hindred from marrying with any of the people of the Land, by whom he might have been induced to Idolatry *. Why ſhould we miſtruſt that God that can make uſe of the Luſts of men to bring about his own gracious purpoſes?

* *Gen.* 21. 10.

* ver. 12.

* *Gen.* 27. 43, 46.

2. *Commotions in the World.* There is the eye of God, that eye which runs to and fro throughout the whole Earth in the Wheels of worldly motions, even in the moſt dreadful Providences in the World, that ſtare upon men with a grim countenance *. All the overturnings in the World are ſubſervient to the Churches intereſt, though they are not viſibly ſo, unleſs diligently attended *. God orders the confuſions of the World, and is in the midſt of the tumults of the people, *Pſal.* 29. 10, 11. *The Lord ſits upon the flood, yea, the Lord ſits King for ever, the Lord will give ſtrength to his people, the Lord will bleſs his people with peace.* He ſits upon the flood as a Charioteer in his Chariot, guiding it with holy and merciful intentions to his people, to give

* *Ezek.* 1. 18. *their wings were dreadful, and their wings were full of eyes.*

* *Broughton on Revel.* 13. *Sect.* 177.

give them both ſtrength and peace in the midſt of them, and as the iſſue of them. By Water and Floods is frequently meant tumults and confuſions in the World. If it were not ſo; why ſhould our Saviour encourage his Diſciples and all their Succeſſors in the ſame profeſſion, to lift up their heads when they hear of wars, if their redemption * were not deſigned by God in them? they are all teſtimonies of the nearer approaches of Chriſt in power and glory to judge the Earth, and glorifie his people. Gods great end in the ſhaking of Nations, is the performing thoſe gracious promiſes to his Church which yet remain unaccompliſht: Theſe earthquakes in the World, will bring Heaven to the Church. The great revolutions in the Eaſtern part of the world, the ruine of the *Babilonian* Empire, the erecting the *Perſian*, and all the means whereby it was brought about, God ordered, God foretold, God directed for *Jacobs* ſervice. *Cyrus* led by ambition, levies an army againſt *Babylon*; yet though he was a ravenous Bird, he was to execute the Counſel of God, *Iſa.* 46. 11. *calling a ravenous bird from the eaſt, the man that executeth my Counſel*, to be an inſtrument for the delivery of the captiv'd *Jews*, and the reſtorer of the ruin'd Temple. He had called him out by name to make a great revolution of the World. He foretold by his Prophet *Iſaiah* many years before, the means he ſhould uſe in the ſiege of *Babylon* to attain the victory, the very dividing *Euphrates*, which was the great confidence of the *Babylonian*, *Iſa.* 44. 27. *that ſay to the deep be dry, and I will dry up the rivers*; whereby it was as it were dried up. for them to paſs over the very opening of the gates, *Iſa* 45. 1. *and the gates ſhall not be ſhut*; the *Babylonians* in a preſumptuous ſecurity had left them open, thinking it impoſſible the City could be taken, becauſe of the River *Euphrates*, *I will go before thee, and make the crooked places ſtraight*; and what was the end of that great revolution and motion in that part of the World? See *Iſa.* 45. 4. *For Jacob my Servants ſake, and Iſrael mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name:* This prophecy was, when *Jeruſalem* and the Temple were ſtanding. God caſts about long before his people needs, for their welfare in the great revolutions and changes of the World. In *Iſa.* 44. 28. *that ſaith of Cyrus, he is my Shepherd, and ſhall perform all my pleaſure, even ſaying to Jeruſalem, thou ſhalt be built; and to the Temple, thy foundation ſhall be laid.* *Cyrus* had no knowledge of this end of God, *though thou haſt not known me*, *Iſa.* 45, 4, 5. twice repeated. *Cyrus* did not know God, neither did he know Gods end; he acts his own purpoſes, and is acted by God to higher purpoſes than he underſtood. In all the ſiftings of Nations, and ſifting the Church among the Nations, as Corn is ſifted in a Sieve, God deſigns not the deſtruction of his people, but the cleanſing them, the ſeparating the flower from the bran.

* *Luk.* 21. 25, 26, 27, 28.

3. *Deſtroying judgments, yea, and the very curſes ſometimes are turned into bleſſings.*

Deſtroying judgments. The deſolation of the *Jews* was not only in order to the fulfilling Gods truth in his threatnings, but uſeful for the great Goſpel deſign; the fall of the *Jews* was the calling of the *Gentiles*, *Rom.* 11. 11, 12. *Through their fall Salvation is come unto the Gentiles*: And alſo their fall and diſperſion among the *Gentiles*, was propheſied of as the occaſion of their return to God, *Ezek.* 20. 36, 37. *like as I pleaded with your Fathers in the Wilderneſs, ſo will I plead with you, and cauſe you to paſs under the rod, and bring you into the bond of the covenant*; when they are in the Wilderneſs of Captivity, then God ſhall plead with them, and make them to paſs under the rod of propriety, and bring them into Covenant. The like alſo is propheſied of that Captivity of the ten Tribes to this day not known where they are, *Hoſ.* 2. 14. The time of Gods ſpeaking kindly to her, ſhould be in the Wilderneſs, and then I *will give her the valley of Achor for a door of hope.* No queſtion but God hath performed his promiſe, and brought many of the poſterity of the ten Tribes into the Church among the Maſs of the *Gentiles*, among whom they were diſperſed.

* *Gen.* 49. 7. *Curſed be their anger, for it was fierce: and their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob, and ſcat tre them in Iſrael.*

Curſes ſometimes, as God orders them, prove bleſſings. The curſe of inſpir'd *Jacob* upon *Levi* *, was the advantage both of *Levi* and the *Iſraelites*; that they

they were diſperſed among the ſeveral Tribes without any univerſal cohabitation as the reſt, was a curſe: But that they ſhould be the inſtructors of the people in the matters of the Law, was an honour God put upon the head of that Tribe, and a publick bleſſing to the people.

4. *Diviſions in the Church.* One would think this of all other things ſhould ſhake the foundation of it; yet God orders even theſe to the good of the Church. *Paul* and *Barnabas*, two great Apoſtles, fell out *. The contention comes to be very ſharp, a thing naturally of very ill conſequence, in two of the prime guides of Chriſtianity, and at the laying the firſt foundation of it; but the Goſpel gains ground: One ſails to *Cyprus*, and the other travels into *Syria*. Perhaps had not this quarrel been between them, and they thus disjoynted from one another, ſome of thoſe poor Souls had never, or at leaſt not ſo ſoon, have heard of the Goſpel-mercy.

* *Acts* 15. 36, 37, 38, 39, &c.

5. *Perſecutions.* Theſe naturally tend to the diſſolution and utter extirpation of it, but God orders them otherwiſe. God doth often lay the Scene of his amazing Providences in very diſmal afflictions: As the Limner firſt puts on the dusky colours, on which he intends to draw the portraiture of ſome illuſtrious beauty. The Oppreſſion of *Iſrael* immediately before their Deliverance, was the dusky colour whereupon God drew thoſe gracious lines of their Salvation from *Egypt*, the pattern of all the after Deliverances of the Church in all Ages, and a Type of our Spiritual Redemption by Chriſt. The Humiliation, Perſecution and Death of the Son of God, was the dusky colour upon which God drew that amazing piece of Divine Love and Wiſdome in mans ſalvation, which the eyes of Saints and Angels will be fix'd on with raviſhing admirations to all Eternity. All Afflictions in the World, which God doth exerciſe the Church with, are parts of his Providence, and like mournful Notes in Muſick, which make the melody of the Tune more pleaſant, and ſet off thoſe ſweeter Aires which follow upon them. Afflictions here, cauſe the joys of Heaven to appear more glorious in the eyes of glorified Saints. The Perſecutions of the Martyrs did but heighten their Graces, ſend them to the place of Reſt, and enlarge their Robes of Glory. God many times ſaves his People by ſufferings, and brings them to the ſhore upon the planks of a broken ſhip, and makes that which was the occaſion of their loſs, to be a means of their ſafety: they ſometimes evidence that which they would deſtroy. *Herods* Murdering the Children to deſtoy him that was born King of the *Jews*, made his Birth more Conſpicuous in the World: ſnuffing the Candle makes it burn the clearer.

They ſometimes make,

1. *To the improvement of the Church.* One of the ſoreſt Judgments God brought upon the *Jewiſh* Church, is expreſly aſſerted by God to be for their good; *Jer.* 24. 5. ſpeaking of the Captiv'd *Jews*, *Whom I have ſent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good.* The *Chaldeans* had over-run their Land, carried them Captives, made them Slaves, deſtroyed the Temple; yet God tells them this was for their good, when there was no preſent appearance of any good in it. It ſhould be good in reſpect of Gods Favour towards them, which retired to return with the greater force; *ver.* 6. *I will ſet mine eyes upon them for good, I will build them, and not pull them down:* God will give them a more durable ſettlement. In reſpect alſo of that frame of heart they ſhould have toward God; their knowledge of him, and cleaving to him, *ver.* 7. *I will give them a heart to know me, and they ſhall return to me with their whole heart:* God had but a moyety of their hearts before, but then he ſhould have the whole. And indeed it was remarkably for their good; for they who before were addicted to Idolatry, were never guilty of the ſame ſin after: And God kept them from being drawn away to it by the example and ſolicitiation of thoſe among whom they were. The Church grows by tears, and withers by ſmiles. Gods Vine thrives the better for pruning. God makes our Perſecutions fit us for that for which we are perſecuted. As *Saul* by his perſecution of *David* for the Title God had given him to the Kingdom, made him fitter to ſucceed him in the Throne, and manage the Government. God

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uſes perſecutors as lances, which whiles they wound us, let out the purulent and oppreſſive matter; and makes them inſtruments of his Providence to work out his Peoples Happineſs, and thus makes the very wrath of man to be an occaſion of his Peoples Praiſe; *Pſal.* 76. 10. *The wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee.* God doth in this as a Father deals with his Son, ſends him to a ſharp ſchool, that he may be Trained up in Learning.

2. *In the increaſe of the Church.* The *Jews* Crucified our Saviour to diminiſh the multitude of his followers, and by this means the number is increaſed. The whole World runs after him by that means they uſed to ſtop their Courſe; which Chriſt fore-told, that when he was lifted up he ſhould draw all men after him; And that a grain of Corn brings not forth more ſeed, unleſs it be caſt into the ground, and dye.

1. *In the increaſe of it within its own bounds.* When the *Iſraelites* were moſt oppreſt in *Egypt*, the more they multiplied *. When the Dragons fury did moſt ſwell againſt the Woman, ſhe brought forth a Man-child *. When the *Roman* Empire was at the higheſt, and was moſt enflam'd with Anger againſt the Chriſtians: When the Learning of the Philoſophers, the Witchcrafts of Hereticks, the Power of the Emperors, and the Strength of the whole World was ſet againſt them, the Chriſtians grew more flouriſhing and numerous by thoſe very means which were uſed to deſtroy them. Not only a new ſucceſſion of Saints ſprung up from the Martyrs Aſhes, but their Flames were the occaſion of warming ſome ſo much with a Heavenly fire, that ſome Perſecutors have become Preachers. Their very bonds for the Truth have ſometimes a ſeminal Vertue in them to beget men to Faith in Chriſt. *Phil.* 1. 12. *The things which have happened unto me, have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the Goſpel.*

* *Exod.* 1. 20.
* *Rev.* 12. 1, 3, 4.

2. *In the increaſe of it in other parts.* *Pauls* Priſon made his Preaching Famous in *Rome*, and was an occaſion of bringing Chriſtianity into *Nero's* Court, that Monſter of Mankind *; one might have looked for Saints in Hell as ſoon; his bonds were as great a confirmation of the Truth of his Doctrine, as his Eloquence. When *Saul* made havock of the Church, and by that ſtorm diſperſed the Chriſtans, they like ſo many grains of Corn ſcattered in ſeveral parts of a greater Field, produced the greater Harveſt. *Acts* 8. 3, 4. *Therefore they that were ſcattered abroad, went every where preaching the Word.* As Clouds ſcattered by the Winds, they Rain'd down the Goſpel in ſeveral Quarters. The *Jews* when ſcattered in their ſeveral flights, did ſcatter among the Heathen the Notions of the true Religion. When they ſhall go down to *Egypt* to ſecure themſelves from *Senacheribs* Invaſion, they ſhall be a means to make many Converts among that Idolatrous Nation. *Iſa.* 19. 18. *In that day* (the day of the *Jews* Trouble) *ſhall five Cities in the land of Egypt ſpeak the Language of Canaan, and ſwear to the Lord of Hoſts*: ſo one expounds it, but I rather think it meant of the times of the Goſpel. The flight of the *Iſraelites* ſhall be the occaſion of ſome *Egyptians* Converſion. A poor Slave in *Naamans* Family was an occaſion both of the cure of his Body, and of that of his Soul; 2 *Kings* 5. 2, 3, 17. So much for the firſt Reaſon, drawn from an enumeration of things.

* *Phil.* 1. 13. *Phil.* 4. 22.

2. Reaſon; To prove that all Providence is for the good of the Church; is, *Becauſe God hath ſometimes preferred Mercy to the Church, and Care of it, above his own concernments of Juſtice.* He values his Mercy to them, above his Juſtice upon his Enemies. He conſults their ſafety before he brings ruin upon the Wicked whoſe ſins are full. He firſt prepared the Ark for *Noah*, and ſees him lodged in it, before he begins to ſhower down deſtruction upon the World. He hath ſometimes puniſhed a Nation more for their Offences againſt his People, than their Sins againſt himſelf. *Amalek* was guilty of many Idolatries and other ſins againſt God; but God chargeth none of them upon them, but their malicious hindring the *Iſraelites* in their March to *Canaan*, 1 *Sam.* 15. 2. *Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, I remember that which Amalek did to Iſrael, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt.* He ſhews his love to them, and how much he values them, that when he is acting Juſtice, and pouring out his

Secondly,

his Wrath, when he is (as it were) cutting and ſlaſhing on all ſides, and is in fury with wicked Men, he hath nothing but ſweetneſs and tenderneſs towards his own. *Amos* 9. 9, 10. in the ſifting of *Iſrael* and the Nations, *Not the leaſt grain ſhall fall upon the earth. All the ſinners of my people ſhall dye by the ſword.* While he thunders out his Fury upon wicked Men, he hath his Eyes upon the leaſt grain of the true *Iſrael*. What would it be for God, when he is raiſing the Glory of his Juſtice upon the People that have provoked him, not to regard the concernments of this, or that, or many ſincere Souls, but put no ſtop to his Fury? Yet he doth, not a grain ſhall periſh. He is more deſirous to hear of the preſervation and welfare of a few Righteous, than of the juſt puniſhment of the Wicked wherein his Juſtice is gloriouſly intereſſed. The Man clothed with Linnen, that was to mark the Mourners, return'd to God, and gave an account that he had done according to his Command *; the other five, which were to kill, returned not to give any account of their ſevere and ſharp proceedings. The Angels that held the four Winds of the Earth, *Rev.* 7. 1. which ſome underſtand of Wars and Commotions in the World for the overthrow of the *Romiſh* power, were ordered not to let the Winds go, till the ſervants of God were ſealed in their Foreheads.

* *Ezek.* 9. 11.

3. Reaſon; *God takes particular notice of the meaneſt of his people, and mightily condeſcends to them, much more of the church.* 'Tis ſtrange to conſider that the Scripture mentions none of thoſe great Potentates among the Heathen, but either as they were inſtruments of his Peoples good, or executioners of his Juſtice upon them, or ſubjects of his Peoples Triumph. *Cyrus* and *Darius* are mentioned as their friends; *Nebuchadnezzar*, and *Senacherib*, and others, as Gods inſtruments in ſcourging them.* *Chedorlaomer* and the other Kings with him, as they were the ſubiects of *Abrahams* Valour and Triumph. He takes no notice of the Names of any in his Word, but upon ſuch Accounts: *Cyrus* and *Nebuchadnezzar* had done, no doubt, many actions before, but none taken notice of but thoſe: But he takes notice of the meaneſt wherein was Grace, and the meaneſt of their concerns and actions *. He mentions in his Word *Jacob*'s Flocks, *&c.* things of no great moment; the actions, ſpeeches, geſtures of his People, to ſhew how his Providence wrought for them, and how much he is concern'd in the leaſt of their Affairs. But the great Empires of the World, their Original and Progreſs, and the magnified Founders of them, he ſpeaks not of, but as they have ſome relation or other to his People. As we love to uſe the names of our Friends, ſo doth God love the relliſh of the names of his ſervants. The name of *Noah* is repeated ſeveral times, as the *Jews* obſerve *. The Spirit of God loves the very mention of their names: he delights to dwell upon the Catalogue of their names. The Scripture uſes to reckon the Genealogies of wicked Men in ſhort characters. *Cains* Generation is numbred in haſte, as if God had no care at all of them *, he puts them off with a kind of *&c.* But he inſiſts much upon the Generation of the Godly. *Seths* Poſterity are written in a large ſcroul, and more legible hand *, with the number of the years which they lived; which in *Cains* Poſterity there is no notice taken of. His whole Reſpect, his Heart, his Eye, his All is fixed upon them. And Chriſt himſelf ſtands more aſtoniſhed, and wondring at the Faith of the Centurian, the importunity of the *canaanitiſh* Woman; condeſcends to them to grant them what they would have. You never find him taking notice of the Learning of the Rabbies, the Magnificence of *Herod*, or the glorious Building of the Temple. See how condeſcending God is, to work a Miracle for the ſupport and ſtrengthning of a weak Faith, and the peeviſh diſtruſt of his People. *Gideons* Faith was weak, yet how compaſſionate is God towards him *, in ordering his Providence as *Gideon* would have it, without upbraiding him; juſt as a tender Mother cheriſhes a weak Child? And this Miracle was in order to the Churches Deliverance from a preſent oppreſſive Enemy. Certainly when we find God taking care and ordering even the very Pins, Snuffers and Baſins of the Temple, the place of his Worſhip, as well as the more ſtately Ornaments of it; we may ſay, doth his Care extend to the meaneſt Utenſils in his Temple, and not much more to the Worſhippers in it? Doth he give order

* *Revet in Gen. exercit.* 129.

* *Gen.* 7. *Gen.* 8.

* *Gen.* 7. 17, 18.

* *Gen.* 5. 6, 7, 8, 9, *&c.*

* *Judg.* 6. 36. *&c. He would have one time the Fleece dry, another time wet; God condeſcends to them in all.*

for

for the Candleſticks, and will he not have much more care of the lights in them? His care to the leaſt, implies his care of the greateſt too. In a building, the little ſtones muſt be well laid, as well as the greateſt. Every Believer is a ſtone in the Spiritual building.

4. Reaſon, *God reveals often to his people what he will do in the World, as if he ſeemed to ask their advice*, and therefore ſurely all his Providences ſhall work for their good. God would not ſurely acquaint them, and adviſe with them what he ſhould do, did he intend to do any thing to their hurt. There is not any thing in the heart of Chriſt wherein the Church is concerned, but he doth reveal it to them, *John* 15. 5. *I have called you friends; for all things I have heard of my Father, I have made known to you*; he diſcovered all to them, the ends of his coming, his Fathers love, his death and reſurrection, what he would do after his aſcenſion, the progreſs of his affairs, and the glory of Heaven, and the end of all. *John* muſt be the Pen-man of the Revelation, which concerned the future ſtate of the Church in all ages. *Joſeph* muſt know the interpretation of dreams in order to the Churches preſervation. *Moſes* muſt be acquainted with Gods methods in the *Iſraelties* deliverance, with the *Egyptians* ruine. *Daniel* muſt know the future ſtate of the *Eaſtern* parts of the World; he muſt know the turnings of the times, and the end of the World. 'Tis to *Noah*, and none elſe, that he immediately diſcovers his intended deſtruction of the World. And all thoſe revelations ended in his peoples advantage; nay, he doth not only reveal, but, as it were, conſult with him in his affairs. God doth as it were unboſom himſelf to *Abraham*, as one friend to another, as it were, adviſeth with him concerning his intention on *Sodom*, *Gen.* 18. 17. *And the Lord ſaid, ſhall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do? i. e.* I will by no means do it, it will not conſiſt with my Love and Friendſhip to him, to hide any thing from him. And ſee the reaſon of it, v. 18. *Seeing that Abraham ſhall ſurely become a great and mighty Nation, and all the Nations of the Earth ſhall be bleſſed in him.* It was firſt his great affection to him, becauſe he had advanced him, and promiſed that a mighty Nation ſhould ſpring out of his Loyns. And he had not withheld from him the ſecret of giving the *Meſſias*, which was a univerſal bleſſing, and ſo many ages were to run out, before it was to be accompliſht; he had diſcovered to him his acts of mercy, and therefore would not hide from him his acts of juſtice; he would know his mind in it, and what he thought of it. And you know the ſtory, how God regulated himſelf by *Abraham*'s prayer, and denyed him nothing, till *Abraham* left off ſuing any more. It would make one conjecture, that if *Abraham* had proceeded farther, he had quite diverted the judgment from *Sodom*. And when the *Iſraelites* had provoked God by a Golden Calf, he would not do any thing againſt them, till he had conſulted *Moſes*, and therefore lays the whole caſe before him, and ſeeks to take him off from pleading with the Lord, and promiſing to make of him a great Nation *, and in ſuch terms, that one would wonder at. *Now therefore let me alone*; As if God did fear *Moſes*'s interpoſition would prevent him, and diſſwade him from it. Do not you ſtand in the way; my wrath will cool, if you interpoſe your ſelf; as much as to ſay, God could not do it, unleſs *Moſes* gave his conſent: *Moſes* would not be quiet, but pleads the Providences of God which had been all for him, the promiſe of God made to *Abraham* concerning them. And he would not leave, till God repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his People, *v.* 14. If Angels, as *Calvin* ſaith, are *Gods* Counſellors in Heaven, Believers are (as it were) his Counſellors on Earth.

Dan. 10. 11, 19, 20.

* *Exod.* 32. 9, 10. *and the Lord ſaid to Moſes, I have ſeen this people, and behold it is a ſtiff-necked people: now therefore let me alone that my wrath may wax hot againſt them.*

5. *God has given the choiceſt things he hath to his people*; He hath given his Law. The Church is the Sphere wherein the light of the Goſpel is fixed, and wherein it ſhines, from whence its beams do dart out to others. *Iſa.* 2. 3. *out of Sion ſhall go forth the Law.* The oracles of God, the great things of the Law, as it is phraſed, *Hoſea* 8. 12. his Covenant, and the counſel of his will, are intruſted with the Church. Now this being a mercy which exceeds all other things in the World, is therefore comprehenſive of all other, as the greater comprehends the leſſer. And the *Pſalmiſt* conſiders it as the top-

top ſtone of all bleſſings; for after ſumming up the Providences of God, he ſhews how God had diſtinguiſhed *Jacob* by more eminent marks of his favour, *Pſal.* 147. 19, 20. *He ſhews his word to Jacob, his Statutes and his judgments unto Iſrael, he hath not dealt ſo with any Nation*; he hath not left ſo rich a Legacy to any, or given any ſo much of his heart. Others are ordered by the word of his power (for that is meant by word in the foregoing verſe); but *Jacob* hath the word of his grace too. And this being the choiceſt piece of affection which God hath ſhewed to the Church, implies the making all leſſer Providences ſubſervient to it. The Church, wherein God hath laid up his Goſpel, and thoſe Souls which are as the Ark, wherein God hath depoſited his Law, ſhall be ſhadowed with the wings of his merciful Providence, in a perpetual ſucceſſion of all true bleſſings. All the Providences of God are to preſerve his Law in the World; his ſevereſt judgments are to quicken up the Law of nature in men that know no other, and the Law of his Goſpel in men that ſit under it. And he hath given Chriſt to his Church, and thereby hath given an earneſt, that ſtill their good ſhall be promoted: 'Tis not to be thought, that God will ſpare any thing elſe, when he hath given them his Son.

Secondly. The Second thing. *It muſt needs be that all providences is for the good of the Church.*

Firſt. 1. *All the providence of God is for the glorifying his grace in Chriſt.* The whole Oeconomy or diſpenſation of the fulneſs of time, to the latter ages of the world, is for the gathering all things together in him, *Eph.* 1. 10. *that in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of time he might gather together in one all things in Chriſt, both which are in Heaven, and which are on Earth, even in him.* In him as their head. This was the deſign in all his diſpenſations, both before his coming, and ſince, ever ſince the promiſe made to *Adam*, though it be more manifeſt in the latter Age. This the Apoſtle repreſents as the main purpoſe of God, *v.* 9. This was the myſtery of his will, which accordingly to his good pleaſure he had purpoſed in himſelf, that is, purpoſed in himſelf as a thing he was mightily pleaſed with; and *ver.* 11. ſaith he, he works all things after, or κατὰ, *according to the counſel of his own will*, or of that purpoſe which he had purpoſed in himſelf, to gather all things in one, in Chriſt. All the things that God acts, are referred to this as their end, and ordered by this Counſel as their rule. As it was the deſign of Gods Providence to make way for Chriſts entrance into the World, and all the prophecies in the old Teſtament tended to the diſcovery of it; ſo ſince the coming of Chriſt, the end of all is to advance him in reſpect of his headſhip, *Eph.* 1. 22, 23. *and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulneſs of him that fills all in all.* God would advance Chriſt to the higheſt pitch, *v.* 21. far above all principality and power, both in this World, and in the World to come; and there is ſtill a fulneſs wanting to Chriſt to compleat him, not any perſonal fulneſs, but a fulneſs belonging to him as Head, which is the advancement God deſigns him. He is already advanced above all principality and power. He is already given as a Head to the Church; but the compleatneſs of it is not till all his members be perfected, to which all his providences in the World doth ultimately tend: Therefore if the deſign of God be to honour Chriſt, and if the ſpiritual happineſs of the Church be part of that Glory and Fulneſs of Chriſt, it muſt needs be carried on by God, elſe he will want part of his compleatneſs as a Head: But this ſhall not be wanting, ſince, as all things are ſquared according to that Counſel of glorifying Chriſt as Head, ſo all things are acted for believers by that power whereby he raiſed Chriſt from the grave to be their Head, which power is the Copy according to which all acts which reſpect the Church, are framed, *v.* 19. *and what is the exceeding greatneſs of his power to us ward, who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Chriſt when he raiſed him up from the dead.* God intended the good of the Church, in this very act of glorifying Chriſt, for he is made the *head over all things to the Church.* As if God then had preſcribed him that order, that the glory he gave him ſhould be alſo managed for the Churches intereſt: Chriſt is Lord of the reſt of the World, but

but Head of the Church: All things are under his feet, but are not his members; He is Head over all things to the Church, and therefore to every member of the Church, the leaſt as well as the greateſt; and to the whole Church, even that part of it which is on Earth, as well as that part which is in Heaven, who are compleated This Church is the fulneſs of Chriſt; he would be bodyleſs without it: therefore ſince Chriſt will be a head without a body, if the Church be not preſerved; in order to the preſervation of it, all things muſt neceſſarily concur by the wiſe diſpoſal of affairs. Therefore ſince they are travelling to be where their head is, he having the government of the World, will make all things contribute aſſiſtance to them in their journey; that Chriſt may have that compleatneſs of glory, which God intends him, he expreſly tells his Father, *John* 17. 10. *that he is glorifyed in his people* *. And at the ſound of the ſeventh Trumpet, *the Kingdoms of this world are to become the Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Chriſt, and he ſhall reign for ever and ever* *. Now ſince all the motions in the World, are, that the Kingdoms of the World may become the Kingdoms of his Chriſt, peculiarly his, as being anointed King by him: It muſt needs be, that all things muſt be ſubſervient one time or other to this end, wherein the good of his people doth conſiſt; otherwiſe they would not bleſs God ſo highly for it as they do *. *We give thee thanks, O Lord God almighty, becauſe thou haſt taken to thee thy great power, and haſt reigned.* Andwhere there is a reſiſtance of this glory of Chriſt, it is a natural effect of that decree whereby Chriſt is conſtituted King, that the reſiſters ſhould be broken in pieces, and daſht like a Potters veſſel, *Pſal* 2. 6, 9. and the iſſue of all is the bleſſedneſs of thoſe that put their truſt in him, *v.* 12. The care that God hath of Chriſt and the Church in the types of them, ſeems to be equal. The Ark, which was a type of Chriſt, and the Table of ſhew-bread a figure of the church, had three coverings; whereas all the reſt of the Veſſels, *&c.* belonging to the ceremonial part, had but two *, On the Ark there was the vail and covering of badgers skins, and a coverings of blew: On the Table of ſhew-bread there was a cloath of Blew, a cloth of Scarlet, and a covering of badgers skins. God orders as much for the ſecurity of the Church, as for the ſecurity of Chriſt; therefore the ſame things that tend to the glorifying of Chriſt, ſhall tend to the advantage of the Church.

* *John* 17. 10. *And I am glorifyed in them.*
* *Revel.* 11. 15.
* *Revel.* 11. 17.
* *Numb.* 4. 7, 6, 7, 8.

2 *God hath given the power of the providential adminiſtration of things to Chriſt to this very end, for the good of the Church.* If God hath conſtituted him Head over all things to the Church, can there be any doubt but that he will manage the Government for that which is the principal end of his Government, which he hath ſhed his Blood for, and which is chiefly intended by God who appointed him?

1. *All power of government is given to Chriſt*, Math 11. 27. *All things are delivered to me of my Father. And the Father judges no man, but hath committed all judgment to the ſon*, Joh. 5. 22. that is, the whole Governmet and Adminiſtration of Affairs. 'Tis not to be underſtood of the laſt Judgment, for then it would be a limitation of that Word *all*; not that the Father lays aſide all care of things, but as the Father diſcovers himſelf only in him, ſo he governs things only by him. All this power was committed to him upon his interpoſition after the Fall of Man. He was made Lord and Chriſt, that is, anointed by God to the Government of the World. For upon the Fall, God as a Rector, had overturned all. Man could not with any Comfort have treated with the Father, had not Chriſt ſtept in and pleaded for the Creation, whereupon God commits all judgment to the Son, that he might temper it. It was by Chriſt as a covenanting Mediator, that the Earth was eſtabliſhed *. He had this Government Anciently, and it was confirmed to him upon his death; *Heb.* 1. 3. *Who being the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon, and upholding all things by the word of his power. Calvin* underſtands the firſt word not only of the Deity of Chriſt, but of the diſcovery the Father made of himſelf in and through him as Mediator. The latter words ſome underſtand both of his Providential and Mediatory Kingdom: *by the word of his power*; this, ſay ſome, is referred to the Father, whoſe image Chriſt is, as acting by a delegated Authority and Commiſſion from his Father: others, to Chriſt; as, that

* *Iſa.* 49. 8.

Chriſt upholds or bears up all things by his own powerful word. *Calvin* thinks both may be taken, but embraceth the ſecond as being more generally received.

I may offer, whether it may not be meant alſo, of the powerful interpoſition of Chriſt as Mediator; whoſe intereſt in God was ſo great, that he kept up the World by his powerful Interceſſion, when all was forfeited; and God put it, upon that interpoſition, into his hands, as *heir of all things*; (who having a hand with him in Creation, underſtood both the Rights of God, and the Duty of the Creature) upon the condition of *purging ſin* by his Death, which he did, and thereupon went to Heaven to take Poſſeſſion of the Government, at the right hand of God; *ſate down*, took his ſeat at the right hand of the Majeſty on high, as due to him by Covenant and Articles agreed on between them. I know nothing at preſent againſt ſuch an interpretation of the words; but I will not contend about it. All this honour was confirm'd unto him upon his Death. For having perform'd the Condition requiſite on his part, God deputes him and intruſts him with the Government of things, that he might order all things ſo, as to ſee the full travel of his Soul.

2. *All this power was intended by God for this End, the good of the Church.* As God appointed Chriſt a Prieſt for his Church to ſacrifice for them, a Prophet to teach them; ſo the other Office of King is conferred upon him for the ſame end, the advantage of the Church. God acquaints us of this End, aimed at by him, in the Promiſe of the Government to him, *Jer.* 33. 15, 16. *In thoſe dayes, and at that time, will I cauſe the branch of righteouſneſs to grow up to David, and he ſhall execute judgment and righteouſneſs in the land*; what is the end? *In thoſe dayes ſhall Judah be ſaved, and Jeruſalem ſhall dwell ſafely.* He ſhould execute Judgment, that is, Adminiſter the Government for the ſalvation of *Judah*, and ſecurity of *Jeruſalem*. It was his Office both to build the Temple, and to bear the Glory, and to Rule upon his Throne; to be a Prieſt upon his Throne, to Rule as King and Prieſt, *Zach.* 6. 12, 13. *He ſhall build the temple of the Lord, even he ſhall build the temple of the Lord.* The erecting a Church is the ſole work of Chriſt by Gods appointment. And he was to bear up the Glory of it. He ſhould rule to this End, *for the Counſel of peace ſhall be between them both.* If by [*both*] be meant, the Lord, and the Man whoſe name is the Branch; it then chiefly aims at our Reconciliation, as wrought by Covenant between them. If by [*both*] be meant the two Offices of King and Prieſt, and that the counſel of Peace be between them; it will extend to all the Bleſſings of the Church, to the good and glory of the Church, which is the fruit of his Kingly, as well as the firſt Reconciliation was the fruit of his Prieſtly Office. By Peace, in Scripture, is meant the confluence of all Bleſſings; ſo that the intent of God in beſtowing thoſe Offices upon Chriſt, and ſo great a Rule, was for the good and advantage of that Church or Temple, which he appointed him only to build. And in *Iſaiah* 11. 9. where the prophecy of the Government of Chriſt is, the End is expreſt to be, that none ſhould *hurt or deſtroy in all his holy mountain.* And certainly, ſince God ſet him at his right hand, and confirm'd this power unto him, after he had *purged our ſins*; it was certainly out of the high value God had for him, and therefore muſt be the intent of God, that he ſhould govern all things in reference to the deſign of that Death, and for the good of thoſe whoſe ſins he had by himſelf purged. For the poſſeſſing this Government, was the very end why Chriſt died and roſe again; *Rom.* 14. 9. *For to this end Chriſt both died, and roſe, and revived, that he might be Lord both of dead and living.* If this were Chriſts End in dying and riſing, it was his Fathers End too, who appointed him to Death, and raiſed him by his mighty power. And ſince he was *delivered for our offences, and roſe again for our juſtification, Rom.* 4. 25. The Government he is inveſted with, being Lord of the dead and of the living, muſt be for the ſakes of thoſe for whom he was delivered, and for whom he roſe. His Regal power, which was one end of his Death, cannot croſs the other main end, the conſtituting a Church, and carrying on the good of them that believe. The Government, being in the hands not of God as Creator, but in and through the hands of a Mediator,

and

and that Mediator which both died and roſe again peculiarly for them; therefore it cannot in the leaſt be for their hurt, but advantage. The whole management of Chriſts Kingly Office in relation to the Church, is preſcrib'd unto Chriſt by God. God reveals to him what ſhall be done in the World, what acts he ſhall perform for the Church, and gives him a Hiſtory of all that was to be done upon the ſtage, together with an order to communicate it unto his Servants, *Revel.* 1. 1. *The Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, which God gave unto him, to ſhew unto his Servants* [to be communicated to the whole Church] *things that muſt ſhortly come to paſs.* Whether this Revelation was made to the humane nature of Chriſt at his incarnation, as *Tirinus* thinks, or rather upon his aſcenſion, is not material; The whole Scheme of what was to be done in the World, is revealed here by God to Chriſt: And you find all the motions in the World relating to the Church, and the end of all is the good of the Heavenly *Jeruſalem.*

3. *All power thus given, and intended for this end, is actually adminiſtred by Chriſt for this end.* Chriſt as the head of the Church, doth like a natural head; It never ſees, nor hears, nor exerciſeth any act of ſence only for it ſelf, but for the good of the whole Body: The eye watches for the body, the Tongue ſpeaks for it, the underſtanding contrives for it; every part of the head is active for the whole Body. Now Chriſt as head is more bound to act for the Church militant, than for the Church triumphant; becauſe the greateſt part of his work for the Church triumphant, *viz.* the bringing them to Heaven, is already performed. And they are above the reach of all things in the World, and all the actions and motions in the World cannot touch or diſorder them. But the command of God concerning the other part behind, is not yet performed; and even they are the members of Chriſt, as well as thoſe in Heaven. The Apoſtle*. ſeems to refer both Chriſts creation, and the preſervation of things, to this title of headſhip. *All things were created by him; and for him, and by him all things conſiſt, and he is the head of the body the Church,* and therefore the conſervation and government of all things ſhall be ſubſervient to the Church, which is the body of this governing Head. The chief ſeat of Chriſts Soveraignty is the Church, *Pſal.* 2. 6. *yet have I ſet my King upon my holy hill of Sion:* And he ſtands upon *Mount Sion, Rev.* 14. 1. The Church is the proper Seat and Metropolis of his Empire, the Royal Chamber of this Great King. All the conqueſts of Princes redound to the advantage of that place, where they fix their Reſidence. He is King of the World, but for the ſake of *Sion.* Chriſt did manage this charge anciently for his People; when *Joſhuah* had paſſed over *Jordan,* and firſt entred upon the conqueſt of *Canaan,* he ſees a man over againſt him with a ſword drawn in his hand; *Joſhua* 5. 13, 14. *And Joſhua ſaid unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adverſaries? And he ſaid, Nay, but as Captain of the hoſts of the Lord am I now come.* This was Chriſt, that came armed for his People, according to his charge, as their Captain and General. It was not an Angel, becauſe *Joſhua* worſhipped him, *ver.* 14. An Angel did not uſe to receive any Worſhip from Men; and he accepts the Worſhip, and commands him to looſe his ſhoe from his foot, for the place whereon he ſtood was holy; *ver.* 15. And the ſame Perſon, *Joſh.* 6. 2. is called *Jehovah*; and there he gives him orders how he ſhould manage his War. Chriſt came here to direct his People in their concerns; He employs his Wiſdom for his Church, as well as his other excellencies. He is called a Counſellor *; 'tis one of the great Letters in his Name: and this, as the reſt there mentioned, hath a relation to the Church. *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.* And the firſt uſe he makes of his Power, after the confirmation of it to us, upon his Reſurrection, is for the Church; *Matth.* 28. 18. *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth*; all Authoritative Power over Angels, and the affairs of the World; *Go you therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them,* &c. *and lo, I am with you alwayes, even unto the end of the World.* He commands the Apoſtles to gather a Church among all Nations; and doth, by Vertue of this Authority committed to him, promiſe his Preſence with them, in all ſuch ſervices they ſhould do to this End, even to the end of the World. He promiſes

* *Col.* 1. 16, 17, 18.

* *Iſa.* 9. 6.

his Spirit and his Providential Preſence; as his power ſhould endure to the end of the World, ſo the exerciſe of it for this End ſhould run Parallel with the continuance of it; There ſhould be no alteration or change in this great end of his, as long as the World laſts. How can Chriſt be with them, and that to the end of the World, if all the parts of his Providential government were not ordered to ſerve this end, the good of the Church? for the Church is *the fulneſs of him that fills all in all*, *Eph.* 1. 23. that fills all in all places, all in all actions and motions; for the good of his Church, which is his body.

Thirdly. 3. *God in the Church diſcovers the glory of all his attributes.* 'Tis in a mans houſe, where his riches and ſtate is ſeen: 'Tis in the Church God makes himſelf known in his excellency more than in all the World beſides. *Pſal.* 76. 1. *In Judah is God known, his name is great in Iſrael, in Salem alſo is his Tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Sion.* 'Tis in his Church he doth manifeſt his power: 'Tis called therefore *a glorious high Throne*, Jer. 17. 12. *a glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our ſanctuary.* Kings uſe to diſplay all their Glory and Majeſty upon their Thrones; in this ſenſe Heaven is called Gods Throne, *Iſa.* 60. 1. becauſe the proſpect of the Heavens affords us diſcoveries of the wiſdom and power of God, more than in any other viſible thing, both in their eſſence, magnitude and motion: So is there a greater diſcovery of Gods attributes in the Church (which is alſo ſtiled Heaven in Scripture) than in the whole World beſides: There it is that the Angels look to learn more of the Wiſdom of God than they underſtood before *. 'Tis there the day of his power dawns, *Pſal.* 110. 3. 'Tis there his Saints ſee his power and his glory, *Pſal.* 63: 2. the Sanctuary is called the firmament of his power, *Pſal.* 150. 1. The glory of Gods attributes is centered in Chriſt in a higher manner than in the creation; and in that work did excel themſelves in what they had done in the framing of the World; and the Church being the glory of Chriſt, all thoſe attributes which are glorifyed in Chriſt, do in and through him ſhine forth more clearly upon the Church, than upon any other part of the World. He ſtyles himſelf their Creator, as much as the creator of the whole frame of Heaven and Earth, *Iſa.* 43. 15. *I am the Lord, your holy one, the Creator of Iſrael, your King.* As though all the attributes of God, his power in creation, his holineſs in redemption, were deſigned for none elſe but them. And indeed by virtue of the covenant they are to be ſo; for if God be their God, then all of God is theirs. What wiſdom, power, ſufficiency, grace, and kindneſs he hath, is principally for them. If God be their God, it is in their concerns he will glorify himſelf as a God, in the manifeſtation of his perfections. This cannot be without the ordering all Providences for their advantage.

* *Eph.* 3. 10.

Fourthly. 4. *There is a peculiar relation of God and Chriſt to the Church*; upon which account this Doctrine muſt needs be true. God is ſet out in all relations to manifeſt his great care of his people. He is a Father to provide for them *. A Mother to ſuckle them *. Chriſt is a Husband to love and protect them *. A Brother to counſel them *. And when all theſe Relations meet in one and the ſame perſon, the reſult of it muſt be very ſtrong. Any one relation where there is affection, is a great ſecurity; but here all the relations are twiſted together with the higheſt affections of them in God to the Church. A Father will order all for the good of his Child; a Mother for her Infant; a Husband for his Wife; and one kind Brother for another; So doth God for his People; and whatſoever thoſe Relations bind Men to on Earth, in reſpect of Care, Love and Faithfulneſs, that is God to his Church. The Church hath the Relation to God, which none in the World have beſides. They are his Jewels, therefore he will keep them; they are his Children, therefore he will ſpare them *. They ſhall have protection from him as they are his Jewels, and Compaſſion from him as they are his Sons. The Church is Chriſts Fleſh, as dear to him as our fleſh is to us; as much his, as our fleſh is ours. *Eph.* 5. 29. *No man hates his own fleſh, but nouriſheth it, as Chriſt doth his Church.* No man can have a higher value for his own fleſh, than Chriſt hath for his Church. The Church, as *Tertullian* ſpeaks, is nothing elſe but *Chriſtus explicatus* *; and as conſidered

Iſa. 68. 5. *Iſa* 49. 15. * *Eph.* 5. 29. * *John* 20. 17

* *Mal.* 3. 17.

**Chriſt unfolded.*

*

ſidered in Union with Chriſt, is called *Chriſt* ; 1 *Cor.* 12. 12. 'Tis the Apple of his eye, *Zac.* 2.8. A tender and beloved part. The Church is Chriſts Spouſe ; the contract is made, the Eſpouſals ſhall be at the laſt Day. The Members are pick'd out one by one to be preſented to the Lamb at laſt as a Glorious Bride for him, *Rev.* 21. 2.

And all Gods dealings with them in the World, are but preparations of them for that State. Upon the making of the Match, God promiſes a communion of Goods ; *Hoſ* 2. 20. *I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulneſs*, which is a fruit of Marriage, the Wife being inveſted in her Husbands Eſtate. When God hath given the blood of his Son for the Church, he will not deny her the ſervice of the creatures, but Joynture her in that as one part of her Dowry. *In that day will I hear the heavens*, &c. *ver.* 21. In what day ? in the day of betrothing, in the day of the Evangelical Adminiſtration ; when the contract ſhall be made between me and my church. Heavens, Earth, Corn, Wine and Oil ; the voice and motions of all creatures are for *Jezreel*, which ſignifies the *ſeed of God.* This great Prince he hath a care of all his ſubjects, ſo more peculiarly of his Spouſe and Princeſs, which is his ſeed too ; and all creatures ſhall be her Servants. This Fatherly Relation and affection is ſtrong and pure, not as the love which acts an ambitious man to Ambition, or a covetous man to Wealth ; which reſpects nothing but the graſping and poſſeſſing the Objects they dote upon ; and have nothing of love for the Objects themſelves ; therefore deſerves not the name of Love. But it is the love of a Father, whoſe love is pure towards his children ; He ſeeks their good as his own.

Conſider theſe two things.

1. *God hath a peculiar love to this very Relation*, and often mentions it with delight, as if he loved to hear the ſound of it in his own Lips : *Cant.* 8. 12. *My vineyard which is mine, is before me. Me, my, mine.* The Church is always under his Eye, ſeated in his affection ; and God is pleaſed with his propriety in them. God never calls the World, *my* World, though he created it ; ſometimes he ſaith, the Earth is mine, but it is either to check the preſumptions of Men, who aſcribe that to themſelves which is due to the firſt Cauſe ; Or to encourage his People in the expectation of Deliverance, becauſe all things in the Earth are at his beck : Or to ſhew his own ſufficiency, without the ſervices of his people ; as when he ſaith, the Earth is mine and the fulneſs thereof : but it is never mentioned in ſuch a way, as to diſcover any pleaſure he hath in the Relation between him and it, ſimply conſidered ; but *my* Vineyard, *my* People, *my* Children, *my* Jewels, *my* Sanctuary, very often. So much doth God eſteem his Propriety in them.

2. *This Relation is prevalent with God in the higheſt Emergencies and Diſtreſſes of his People.* The very conſideration that they are his People, kindles his affection, and enlivens his Strength for them. *Iſa.* 63. 8. *And he ſaid, Surely they are my people, children that will not lye ; ſo he was their ſaviour.* God is brought in, as one that had heard the cries of his Church, and had not been moved ; but when he recollects himſelf, and conſiders that they were his People, and that he was in a ſpecial manner related to them, he became their Saviour ; He could no longer bear it, but ſtirs up himſelf to relieve them. Nay, it hath ſo ſtrong an influence upon him, that if this Note be often ſounded in his Ears, it doth as it were change his Voice ; and when he ſeems to have a mind to caſt them off, he cannot. When *Iſrael* had offended by erecting and worſhipping a golden Calf, he calls them no more *his* People, but *Moſes* People ; *Exod.* 32. 7. *And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, Go, get thee down ; for thy people which thou broughteſt out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themſelves.* As though God had not been concerned in this Miraculous Conduct out of *Egypt* ; And *ver.* 9. *this people* ; as if he had had no intereſt in them, but particularizes them with Diſdain. God had here diſcarded them, and turn'd them over upon *Moſes*'s hands, as if he would have no longer any thing to do with them ; but *Moſes* in Prayer turns them upon God again, and would not own them as his, but pleads that they were God's proper Goods ; *ver.* 11. *Lord, why doth thy wrath*

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wax hot againſt thy people, which thou haſt brought forth out of the land of Egypt? And *ver.* 12. again, thy People; and God at laſt reſumes his former Notes, *ver.* 14. *And the Lord repented him of the evil he thought to do unto his people.* Now they are Gods People again; the repetition of this Relation, is a powerful Rhetorique to perſwade him to own them again, which he had Caſhiered and turned off.

Fifthly. 5. *The whole intereſt of God in the world lies in his church and people.* He ſees little of himſelf in any part of the corrupted World, but only in them. 'Tis in the Church he hath put his Name; 'Tis there he ſees his Image, and therefore places his love there: and ſhall all this ſignifie nothing? Shall the Governour of the World let things go contrary to his own intereſt? They are like to him in that which is one of his greateſt perfections, *viz.* his Holineſs; which gives him a greater intereſt in them. 'Tis his Intereſt that is oppoſed, by an oppoſition to the Church. All the hatred any bear, it grows from the inward root of enmity againſt God himſelf; *Pſal.* 44. 22. Yea, for thy ſake are we killed all the day long. God ſurely will concern himſelf in the Churches intereſt, ſince it is his own. His Intereſt lies,

* *Iſa.* 19. *laſt.* * *Dut* 32. 9. 1. *In the Perſons of his People.* 'Tis his Inheritance*. It is his Portion*. *Deut.* 32. 9. *The Lords portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.* Every part of an inheritance, and a portion, doth as particularly belong to the owner, as the whole. Every part of the ground which belongs to the Inheritance, is the Heirs, as well as the whole Field. He will not ſuffer the World which is but the work of his hands, to lay waſte his Church, which is his proper inheritance. 'Tis his Treaſure, and where a mans treaſure is, there is his heart; and where Gods Treaſure is, there is Gods heart.

2. *In the ſervices and actions of the Church.* If the Church ſhould be deſtroyed, whom hath God to love and imitate him, and to ſhew forth his Glory? If the Candleſtick is broken, what is fit to hold out the light to the World? He hath none in the World beſides, that do intentionally mind his Honour, that take pleaſure in glorifying his Name, and writing after his Copy, and obſerving his Works. And will it ſtand with his intereſt to govern things contrary to theirs, which is really his own?

When God had made the World, and pronounced it good, what would it have ſignified, if he had not brought in man as his Rent-gatherer, and the Collector of his Tribute, to return it to him? And what would Man ſignifie? ſince the corrupted World embezzles that which is Gods Right, and turns it to its own uſe; if God had not ſome honeſt Stewards, who faithfully act for him, and give him the Glory of his Works? And God will ſpare them as a man ſpares his own Son that ſerves him. God hath no voluntary ſervice in the World but from them; therefore he is more intereſſed in their good, than in the good of the whole World beſides. The ſervices of the Church, are all the delight God hath in the World; *Hoſ.* 9. 10. *I found Iſrael like grapes in the wilderneſs, I ſaw your fathers as the firſt ripe in the fig-tree at her firſt time.* They are as the refreſhing Wine and Grapes, as the delicious fruit of the firſt ripe Figs; wherewith a weary Traveller recruits his Spirits after a long and tyring journey. And God hath a greater delight in the fruit he receives from the Church, than in it ſimply as it is his inheritance; for no inheritance is valued but for the fruit and revenue it yields; and therefore God orders all his blackeſt Providences in the World, like dark clouds, to be the watering-pots of this his Garden; that the Fruit and Flowers of it may be brought to maturity, which yield him ſo much pleaſure and honour. God only is acknowledged by them and in them, as the *Jews* were bound to acknowledge God the Author of their mercies, by preſenting the firſt fruits of their increaſe to God. And Believers are called ſo, *Rev.* 4. 4. *Theſe were redeemed from among men, being the firſt fruits to God and the Lamb.* 'Tis by and in them that God hath the acknowledgment of all his mercies and bleſſings to the World.

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6. *It cannot be but all the providences of God ſhall work to the good of his Church, if we conſider the affections of God.*

1. *His love.* What hath God in the World as an object to beſtow his affections upon, and communicate the rayes of his love unto, ſince he created it, but his Church? The men of the World hate him: He can ſee nothing amiable in them; for what was firſt lovely, they have defaced and blotted out; but the Church hath Gods comlineſs put upon her, *Ezek.* 16. 14. *it was perfect through my comlineſs which I had put upon thee, ſaith the Lord God*; and he did not lay thoſe glorious colours upon her, to manage his government, or any part of it againſt her, to deface her. Beſides their lovelineſs which is conferred upon them by God, they have a love to God, and no man will act againſt thoſe whom he thinks to be his friends. God being *purus actus*, there being nothing but purity and activity in God, his love muſt be the pureſt and higheſt love, the moſt vigorous and glowing: As fire, which ſets all other Bodies, ſo this all other powers in the World in motion for them. God cannot love them, but he muſt wiſh all good to them, and do all good for them; for his love is not a lazy love, but hath its raptures and tenderneſs, and his affection is twiſted with his Almighty Power to work that good for them, which in their preſent condition in the World they are capable of. Now it is certain, God loves his Church: For,

1. *He carries them in his hand**, and that not in a looſe manner to be caſt out, but they are engraven upon the palms of his hands*, that he cannot open his hand to beſtow a bleſſing upon any perſon, but the picture of his Church doth dart in his eye. God alludes to the Rings wherein men engrave the image of thoſe that are dear to them. And the *Jews* did in their captivity engrave the Effigies of their City *Jeruſalem* upon their Rings, that they might not forget it*. If his eye be alway upon the Church, his thoughts can never be off it in all his works.

* *Deut.* 33. 3.
*. *Iſa.* 49. 16.
* Sanctius *in Iſa.* 49. 16.

2. *He loves the very gates and outworks.* *Pſal.* 87. 2. *the Lord loveth the gates of Sion.* He loves a Cottage where a Church is, more than the ſtately Palaces of Princes. The gates were the places where they conſulted together, and gave judgment upon affairs: God loved the aſſemblies of his Saints, becauſe of the truths revealed, the ordinances adminiſtered, the worſhip preſented to him.

3. *Nay, one Saint is more valued by him than the whole World of the wicked.* God is the God of all Creatures, but peculiarly the God of *Abraham*, and of his ſeed: One *Abraham* is more deeply rooted in his heart, than all the World; and he doth more entitle himſelf the God of *Abraham*, than the God of the whole World; for in that ſtyle he ſpeaks to *Iſaac*, *Gen.* 26. 24. *I am the God of Abraham thy Father*, much more the God of *Iſrael*; The God of the whole Church, of which *Abraham* was but a member, though the Father of the faithful, and a Feoffee of the Covenant. God hath a greater value for one ſincere Soul, than for a whole City. He ſaves a *Lot*, and burns a *Sodom*: Yea, than for a whole World; he drowns a World, and reſerves a *Noah*: He ſecures his Jewels, whilſt he flings away the pebbles.

4. *He loves them ſo, that he overlooks their crabbed and perverſe miſconſtructions of his providence.* When the *Iſraelites* had jealous thoughts of him, and of *Moſes* his inſtrument, when they ſaw that mighty *Egyptian* Army juſt at their heels, and themſelves cooped up between Mountains, Forts and Waters, God doth not upon this provoking murmuring, draw up his cloudy Pillar to Heaven, but puts it in the rear of them, when before it had marched in the van*, and wedgeth himſelf in between them, and *Pharaoh's* enraged hoſt, to ſhew, that they ſhould as ſoon ſheath their ſwords in his heart, as in their bowels; and if they could ſtrike them, it ſhould be through his own Deity, which

* *Exod* 14. 19.

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was the higheſt expreſſion of his affection: And though they often murmured againſt his Providence after they were landed on the ſhore, yet he left them not to ſhift for themſelves, but bore them all the way in his arms, as a Father doth his Child*; and bare them like an Eagle upon his Wings *. And God loves them magnificently and royally, *Hoſ.* 14. 4. *I will love them freely* *, without any doubting, without any reluctancy. I will love thee without any repugnancy in my heart, to draw me back from thee, *for mine anger is turned away*, as the ſtreams of a River quite another way. Now all this conſidered, can the Governour of the World, the King of Saints, act any thing againſt his own affections? Yea, will he not make all things ſubſervient to them whom he loves?

* *Deut.* 1. 13.
* *Deut.* 32. 11.
* *Hoſea.* 14. 4. נדבה Sept. ὁμολόγως

2. *His Delight.* See what an inundation of ſweetning joy there was in him, for which he had not Terms of Expreſſion to ſuit the narrow apprehenſions of Men; *Zeph.* 3. 17. *The Lord thy God in the midſt of thee is mighty, he will ſave, he will rejoyce over thee with joy, he will reſt in his love, he will joy over thee with ſinging.* He ſeems in his expreſſion to know no meaſure of his delight in the Church, and no end of it; *I will rejoyce over thee with joy.* Joy ſparkles up freſh after joy: 'Tis his *reſt* where his Soul and all that is within him centers it ſelf with infinite contentment. *Joy over thee with ſinging*; A Joy that bloſſoms into Triumph. Never had any ſuch charming tranſports in the Company of any he moſt affected, as God hath in his Church; he doth ſo delight in the Graces of his People, that he delights to mention them. He twice mentions *Enochs* walking with him *. And certainly God cannot but delight in it more than in the World, becauſe it is a fruit of greater pains than the creation of the World. The World was created in the ſpace of ſix daies by a Word; the Erecting a Church hath coſt God more Pains and Time. Before the Church of the *Jews* could be ſettled, he hath both a conteſt with the Peeviſhneſs of his People, and the Malice of their Enemies. And his own Son muſt bleed and dye, before the Church of the Gentiles could be fixed. Men delight in that which hath coſt them much Pains, and a great Price. God hath been at too much pains, and Chriſt at too great Price, to have ſmall delight in the Church; will he then let wild Beaſts break the Hedges, and tread down the fruit of it? ſhall not all things be ordered to the good of that which is the Object of his greateſt delight in the World?

* *Gen.* 9. 22., 24.

Seventhly. 7. *The preſence of God in his Church will make all Providences tend to the good of it.*

It would be an idle uſeleſs Preſence, if it were not operative for their good. *The Lord is there*, is the very name of the Goſpel-Church *; what would it ſignifie if it were a uſeleſs Preſence? Chriſt ſtands upon Mount *Sion*, his Throne is in the Church, when the great things in the World ſhall be acted for the Ruine of Antichriſt *. Gods Preſence in his Church, is the Glory and Defence of it; As the preſence of the King is the Glory of the Court. *Zach.* 2. 5. *For I, ſaith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midſt of her.* His preſence is a Covenant-preſence. *Iſa.* 41. 10. *Fear not, I am with thee; be not diſmayed, for I am thy God*: whence follows Strength, Help and Support; *I will ſtrengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee, with the right hand of my Righteouſneſs*: that is, with my righteous Power, with my power engaged to thee in a Righteous Covenant. His Preſence and Providence in the World, is in a way of Abſolute Dominion; but in his Church in a way of Federal Relation. He is the God *of Iſrael*, and God *to Iſrael*, or *for Iſrael* *; yea, and a God *in the midſt* of *Iſrael*. Every one of them ſufficient engagements to protect *Iſrael*, and provide for *Iſrael*, and govern every thing for *Iſraels* good. God is under an Oath to do good to *Iſrael*; will he violate his Oath? tear his Seal? break his Covenant, who never broke his League with any of his people yet?

* *Iſa.* 48. 35.
* *Revel.* 14. 1.
* 1 *Chro.* 17. 24.

Eighthly. 8. *The Prayers of the Church have a mighty force with God to this end.* God is entitled

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entitled a God hearing Prayer, and what prayers ſhould God hear, if not the prayers of his Church, which aim at Gods Glory in their own good? Though the prayers of the Church may in ſome particulars fail, yet in general they do not; becauſe they ſubmit their deſires to the Will of God, which always works what is beſt for them.

When God would do any mighty work in the World, he ſtirs up his people to pray for it; and their prayers by his own appointment have a mighty influence upon the Government of the World: For when they come before him in behalf of the Church in general, he doth indulge them a greater liberty and boldneſs, and as it were a kind of Authority over him, than upon other occaſions of their own: *Iſa.* 45. 11. *Thus ſaith the Lord, the holy one of Iſrael, and his maker, Ask of me things to come, concerning my ſons, and concerning the work of mine hands command you me.* God would be more poſitively, confidently and familiarly dealt with, about the concerns of his Sons, though they were things to come to paſs in after Ages. And indeed the prayers of the Church have a powerful and inviſible Efficary on the great actions and overturnings which are in the World. The Being of the World is maintained by them from ſinking, according to the *Jews* ſaying, *ſine ſtationibus non ſubſiſteret mundus*; (ſtanding in prayer was their uſual prayer-geſture) And that they have actually ſuch a force is evident, *Rev.* 8. 3, 4. An Angel hath a golden Cenſer with Incenſe, to offer it with the prayers of the Saints, upon the Altar which was before the Throne. And *ver.* 5. the Cenſer wherein their prayers were offered, was filled with the fire of the Altar, and caſt into the Earth; and there were Voices, Thundrings, Lightnings, and Earthquakes. When the prayers of the Saints were offered to God, and aſcended up before him, that is (were very pleaſing to him:) The iſſue is, the Angel fills the Cenſer with fire of the Altar, and thereby cauſes great commotions and alterations in the world; ſignifying that the great changes of the World are an anſwer unto thoſe prayers which are offered unto God; for fire is taken from that altar upon which they were offered, and flung into the world. And it muſt needs be that the prayers of the Church ſhould have an influence on the government of the World.

1. *Becauſe God hath a mighty delight in the prayers of his people. The prayer of the upright is his delight*, and he loves to hear the Churches voice, *Cant.* 2. 14. *O my dove, let me hear thy voice, for ſweet is thy voice*, [Chaldee] thy voice is ſweet in prayer. In the times of the Goſpel God promiſes that the offerings of *Judah* and *Jeruſalem* ſhould be *pleaſant* to him, *Mal.* 3. 4. When Chriſt ſhall ſit as a refiner, *v.* 3. what is the iſſue of thoſe prayers? *v.* 5. *I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a ſwift witneſs againſt the ſorcerers*, &c. Prayer awakes Providence to judge the Enemies of the Church: A Parent delights, not in the bare crying, or the voice of his child ſimply conſidered in it ſelf, but in the ſignifications and effects of it. He delights in the matter of their prayers, it being ſo agreable to his own heart and will; and in the ſence they have of the ſufferings of the whole body.

2. *Becauſe Prayer is nothing elſe but a pleading of Gods promiſes.* Unto this they are directed by that Spirit which knows the mind of God, and marſhals their petitions according to his will. Now as God turns his own decrees and purpoſes concerning his Church into promiſes to them, ſo the Church turns thoſe promiſes into Prayers for them: So that promiſes being for the good of the Church, and there being an exact harmony between thoſe promiſes and the Churches prayers, all thoſe Providences which are the iſſue of thoſe promiſes, and the anſwer of the Churches prayers, muſt needs be for the Churches good.

3. *Becauſe there are united ſupplications and pleadings both in Heaven and Earth*; all the hands of the whole Family in Heaven and Earth are concerned in their petitions.

1. *Chriſt intercedes for the Church*, who alwaies deſires mercy and deliverance for them in the appointed time, *Zech.* 1. 12. *How long wilt thou not have mercy on Jeruſalem?* and the iſſue is alwaies gracious: For, *v.* 13. God *anſwers* him with *good and comfortable words*; and thereupon *Carpenters* are raiſed to cut off the *horns which had ſcattered Judah*, v. 20.

2. *Angels in all probability plead for the Church*, as we have already heard: 'Tis likely they offer and preſent that to God which makes for his glory, and that is the good of the Church. Angels ſurely deſire that which their Head doth, which is * deſcribed as one of their own Order, and called an Angel. Do they rejoyce at the repentance of a ſinner, and do they not likewiſe triumph at the happineſs of the Church, which is part of that Family they are of? And we know, that the greatneſs of our joy is ſuted to the mercies of our deſires; where our joy is moſt triumphant, it implies that our deſires before were moſt vehement.

* *Zech.* 1. 12.

3. *Glorifyed Saints are not ſurely behind.* The rich man in the Parable deſired his Friend on Earth might not come into that place of torment *. If there be ſo much charity in Hell, can there be leſs in Heaven? If he deſired it, that by the preſence of his companions in ſin, his own torments might not be increaſed; Do not the Saints in Heaven deſire the preſence of the whole Church, that their happineſs in that of the whole body may be compleated? If the Head Chriſt be not compleat without the body, the members of the body cannot be compleat without one another. The Souls of them that were ſlain for the word of God, cry under the Altar for vengeance on them that dwell on the Earth, as *Revel.* 6. 9, and 10 *How long, O Lord holy and true, doſt thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the Earth?* Will not their kindneſs to their fellow-members, be as ſtrong as their juſtice? And their love for the good of their friends draw out their prayers as well as their deſire of vengeance on their Enemies? Why may they not as well pray for us, as we praiſe God for them? Had they not ſome likeneſs to their great Maſter whilſt they were on Earth, and ſhall they not be more like to him now they are in Heaven, and behold his face, and feel all the ſtirrings of his heart? And if they have no ſence at all of the Churches ſufferings, how ſhall they be like to him who hath? As their bodies ſhall be like the glorious body of Chriſt at the reſurrection, are not their Souls now like his glorious Soul, merciful, and compaſſionate, and ſympathizing in all the afflictons of the Church? and can this be without ſome breathings for a full compleating of the Churches freedom? are ſuch deſires and pleas any hinderance to their preſent happineſs? 'Tis ſo far from that, that it doth rather further their glory, which cannot be compleat, as the glory of Chriſt, as head, is not mounted to the higheſt pitch of glory, till his myſtical body be all gathered in and lodged with him. If it be thus, will God do any thing prejudicial to the Church, and contrary to the combin'd deſires of all thoſe that are ſo near him? If God doth ſometimes ſtir up himſelf upon the ſupplication of one man, and grant an order upon his petition according to his mind; and if the prayers of one faithful *Moſes*, or *Elias*, or *Samuel* have ſuch a kind of Almighty power in them, much more is the joynt force of ſo many prayers twiſted together.

* *Luk.* 16. 28.

Uſe. *Uſe.* 1. *For information.* Is it ſo that all Providence is for the good of the Church? Then,

1. *God will alwaies have a Church in the world, he will have ſome to ſerve him.* The whole courſe of his Providence being deſigned for it; As long as the world, which is the object of his Providence, doth endure, he will have a Church. God would otherwiſe loſe the end of the motion of his eyes *, the operation of his providence, ſince it is to ſhew himſelf ſtrong for the Church and every member of it. As long as the candle and light of the Goſpel burns and ſhines, God will have a candleſtick to ſet the candle in *. His great deſign in making a World, was not to have Sun, Moon and Stars, but a Church, a company of men that might bear his mark, and honour him, to whom he might

The Text.

* *Chamier. des grais verit. liv. 3. Chap. 1. p. 16.*

might ſpeak, and extend his grace abroad, which he was ſo full of within. As a Limner, who would draw an exellent draught, draws his deſign in the midſt of the cloth, and fills the void places with clouds, and landskips, and other fancies at his pleaſure, which communicate ſome beauty and luſtre to the work: But that was not the principal deſign of the Workman. That Redeemer which bears the Church upon his heart, will create a ſtability for it; 'tis a part of his Prieſtly Office to have a care of the Lamps: 'Tis one of his Titles to be he that walks in the midſt of the Seven Golden Candleſticks *. Prieſts under the Law were to look to the great Candleſtick in the Temple, ſupply the Lamps with Oyl, and make them clean *. The Church indeed may be eclips'd, but not extinguiſhed; if it be not conſpicuous on the mountain, yet it ſhall be hid in the Wilderneſs. There ſhall be ſprinklings of profeſſors among all people. God will leaven the places where they are, into Chriſtianity, and cauſe them to fructify and grow up in purity and glory: *And the remnant of Jacob ſhall be in the midſt of many people, as a dew from the Lord, as the ſhowers upon the graſs, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the ſons of men. It tarries not for man.* It attends not the power of man, the precepts of man, or inventions of man; but whoſe deſcent is from Heaven, and is carried on not by humane power, but by the divine Spirit and Providence: It ſhall be firmer than all worldly power, and the ſtrongeſt Kings, *Iſa.* 2. 2. *And the mountain of the Lords houſe ſhall be eſtabliſhed upon the top of the mountains, and ſhall be exalted above the hills.* Above Mountains and Hills, to which ſometimes the powers of the World are compared, *Zach.* 4. 7. That Providence which gave the Church at firſt a footing in the World upon a weak foundation to outward appearance, in ſpight of Men and Devils will preſerve it, and not ſuffer it to be blown up, he will ſhadow the Church with his wings in a perpetual ſucceſſion of the choiceſt mercies.

* *Revel.* 2. 1.
* *Levit.* 24. 3, 4. *Chap.* 27. 20. *Chap.* 30. 8.
* *Mich.* 5. 7.
Zach. 4. 7.

2. *God will in the greateſt exigences, find out means for the protection of his Church.* This will be till his Providence be at an end. When God hath removed one inſtrument of his Churches protection, he hath his choice of others, whom he can raiſe and ſpirit for his work. When thoſe upon whom the Churches hopes hang, are taken off, he can raiſe things that are unlikely, to ſupply the place. As the Luteniſt accidentally had a Graſshopper leapt upon his inſtrument, to ſupply by its noiſe the place of a ſtring which had newly crackt, whereby his Muſick was continued without interruption. God can Spirit men againſt their own natural fears. It was very improbable, that *Nicodemus*, one of a fearful diſpoſition, who came to our Saviour by night for fear of the *Jews*, ſhould have the courage to aſſert his cauſe in the face of a whole Councel of Phariſees, contriving his death, and at preſent blunt the edge of their malice, though we read of none at that time in the counſel to ſecond him *: The holy Ghoſt takes particular notice that it was he that came to Jeſus by night.

* *Joh.* 7. 50, 51.

Joſeph of *Arimathea*, whoſe name we meet not with in the Catalogue of any of our Diſciples, till the time of his death, and then he appears boldly to beg the body of Jeſus of *Pilate*. God will never want inſtruments for the preſerving that Church, which he owns as his. 'Tis obſerved by ſome, that God ſo ordered it, that the ſame day that *Pelagius*, the great poyſoner of the Chriſtian Doctrine was born in *Brittain*, *Auſtin* the moſt famous defender of the truth was born in *Africk*; That the horn, which puſhed the truth, ſhould no ſooner appear, but the Carpenter to cut it off, ſhould be provided too. As it is obſerved where poyſons grow, Antidotes grow near them by the indulgent proviſion of the God of Nature

As there is the Wiſdom of the Serpent againſt the Church, ſo there is the Wiſdom of God for it. Gods Goodneſs upon his Church in former Ages is not all laid out: He hath his Stores ſtill, neither is his Wiſdom non-pluſt, nor his Power weakned; neither is he, nor can he be weary of his care.

3. *The Church ſhall in the end prove Victorious againſt all its adverſaries*, or Providence muſt miſs of its Aim. The Church is compared to an Olive Tree, *Hoſ.* 14. 6. in reſpect of Beauty, *his Beauty ſhall be as the Olive Tree.* It is ſo alſo in reſpect of Victory. Olive Branches were uſed in Triumph. God is on the Churches ſide, and he is ſtronger than the ſtrongeſt and wiſer than the wiſeſt, and higher than the higheſt. Jeſus Chriſt is the Churches Head and General: Chriſt the Head watcheth for the good of the Church, the Body. He muſt be deſtroyed before the Church can. There is a mighty Arm, which though it may for a time ſeem withered, will in the end be ſtretched out, and get it ſelf the Victory. Whilſt Chriſt is in the Ship, it may be toſſed, but it ſhall not be ſunk. It may be beaten down, but like a Ball to rebound the higher. The young Tree that is ſhaken by the wind, may loſe ſome leaves, and ſome fruit too, but the root gets greater ſtrength and ſtrikes it ſelf deeper into the Earth, and makes the Branches more capable of a rich return of Fruit the following year. The Churches Stature is compared to a Palm Tree * which cannot be depreſt by the weights which hang upon it, but riſeth the higher. God uſes the ſame method in the Churches, as in Chriſts advancement. Our Saviours Death was neceſſary to his Glory *, And the Churches affliction ſometimes to its exaltation. A Nation may loſe ſome Battels, and yet be Victorious: The Church may have many a croſs, but in the end will ſurmount all difficulties. Though Judgments and Apoſtacies may be great in a Nation, yet God will have a care of his own Plants *. *There ſhall be a tenth; It ſhall return, the Holy Seed ſhall be the ſubſtance thereof*: As a Tree in Winter which ſeems dead, but its juyce ſhall revive into rich and generous Bloſſoms. The Ark ſhall float above the waters. *Babylon* ſhall fall, the Lamb ſhall ſtand upon Mount *Sion.* Men may as well ſtop the riſing of the Sun in its mounting to the *Meridian*, Bridle in the Tyde of the Ocean, as hinder the Current of an Almighty Providence.

* Cant. 7. 7.

* Luk. 24. 26.

* Iſa. 4. 12, 13.

4. *The intereſt of Nations is to bear a reſpect to the Church, and countenance the Worſhip of God in it.* This is to concur with Gods main end, and imitate him in his Providential Adminiſtrations. Gods People, (whatever their Enemies ſuggeſt to the contrary) are a Bleſſing in the midſt of a Land *; their intereſt is greater than the intereſt of all the World beſides; though they be but a handful, their fruit ſhall ſhake like *Lebanon* *. The neglect of Religion is the Ruine of Nations. 'Tis obſerved that *Cyrus* was ſlain in the War in *Scithia*, a little after he neglected the building of the Temple of *Hieruſalem* which he had begun. Thoſe *Perſian* Kings Reigned the longeſt, that favoured the *Jews* in that and their other juſt requeſts. God honoured or Diſgraced them as they were kind or cruel to his People. And when any act for the good of his People, they ſhall not be without their Reward. When *Cyrus* ſhould let the *Jewiſh* Captives go free without Ranſom, he ſhould be no loſer by it. God would give him the labour of *Egypt*, the Merchandize of *Ethiopia*, and the ſtrength of the *Sabeans* into his hand for the price of his Peoples Delivery *. Thoſe Nations which ſhould favour them in the times of their Perſecutions and Flights, and give them ſhelter in their Countreys, ſhould thrive and proſper by the bleſſing of God upon them. If *Moab* give entertainment to the flying *Iſraelites* in the time of the Invaſion of *Salmanaſſer*; God will preſerve their Land that the Spoyler ſhall not enter into the Confines of it, and they ſhall have Kings and Judges under the Protection of the Houſe of *David*; *i. e.* under the Kings of *Iſrael* (as ſome underſtand it *) Saints are the Guardians of the places where they live, their Prayers have a greater influence than the wiſeſt Counſels, or the mightieſt Force *. *And* Eliſha *cried, my Father, my Father, the Chariot of* Iſrael, *and the Hroſmen thereof. The Chaldee* paraphraſeth thus. Thou art better to *Iſrael* by thy Prayers than Chariots and Horſmen. This is the Elogy of one ſingle Prophet, what influence then hath the whole Church of God in a place? The whole World is the better for the Church of God. The *Chaldee* Paraphraſe hath a notion upon that, *Pſalm.* 22. 3. *But thou art holy, oh thou that inhabiteſt the Praiſes of Iſrael:* Thou that eſtabliſheſt the World for the Praiſes of *Iſrael.* God hath nothing to do in the World but the ſaving his People: When that is once done, he will put an end to this Frame of things: When he hath

* Iſa. 19. 24.

* Pſal. 72. 16.

Broughton on Dan. 10. 10.

* Iſa. 45. 13, 14

* Iſa. 16, 4, 5.

2 King. 2. 12.

hath gathered his Wheat into his Garner, he will burn up the Chaff. His People are the Spirit and Quinteſſence of the World: When this is extracted, the reſt are flung upon the Dunghill, as a *Caput Mortuum.*

5. We may ſee hence the *ground of moſt of the Judgments in the World.* Men by their rage againſt the Church, will not acknowledg God's Government of the World for the Churches good: Therefore the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 59. 13. *Conſume them in wrath, conſume them that they may not be, and let them know that God rules in* Jacob *unto the ends of the earth.* The Church is the Seat of his Government, and from thence he extends it to the uttermoſt parts of the Earth. In *Jacob* he rules, and for the ſake of *Jacob* he orders his Government to the ends of the Earth: The not acknowledging this, brings wrathful Conſumptions upon men: And it is alſo the end of his Judgments, to make men know it. 'Tis likely enough the four Kings * might have gone clear away with all their Booty, had not they laid their fingers upon *Lot*: But when they would pack him up among the reſt, they did but ſollicite their own Ruine, and arm the Almighty God againſt them. God did not think any of the People worth the mention, *verſe* 11. only *Lot* a righteous perſon, *verſe* 12. he is named as having Gods eye only upon him. And when *Abraham* returns from the Victory, *v.* 16. the reſt of the delivered Captives are mentioned in the bulk, *Lot* only in particular, as though all that had been done, had been done by God only for *Lots* ſake. They might have preſerved the whole Prey to themſelves, had it not been for this Jewel too precious in Gods accompt for their Cuſtody. And the fearful Curſe that God pronounced againſt the *Ammonite* and *Moabite*, that they ſhould not come into the Congregation for ten Generations, though any of them turned Proſelytes, was becauſe they came not out with ſo much as Bread and Water to meet the *Iſraelites*, and becauſe they hired *Balaam* to Curſe them. The utter waſting of Nations and Kingdoms, is becauſe they will not ſerve the intereſt of God in his People. *Iſa.* 60. 12. *For the Nation and Kingdom that will not ſerve thee, ſhall periſh; yea thoſe Nations ſhall be utterly waſted*: God will bring an utter Conſumption upon thoſe people that refuſe to love them, much more upon thoſe that hate them.

* Gen. 14. 9

Deut. 23. 3, 4.

6. *What eſteem then ſhould there be of the Godly in the World?* The Providence of God, being chiefly for the good of his people, cannot well fall upon them, but ſome drops will fall upon thoſe involved with them in a common intereſt. When the Corn and Wine, and Oyl hear *Jezreel* (the Seed of God) and the Earth hears the Corn, and the Heavens hear the Earth, and God hears the Heavens *: When their ſupplications come up to the great Superintendent of the World, many of the Wicked will fare the better for that Providence which is given only in anſwer to *Jezreels* Prayer: God cauſes his Son to ſhine upon the unjuſt, upon them, not for their ſakes. When *Nebuchannezzar* iſſued out that unjuſt order for the ſlaying the *Chaldeans* for not performing an impoſſible command in telling him the Dream he had forgoten, *Daniel* was ſought out to undergo the ſame fate: Yet by his Wiſdom God bends the heart of *Arioch* the Executioner of this Decree, to ſtay his hand. *Daniel* goes to the King, God ſtayes *Nebuchnezzars* Fury, and moves his heart to give them time. The Providence is chiefly intended for the preſervation of *Daniel* and his Godly Companions, but the reſt of the wiſe men have the benefit of it. As the water with which a man waters his choiceſt Plants and Flowers in his Garden is intended only for them, yet ſome falling off from thoſe Flowers, refreſheth the Weeds that grow under them. If God had not had ſuch flowers as *Daniel* and his Companions, the Weeds in *Chaldea* had been plucked up. Yet the ungrateful World takes no notice of the benefits they receive from this Salt of the Earth, which preſerves them, and to whom they are all ſo much beholding. *Lot* had been the occaſion of reſtoring *Zoar* from Captivity, as I mentioned before, for the inhabitants of that City were engaged with thoſe of *Sodom* in the Fight againſt the four Kings; *And the King of* Bela, *the ſame is* Zoar. And perhaps were carried Captives with the reſt of their Neighbours: And it had been ſaved from the Flames which fell upon *Sodom* meerly by *Lots* prayer, *Gen.* 19. 21. *See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing, that*

* Hoſ. 2. 21, 22.

* Dan. 2. 12

Gen. 14. 8.

I will not overthrow this City for the which thou haſt ſpoken; yet he found them a ſurly people, and was requited with a rude reception notwithſtanding his kindneſs, *verſe* 13. *He went up out of* Zoar, *for he feared to dwell in* Zoar: It was not likely he was ſo diſtruſtful of God, that he ſhould overthrow it, when he had abſolutely promiſed him the contrary: Therefore moſt likely for ſome churliſh threatnings from them. Nay, *Sodom* it ſelf was beholding to him for a ſmall reſpite of the Judgment intended againſt them. For God tells him he could do nothing till he were come thither *. And it was ſo, for *Lot* was entered into *Zoar* before a drop of Brimſtone and Fire was rained down upon *Sodom*.* *Then the Lord rained upon* Sodom; when? when *Lot* was entered into *Zoar*. This good the Wicked World get by Gods People, is ſo evident, that ſometimes wicked men cannot but take notice of it. *Laban*, a ſelfiſh Idolater, was ſenſible of it, *Gen.* 30. 27. *I have found by experience that the Lord hath bleſſed me for thy ſake.* It was a Leſſon ſo legible, that he might have learned it ſooner than in fourteen years. The Church is the chief object of preſervation, wicked men are preſerved for their ſakes; as Dung is preſerved, not for its own ſake, but for the manuring a fruitful field, and Thorns in the Hedge are preſerved for the Gardens ſake.

* Gen. 19.

* Ver. 23, 24.

7. *'Tis then a very fooliſh thing for any to contend againſt the welf are of Gods People.* 'Tis to ſtrive againſt an Almighty and unwearied Providence. Men may indeed ſometimes be ſuffered by God for holy ends to have their Wills, in ſome meaſure, upon the Church, but not altogether: They muſt firſt depoſe him from his Throne, blind his eyes, or hold his Arm. 'Tis as fooliſh as if a worm ſhould deſign to dig down a Mountain, or Chaff to Marſhal it ſelf in Battel Array againſt the Wind, or for a poor Flye to ſtop the motion of a Milſtone.

1. 'Tis fooliſh, *Becauſe it is exceeding ſinful.* What is done againſt the Church is rather done againſt God than againſt it. Since all her Conſtitution, Worſhip, Obſervances, are directed to God as their ultimate end; ſo that to endeavour to deſtroy the Church, is to deny God a Worſhip, deprive him of his Sanctuary, break open his Houſe, Raviſh his Spouſe, cut off Chriſt's Body, rob him of his Jewels, and will be ſo interpreted by God at the laſt, upon the ſcanning of things. If the Church be Gods houſe, the Enemies ſhall anſwer for every Invaſion, every forcible Entry, for the breaking down the Gates and Bars of it, God will ſue them at laſt for dilapidations.

2. *Very unſucceſsfull.* Shall God be afraid of the multitudes and power of Men? *No more than a lyon, or a young lyon roaring after his Prey, when a multitude of Sheperds are called forth againſt them, ſhall he be afraid of their voice, or abaſe himſelf for their noiſe* *. Noiſe and Clamor is all they can do, and that not long: The fierceneſs of the Lyon quickly ſcatters them. The Aſſociations, and mens girding themſelves againſt the Church, is but a preparation to their own Ruine, *Iſa.* 8. 9. *Aſſociate your ſelves together oh ye people, and ye ſhall be broken in pieces*, three times repeated. Your Counſels, ſaith he, ſhall not ſtand againſt that preſence of God that is with us, *For God is with us.*

* Iſa. 31. 4.

3. *It is very deſtructive too.* God will not alway be ſtill and refrain himſelf: he ſeems to do ſo for a while; but when he doth ariſe, he will deſtroy and devour at once *, he will make but one morſel of them. When God is angry with his people, and gives them into the hands of men to execute his Juſtice upon them, and puniſh them, he will even puniſh thoſe enemies for their Cruelty, and going beyond their Commiſſion, in ſatisfying their own immoderate Paſſions upon them. Upon this account God threatens *Babylon*, Iſa. 47. 6. *I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine Inheritance, and given them into thy hand, thou didſt ſhew them no mercy*; whereupon God threatens them afterwards, &c. ſo *Zach.* 1. 15. God was ſore diſpleaſed with the Heathen; for when he was but a little diſpleaſed with his people, they helped forward the affliction.

Iſa. 42. 14.

Uſe. 2. Is *for Comfort.*

If

If all the Providence of God be for the good the Church: If his eyes run to and fro to ſhew himſelf ſtrong for them, it affords matter of great comfort. His Providence is continual for them *, he hath ſeven pipes to convey kindneſs to them, as well as ſeven Lamps whereby to diſcern their ſtreights. His Providence is as vaſt as his Omniſcience: The number of Pipes belonging to the Candleſtick of the Church is exact according to the number of Lamps. The Churches miſery cannot be hid from Gods eye, let it be in what part of the Earth ſoever, for his eyes run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, and his ſight excites his ſtrength. Upon the ſight of their diſtreſſed condition, he watches only for the fitteſt opportunity to ſhew himſelf ſtrong for them. And when that opportunity comes, he is ſpeedy in the Deliverance of them, *Pſal.* 18. 10. *He rode upon a Cherub and did flye, yea, he did flye upon the wings of the wind.* He doth not only ride upon a Cherub, but flye. His wings are nothing but wind, which hath the quickeſt and ſtrongeſt motion, which moves the greateſt bodies, and turns down all before it. What is for the good of the whole, hath an influence upon every Member of the Body

* Zech. 4.2.

1. *'Tis comfort in Duties and ſpecial Services.* Nothing ſhall be wanting for encouragement to Duty, and ſucceſs in it, when God calls any to it, ſince all his Providence is for the good of the Church. Let there be but ſincerity on our parts, in our attempts of ſervice upon Gods call, and we need not fear a want of Providence on Gods part: God never calls any to ſerve his Church in any ſtation, but he doth both ſpirit and encourage them. God hath in his common Providence ſuited the nature of every Creature to that place in which he hath ſet it in the World; and will he not much more in his ſpecial Providence ſuit every one to that place he calls them to, for the ſervice of his Church! He did not forſake Chriſt in redeeming his Church, neither will he forſake any in aſſiſting his Church. When *Joſeph* of *Arimathea* would boldly demand the body of our Saviour, Providence made the way plain before him, he meets with no check, neither from *Pilate* nor the Prieſts *.

Mat. 27.58. Mark 15. 43.

2. *In meanneſs and lowneſs.* 'Tis one and the ſame God that rules the affairs of the whole World, of the Church and of every particular Member of it. As it is the ſame Soul that informs the whole Body, the meaneſt Member as well as that which is moſt excellent. Not the meaneſt ſincere Chriſtian but is under Gods eye for good. The Spirit acts and animates every Member in the Church, the weakeſt as well as the moſt towring Chriſtian. *Baruch* was but the Prophet *Jeremy*'s *Amanuenſis* or Scribe, and Servant to *Jeremy* (who was no great man in the World himſelf) yet God takes notice ſo of his Service, that he would particularly provide for him, and commands *Jeremy* in a way of Prophecy to tell him as much, *Jer.* 45. 5. *I will bring evil upon all fleſh, but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey, whitherſoever thou goeſt.*

3. *In the greateſt Judgments upon others.* In an Epidemical Judgment upon the whole Nation of the *Jews*, God would have a ſpecial care of *Baruch*. If he ſhould caſt his people far off among the Heathen, and ſcatter them among the Countries, yet even there he would be a little Sanctuary unto them. His own preſence ſhould ſupply the want of a Temple, ſo he is pleaſed to expreſs himſelf *. But how is it poſſible the great God can be but a little Sanctuary? His eye is upon them to ſee their danger, and his hand upon them to ſecure them from it. His promiſe ſhall ſhield them, and his Wings ſhall cover them*. While he hath indignation, he hath a ſecret Chamber for their ſecurity *. An Almighty ſhadow, under which they may abide *. In times of the moſt devouring danger, he hath a ſeal to ſet upon their foreheads as a mark of his ſpecial Protection. We never have ſo much experience of Gods care and ſtrength, as in times of Trouble, *Pſal.* 37. 39. *He is their Strength in time of Trouble* He is a friend who is as able as willing, and as willing as able to help them, whoſe watchfulneſs over them is as much above their apprehenſion as it is above their merits.

* Ezek. 11.16. * Pſal. 91. 4. * Iſa. 26. 20. * Pſal. 91.1.

4. *In*

4 *In the greateſt extremities wherein his people may be*, there are promiſes of comfort* Both in overflowing waters, and ſcorching fires, he will be with them His Providence ſhall attend his Promiſe, and his truth ſhall be their Shield and Buckler, *Pſal.* 91. 4. That ſurely is a ſufficient ſupport; Chriſt thought it ſo, when he only ſaid to his diſciples, *'tis I, be not afraid**. What though there be a Storm, a darkneſs and trouble, *'tis I am he.* The darkneſs of the night troubles not the Pilot whilſt he hath his Compaſs to ſteer by. If all his Providences be for the good of them that fear him, he can never want means to bring them out of trouble, becauſe he is always actually exerciſed in governing that which is for their good; and till he ſees it fit to deliver them, he will be with them. Great Mercies ſucceed the ſharpeſt Afflictions* When there ſhould be a voice of trembling, and men with their hands upon their Loins as women in Travel, and paleneſs in their faces, from the exceſs of their fears: In that day God would break the Yoak from them, and they ſhould ſerve the Lord their God, and *David* their King. Though the night be never ſo dark, yet it is certain the Sun will riſe and diſperſe its light next morning, and one time or other ſhew its ſelf in its brightneſs: We have no reaſon to deſpond in great extremities, ſince he can think us into ſafety, *Pſal.* 40. 17 *Lord think on me*; much more look us into it; his thoughts and his eyes move together.

* Iſa. 43. 2.

* Joh. 6. 17, 18.

* Jer. 30. 5, 6, 7. &c.

5. *In fear of wants.* The power of the Governour of the World cannot be doubted. His love, as little as it ſeems, ſince it hath moved him to prepare Heaven to entertain his people at the end of their Journey, it will not be wanting to provide accommodation for them upon the way, ſince all things both good and bad are at his beck, and under the government of his gracious Wiſdom. His eyes run to and fro through the whole Earth, not only to defend them in dangers, but ſupply them in wants: for his ſtrength is ſhewed both ways. Doth he providentially regard them that have no reſpect for him, and will he not employ his power for, and extend his care to them that adore and love him, and keep up his honour in the World? He will not ſurely be regardleſs of the afflictions of his Creatures. His people are not only his Creatures, but his new Creatures, their bodies are not only created by him, but redeemed by his Son. The purchaſe of the Redeemer is joyned to the Providence of the Creator. If he took care of you when he might have damned you for your Sins, will he not much more ſince you are Believers in Chriſt. And he cannot damn you Believing, unleſs he renounce his Sons Mediation and his own Promiſe. A natural man provides for his own, much more a Righteous man, *Prov.* 19. 22. *A good man leaves an Inheritance to his children*, much more the God of Righteouſneſs, a God who hath his eye always upon them. His eye will affect his heart, and his heart ſpirit the hand of his Power to relieve. He hath *prepared of his goodneſs for the poor.* Pſalm 68. 10.

6. *'Tis comfort in the low eſtate of the Church at any time.* Gods eye is upon his Church, even whilſt he ſeems to have forſaken them. If he ſeem to be departed, it is but in ſome other part of the Earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong for them; where ever his eye is fixed in any part of the World, his Church hath his heart, and his Churches relief is his end. Though the Church may ſometimes lye among the Pots, in a dirty condition, yet there is a time of Reſurrection when God will reſtore it to its true glory, and make it as white as a Dove with its Silver wings*: The Sun is not alway obſcured by a thick Cloud, but will be freed from the darkneſs of it. *God will judge his people, and repent himſelf concerning his Servants**: 'Tis a comfort to God to deliver his people, and he will do it in ſuch a Seaſon when it ſhall be moſt comfortable, to his Glory, and their Hearts. The very name *Hieruſalem*, ſome derive from *Jireh Salem, God will provide in Salem.* The new *Jeruſalem* is the title given to Gods Church, *Rev.* 1. and is ſtill the object of his Providence, and he will provide for it at a pinch, *Gen.* 22. 14. *Jehovah Jireh*, God will raiſe up the honour and beauty of his Church: Great men ſhall be ſervants to it, and employ their ſtrength for it when God ſhall have mercy on it*: Yea, the Learning and Knowledg of the World ſhall contribute to the building of it, v. 13. *The*

* Pſal. 68. 13.

* Pſal. 135. 14. נחם Comfort himſelf,

* Iſa. 60. 10, 11, 12.

glory

glory of Lebanon *ſhall come unto thee, the firr-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautifie the place of my ſanctuary. It ſhall be called the city of the Lord, the Sion of the holy one of* Iſrael, *that ſhe may know that the Lord is her Saviour, and her Redeemer, the mighty one of* Jacob. As Chriſt roſe in his Natural, ſo he will in his Spiritual Body. If Chriſt when dead could not be kept from Riſing, Chriſt now living ſhall not be hindered from raiſing and helping his Church. His own Glory is linked with his Peoples ſecurity; and though he may not be moved for any thing in them becauſe of their ſinfulneſs, he will for his own name, becauſe of its Excellency *. *Ezek.* 36. 22. *I do not this, for your ſakes, O houſe of Iſrael, but for my holy names ſake.* As ſorrows encreaſed upon the *Iſraelites*, the nearer their Deliverance approached. * Ezek. 36.

Becauſe this Method of God is the greateſt ſtartling even to good men, let us conſider this a little; that God doth, and why God doth leave his Church to extremities before he doth deliver it.

Take the reſolution of this in ſome propoſitions.

1. *'Tis indeed Gods uſual method to leave the Church to extremity before he doth command help.* You never heard of any eminent Deliverance of the Church but was uſhered in by ſome amazing diſtreſs. The *Iſraelites* were not ſaved till they were put in between Sea, Hills and Forts, that their Deſtruction was inevitable unleſs Heaven relieved them. *Pharaoh* reſolves to have his will, and God reſolves to have his; but he lets him come with his whole Force and open mouth at the *Iſraelites* backs, and then makes the Waters his Sepulcher. *Conſtantine* the man-child in the Revelation, was preceded by *Dioclesian* the ſharpeſt Perſecutor. When his People are at a loſs, 'tis his uſual time to do his greateſt works for them; God had promiſed Chriſt many ages, and yet no appearance of him; ſtill Promiſe after promiſe, and no performance, *Pſal.* 40. 8. It was then [*lo I come*] yet many hundred years rowl'd away, and no ſight of him yet. Captivity and Affliction, and no Redeemer; but when the World was over-run with Idolatry, the *Jews* oppreſſed by the *Romans*, the Scepter departed from *Judah*, *Herod* an *Edomite*, and ſtranger, King, and ſcarce any Faith left, then, then he comes. The World will be in much the like caſe at his next coming, *Luke* 18. 8. *When the Son of man comes, ſhall he find faith in the earth?* there ſhall be faintings, deſpondency, unbelief of his promiſe, as though he had caſt off all care of his Churches concerns. 'Tis not meant of a Juſtifying Faith, but a Faith in that particular promiſe of his coming. The Faith of the *Iſraelites* muſt needs begin to flag, when they ſaw their Males murdered by the *Egyptians*; could they believe the Propagation of the Seed of *Abraham*, when murder took off the Infants, and Labour and Age would in time, the old ones? Whilſt their Children were preſerved, the Promiſe might eaſily be believed. But conſider, this was but juſt before their deliverance; like a violent Criſis before Recovery. He doth then *judge his people, and repent himſelf for his ſervants, when he ſees their power is gone, and there is none ſhut up or left* *: He doth ſo for the wicked many times, when the affliction of Idolatrous *Iſrael* was bitter, when there was not any ſhut up, nor any left, nor any helper for *Iſrael*, then he ſaved them by the hand of *Jeroboam* the Son of *Joaſh* *. He doth ſo with private perſons; *Peter* might have been delivered by God's Power out of Priſon, when he was firſt ſent thither, but God thought it fitteſt for him to lie in Chains, and free him but the night before his intended Execution *. *Lot* had his goods rifled, and carried away Captive, before God ſtirred up *Abraham* to reſcue him. When the hand of the wicked lies heavieſt upon the heads of the Righteous, and wrings the moſt mournful ſighs from them; when they are needy, and the wicked ſecurely puffing at them, as though they had brought them to ſo low a condition as to blow them away with a blaſt, now ſaith God will I ariſe, *Pſal.* 12. 5. *For the oppreſſion of the poor, for the ſighing of the needy, now will I ariſe ſaith the Lord, I will ſet him at ſafety from him that puffeth at him.* Now, this is the time I watched for, as fitteſt for my own Glory and their ſafety. Then God diſappoints them, when they ſeem to have got to the Goal with the Ball at their foot. * Deut. 32. 36. *2 Kings 14. 26, 27. *Acts 12 6, 7.

Secondly. God hereby doth glorify himſelf. He then diſcovers that there is nothing too high for his power to check, nothing too ſubtil for his Wiſdom to diſappoint, nothing too low for his love to embrace. That is the ſeaſon wherein his Mercy will be moſt prized, his Power moſt admired, his Wiſdom moſt adored, and his Juſtice moſt cleared. God lets the concerns of his Church go backward, that he may bring them on with more Glory to himſelf, and ſatisfaction to his Creature. God will divide the benefit and the honour between himſelf and the Creature: He will have the whole Glory, and his creature ſhall have the ſenſible advantage. They ſhall enjoy *Salvation*, there is their benefit; but not by *ſword* or *bow*, but *by the Lord their God* *. Saved they ſhould be, but in ſuch a way wherein the honour of God might moſt appear without any mixture of the Creature.

* Hoſ. 1. 7.

1. *God glorifies his Power.* His eyes run to and fro to ſhew himſelf ſtrong. He will then pitch upon ſuch a ſeaſon, when his ſtrength may appear moſt illuſtrious, and none elſe have any pretence to claim an equal ſtrength with him. A time of extremity is the fitteſt opportunity for this. When his power cannot be clouded by any interpoſitions of the creature for challenging a ſhare in it. The greater the malice againſt the Church, the weaker the Churches ability to help it ſelf, the more glorious is the power of God magnified in deliverance; little dangers are not ſo ſuitable for the triumph of an Infinite ſtrength. As God let Chriſt lye three dayes in the Grave, that his Reſurrection might be known to be the fruit of a Divine power; for the ſame end he lets his myſtical Body lye in the ſame condition. Had God brought *Iſrael* out of *Egypt* in the time of the Kings that were friends to them from a kindly remembrance of *Joſeph*, there had been no character of a Divine Power, tho there had been of a Divine truth apparent in the caſe; but he ſet apart that time for their deliverance, when he was to conteſt with the mightieſt oppoſition from the whole Body of the *Egyptian* Nation, who had forgot *Joſeph* their great Benefactor. Had not the Diſciples been in a great Storm, ready to be caſt away, and Chriſt aſleep, till they were in extremity, they had not ſeen ſuch * viſible marks of the extenſiveneſs of their Maſters power. When the hearts of the ſtrong men fainted, when the *Aſſyrians* would not hear the Embaſſadors of Peace, when they had broke their former Covenant, reſolved to invade the Land; when their Calamity and deſpair had arreſted all their hopes, *now*, when all things are in ſuch a deplorable ſtate, *will I riſe ſaith the Lord, now will I be exalted; now will I lift up my ſelf.* God was not aſleep or unconcerned, but he ſate ſtill watching for ſuch a ſeaſon; Now, is three times repeated. The Pſalmiſt gives us a Record of this in his particular caſe. When the waters of his affliction were many, the Enemy ſtrong, and too ſtrong for him, their ſtrength edged with an intenſe hatred, then God appears to be his ſtay, and prevents them in the day of his Calamity, *Pſal.* 18. 16, 17, 18. God lets his Enemies be too ſtrong for him, that he might appear his only ſtay, without any mixture of *Davids* ſtrength in the caſe. When the *Jews* thruſt Chriſt out of *Nazareth*, led him to the Brow of the Hill, and were ready to caſt him down, then, and not till then, he frees himſelf out of their hands, and diſappoints the effects of their rage. As Chriſt dealt thus for himſelf, ſo he deals for his Church in all Ages.

* Iſa. 33. 7, 8, &c.

2. *God glorifies his Wiſdom. His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth to ſhew himſelf ſtrong*; 'tis not a bare ſtrength that God would ſhew, or ſuch a Power which we call in man a bruitiſh valour, without wit or skill; but to ſhew his ſtrength with his wiſdom, when all his other Attributes may be glorified with that of his Power. When all worldly helps are departed, we can as little aſcribe our ſecurity to our own wiſdom and induſtry, as to our own ſtrength and power. The Phyſitians skill is beſt evidenced in maſtering a deſperate Diſeaſe. He will bring the Counſels of the Heathen to nought *. He will let them counſel, he will let them deviſe and carry on their Counſels near to Execution, that he may ſhew, that as the ſtrength of Hell is no match for his Power, ſo the craft of Satan is no mate for his Wiſdom. But he raiſes the Trophies of his Wiſdom upon the ſubtil devices of his Enemies.

* Iſa. 33. 10.

3. *God*

3. *God glorifies his care and compassion* When his people are neareſt cruſhing, God is neareſt preſerving. Gods Mercy is greateſt when his Saints Miſery is deepeſt; when *Sion* is as an outcaſt, it ſhall be taken into Gods protection, *Jer.* 30. 16, 17. *I will heal thee of thy wounds, becauſe they called thee an Outcaſt, ſaying, this is* Sion *whom no man ſeeks after.* When none ſtood up to plead for her, when her Lovers, ſhe depended on, had forgotten and forſaken her, when they thought her caſt out of the care of any creature, the Creator would take her up. When the ruine was inevitable as to man, their preſervation was moſt regarded by God. Had God ſtopped *Pharaoh* at his firſt March, by raiſing ſome Mutiny in his Army, his mercy to his people, as well as his power againſt his Enemies, had not been ſo conſpicuous. The more deſperate things are, the fitter ſubject for the advancement of Gods kindneſs. Had God conducted the *Iſraelites* through a rich and fruitful Country, it would have obſcured the glory of his care of them, which was more ſignal in directing them through a Barren Deſert, crowded with fiery Serpents, without Bread to nouriſh them, or Water to cool them, wherein he manifeſted himſelf to be both their Caterer and Phyſitian. *Moſes* was never more peculiarly under Gods protection, no not when he had the whole Guard of *Iſrael* about him in the Wilderneſs, than when his Mother had expoſed him to the River forlorn, in a pitched Ark, and forſaken by his Siſter, who ſtood aloof off to ſee how providence would conduct him. When *Laban* was poſſeſſed with Fury againſt *Jacob*, God countermands it, and iſſues out his own order to him, how he ſhould behave himſelf towards his Son *. God times his kindneſs, ſo that it may appear to be nothing elſe but Grace, Grace with a Witneſs; that his people may be able to underſtand the very particularities of it, *Iſa.* 30.18. *therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you:* He leaves them therefore for a while to the will of their enemies, verſe 17. *At the rebuke of five ſhall you flee, till you be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an enſign upon a Hill:* Never is Salvation ſweeter, and Mercy better reliſht, than when it ſnatcheth us out of the teeth of danger. God would have his mercy valued, and 'tis fit it ſhould. And when is a Calm more grateful than after the bittereſt Storm, attended with the higheſt deſpair? Gods mercy in ſparing *Iſaac* after the knife was at his throat, was more welcome and more delicious both to Father and Son, than if God had revealed his intent to *Abraham* in the three days Journey to the Mount *Moriah*. But God ſuſpending his Soul in bitterneſs all that time, prepared his heart for the valuation of that mercy. When humane help forſaketh us, God moſt embraceth us, *Pſal.* 27. 10. *When my father and mother forſake me, then the Lord will take me up.*

* Gen. 31.24, 29.

4. *God glorifies his Righteouſneſs and Juſtice.* There is a meaſure of wickedneſs God ſtays for, which will be an object of his Juſtice without exception. When the meaſure of a peoples Covetouſneſs is come, then their end is come, and God will fill them with men as with Caterpillers, and they ſhall lift up a ſhout againſt them *. Hereby God clears the Juſtice of his proceedings, that he exerciſed Patience ſo long; that things were come to that paſs, that either his People or his Enemies muſt be deſtroyed. As the caſe was with the *Iſraelites*, had not God marvellouſly appeared, every man of them had been cut off or reduced to Slavery. The Dye was caſt, either the *Egyptians* or *Iſraelites* muſt be defeated: either God muſt appear for his Church, or none would be left in the world to profeſs him. In ſuch a caſe the Juſtice of God is more unexceptionable. No man has any ſemblance for complaining of him; For he ſtruck not till the ſafety of his Adverſaries was inconſiſtent with his own Honor and Intereſt of the World. When men come to ſuch a height, as to ſlight and reſolve to break the laws of God, then is the time for the Honor of his Righteouſneſs in his own inſtitutions, to vex them in his ſore diſpleaſure, *Pſal.* 2. 3, 5. *Then ſhall he ſpeak to them in his wrath, and vex them, &c. When?* When they reſolve to *caſt away his bands and cords from them, ver.* 2. He is forced to raiſe them, when men make void his Law, and tread down the Honor of it; when they would not have God to have a ſtanding Law in the World, or a people to profeſs him, *Pſal.* 119. 126. *'Tis time for the Lord to work, for they have made void thy Law.* *riſe then*

* Jer. 51. 13, 14.

When the Grapes of Wickedness are thus fully ripe, then is Gods time for the
Rev.14.19,20. honour of his Justice to cast them into the Wine-press of his Wrath *. This is Gods set time when he may glorify, without any exception, his Justice in punishing his enemies sins, his Wisdom in defeating his enemies Plots, his Power in destroying his enemies strength, and his Mercy in relieving his Peoples wants.

Thirdly, Such extremities, and deliverance in them, are most advantageous for his people.

1. *It being a season to improve and know their interest.* Men do not usually seek to God, or at least so earnestly, as when they are in distress; the time of the tempest was the time of the Disciples praying to Christ: The *Israelites*, you scarce find them calling upon God but in times of danger and distress: hereby God doth incourage and give an argument for Prayer. The Psalmist useth the extremity of the Church often as an Argument to move God to pity, *Psal.* 123. 3. *Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.* We are glutted with contempt, as low as low can be, so *Psal.* 44. 23, 24. *Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord, arise, cast us not off for ever, our soul is bowed to the dust.* That is the most successful time for Prayer which is the time of the stirring of Gods Bowels. He hath been a *strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall* *. They in such a time find how considerable their interest is
* Isa. 25. 1. with God, when upon their Prayer they shall find relief suitable to every kind of danger they are in: The Spirit of Prayer upon the Church is but the Presage of their Adversaries ruin. When God seeks to destroy the Nations that come against *Hierusalem*, he will pour upon the Inhabitants of it, a spirit of Grace and of Supplication, *Zech.* 12. 9. *and in that day I will seek to destroy all the Nations that come against Jerusalem, and I will pour upon the house of* David *and the Inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and of supplication.* This time of extremity, when all their hands fail, should edge the Churches Prayers. Our great Intercessor seems in this case to set us a pattern, *Zech.* 1. 12. *O Lord of Hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy upon Jerusalem?* [אתה single by it self, not in an affix.] When all the Earth sits still and is at rest, unconcerned in the affairs of thy Church, if thou wilt not have mercy on them in this strait, who shall relieve them? none else have any mind to it; then issue out comfortable words to the Angel from the mouth of God. This is an advantage of extremity, it sets Christ a pleading, and the Church on praying.

2. *As a season for acting Faith at present, and an encouragement of relyance upon him in future streights.* As a season for acting Faith at present. Our Saviour lets *Lazarus* dye and stink in the Grave, before he raised him, that he migh both confirm Faith in his Disciples hearts, and settle it in the hearts of
* John 11.15. some of the *Jews* *. *I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent*
45. *that ye may believe.* What, let *Lazarus* die, one that he loved, one so strongly pleaded for by two Sisters that he loved too, and sollicited upon his friendship to relieve him? *v.* 3. *Behold he whom thou lovest is sick*; and our Saviour glad he was not there to prevent it? yes, not glad of *Lazarus* his extremity, nor of the Churches; But of the opportunity to give them greater ground of Faith and encouragement to trust him: The Churches Faith is Gods Glory: He that hath many things to trust to, is in suspence which he should take hold of: But when there is but one left, with what greediness will he clasp about that! God cuts down worldly props, that we might make him our stay. How will the Church in extremity recollect all the deliverances of it in former ages, and put them up in pleas to God, for a renewal of his wonted kindness, and new successions of deliverance, whereby God gets the glory of his former work, and his Church the present comfort in renewing fiducial acts upon him? How doth *Jehosaphat* put God in mind of his gracious assistance acted some ages before, when he was in a streight, by the Invasion of a powerful Army, 2 *Chron.* 20. 7. *Art not thou our God that didst drive out the Inhabitants of this*

Land

Land before thy people Iſrael? *v.* 12. *We know not what to do, but our eyes are upon thee*: Never are the Churches eyes ſo fixed upon God; never Gods eyes ſo fixed upon the Church, as in times of their diſtreſs. Then there is a ſweet Communion with, and recounting of all their former friendſhips: The Church then throws it ſelf wholly upon God: Its proſperity is but like a troubled Sea, its diſtreſs is the time of its reſt. So *Aſa*, when aſſaulted by a million of men under *Zerah* the *Ethiopian*, how doth he throw himſelf and the whole weight of his concerns upon the hands of God, and makes his Cauſe Gods? 2 *Chron.* 14. 11. *Help us, O Lord our God, for we reſt on thee, oh Lord, thou art our God, let not man prevail againſt thee.* And there is an encouragement alſo in the deliverance for future Faith. It gives a ground for future Faith from the riches of the preſent experience; in ſuch diſtreſſes there is the higheſt experience of God, and hope is the fruit of experience; How apt are we to believe God in other ſtraits, when we have had aſſiſtance (like they that dream'd) come unexpectedly upon us. God overthrew *Pharaho's* Hoſt in the Red Sea, when they were upon the heels of the affrighted *Iſraelites* and ready to cruſh them, but God gave them *to be meat to the people inhabiting the Wilderneſs* *, as a ſtanding excellent diſh to feed their hopes for all future deliverances upon their truſt in God. And indeed that deliverance was an earneſt of their perpetual ſecurity, by ſpecial Providence in any ſucceeding trouble. And God often gives them a particular charge to remember that deliverance, with a practical remembrance, to ſtill their Fear, and ſupport their Faith, *Deut.* 7. 18. *Thou ſhalt not be afraid of them, but ſhalt well remember what the Lord thy God did unto* Pharaoh, *and to all the* Egyptians. He would have them remember it as a Covenant-mercy, *what the Lord thy God did*, thy God in Covenant, not what the Lord did barely by an arm of Power, but what he did by a vaſtneſs of affection, and as a God of truth and firmneſs in his Covenant.

* *Pſal.* 74. 14.

3. *In fitting them by the extremity for a holy reception of the mercy intended.*

God keeps up the diſtreſs of his Church to expel ſelf-confidence. Truſt in earthly things are the great checks of Gods Kindneſs. We hardly forſake this temper till we are forſaken by all thoſe things we confide in. Times of extremity make us more humble; and humility, like the Plow, fits us for the ſeed of mercy. The Gardners digging up the clods is but to prepare the earth for the receiving and nouriſhing ſome excellent Plants he intends to put into its Womb. There is a certain ſet time for Gods great actions. He lets the powers of darkneſs have their hour, and God will take his hour, *Pſal.* 102. 13. *Thou ſhalt ariſe and have mercy upon* Sion, *for the time to favour her, yea the ſet time is come.* He hath a ſet time for the diſcovery of his mercy, and he will not ſtay a jot beyond it. What is this time? *v.* 9, *&c.* When they *eat aſhes like bread, and mingle their drink with weeping.* When they are moſt humble, and when the ſervants of God have more affection to the Church. When their humble and ardent affections are ſtrong, even to the ruine and rubbiſh of it; when they have a mighty deſire and longing for the reparation of it, as the *Jews* in Captivity had for the very duſt of the Temple, *v.* 14. *For thy ſervants take pleaſure in her ſtones, and favour the duſt thereof.* For, there notes it to be a reaſon why the ſet-time was judged by them to be come. Thtis Gods ſet time when the Church is moſt believing, moſt humble, moſt affectionate to Gods intereſt in it, and moſt ſincere. Without Faith we are not fit to deſire mercy; without humility we are not fit to receive it, without affection we are not fit to value it, without ſincerity we are not fit to emprove it. Times of extremity contribute to the growth and exerciſe of thoſe qualifications.

4. *In ſecuring them againſt future ſtreights.* For Gods diſappointing Enemies when they think themſelves ſure of all, is the higheſt diſcouragement to them, and thoſe of the like temper, to renew the like attempts; but if they do, it is an evidence they ſhall meet with the like ſucceſs; 'Tis the higheſt vexation to ſee their projects diverted, when they have lighted their match, and are ready to give fire. Men may better take notice how God loves his people when,

when he apprehends their adverſaries in the very Pinnacle of their Pride, and flings them down from the Mount of their hopes. It doth not only daſh the preſent deſigns, but diſhearten future attempts. The *Egyptians* after their overthrow at the Red Sea, never attempted to diſturb them in their journey in the Wilderneſs. It was a Bridle to all their enemies, except *Amalek*, upon whoſe Country they travelled in the Wilderneſs, when it was the intereſt of State in all thoſe Nations to rout that ſwarm of People that muſt have ſome Seat to dwell in; and every Nation might juſtly fear to be diſpoſſeſſed by them; yet we read of no League among thoſe Nations bordering upon the Wilderneſs, ſuch a terror did God ſtrike into them by that relief he gave his People in their extremity at the Red Sea; whereby he provided for their future ſecurity in their whole Journey. It was this melted the hearts of the *Gibeonites*, one of the Nations of *Canaan*, and brought them to a ſubmiſſion to *Joſhua*, as the ſentiment of all their Neighbours, *Joſh.* 9. 9. *We are come becauſe of the name of the Lord thy God, for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt.* And for this and other reaſons it may be, that the times before the Churches laſt deliverance ſhall be ſharper than any before; which our Saviour intimates, *Mat.* 24. 21. *For then there ſhall be great tribulation, ſuch as was not ſince the beginning of the world, no nor ever ſhall be.* In Diſcourſing his Diſciples of the troubles at the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which was a type of the trouble preceding the end of the World, he adds a diſcourſe of what ſhall be at the end of the World, in the laſt attempt of the enemies of the Church; for *ver.* 29. he ſaith, *immediately after the tribulation of thoſe days*, he ſpeaks of his coming in the Clouds of Heaven with great power and glory. And alſo in the Revelation, *Rev.* 16. 18. *And there was a great earthquake; ſuch as was not ſince men were upon the earth, ſo mighty an earthquake, and ſo great.* Thisperhaps at the pouring out of the ſeventh Vial, may concern the Chriſtian Church as well as the Antichriſtian Party. But the reaſon why it may be ſharper juſt before that laſt deliverance, than it was in former ages, may be becauſeit is the laſt effort the enemy ſhall make; the laſt demonſtration of Gods power and wiſdom for, and care of his Church, and of Juſtice upon his enemies in ſuch caſes. The laſt ſeaſon for their multiplying their cries, and acting their Faith for ſuch a concern.

3. *Uſe* of *Exhortation.*

If it be ſo, that the Providence of God is chiefly deſigned for the good of the Church:

Firſt, Fear not the enemies of the Church. 'Tis a wrong to God. Fear of Man is always attended with a forgetfulneſs of God, *Iſa.* 51. 12, 13. *I, even I am he that comforteth you, who art thou that art affraid of a man that ſhall dye, and of the ſon of man that ſhall be made as graſs, and forgetteſt the Lord thy maker, who hath ſtretched forth the Heavens, &c?* 'Tis to value the power of graſs above the power of the Creator, as though that had more ability to hurt, than God to help. As if men were as ſtrong as Mountains, and God as weak as a Bulruſh. 'Tis a wrong to his truth; hath he not *comforted* you in his Promiſe? What Creature ſhould then deject you? 'Tis a wrong to his Mercy; Is he not the Lord thy maker? *Calvin* refers this to Regeneration, and not Creation. Hath he not renewed you by his Spirit? and will he not protect you by his ſtrength? and that you may not queſtion his power, look up to the Heavens which he hath ſtretched out, and the foundations of the Earth which he hath laid: And is that Arm which hath done ſuch mighty works, too weak to defend that work which is choicer in his eye than either the extended Heaven, or the eſtabliſhed Earth? We vilifie God, and defile his glory, when our fear of mans power ſtifles our Faith in God, *Iſa* 8. 12, 13. *Neither fear you their fear, nor be affraid, ſanctifie the Lord of Hoſts himſelf, and let him be your fear.* Let the wicked fear the *Aſſyrians*, and engage in confederacies againſt them; but let your eyes be lifted up to me and my Providence. God will either turn away the mouth of the Cannon from the Church, or arm it againſt the ſhot. Either preſerve it from a danger, pro-tect it in it, or ſanctifie it to the Church, and who need fear a Sword in a Fathers hand?

1. *Will*

1. *Will you fear man, who have a God to ſecure you?* The Church belongs to God, not to man, as a juſt propriety. *Iſa.* 43. 1. *Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by my name: thou art mine, when thou paſſeſt through the waters I will be with thee, &c. Thou art mine*, not mans. Thou art mine, I am thine. I will be with thee as thine, I will ſecure thee as mine. Is my creating, is my forming, is my redeeming thee to no purpoſe? I will not ſecure you from trouble; but ſurely my redemption of you, the propriety I have in you, ſhould ſecure you from fears in thoſe troubles. None ſhall hurt you whilſt I have power to defend you. *God with us*, if well conſidered and believed, is ſufficient to ſtill thoſe fears which have the greateſt outward objects for their encouragement, *Pſal.* 27. 1. *The Lord is the ſtrength of my life, of whom ſhall I be affraid.* If God be our ſtrength to ſupport us, why ſhould the weakneſs of duſt and aſhes ſcare us? Alliance to great men, and Protection of Princes, prop up mens hearts againſt the fears of others; and ſhall alliance to God be of a weaker efficacy? A * Heathen could ſo argue, that knew nothing of Redemption. Let the Counſels of Enemies be crafty *, yet they conſult againſt Gods hidden ones, hidden by God whilſt Plotted againſt by men: who would fear the ſtratagems of men, whilſt protected in an impregnable Tower? God hides, when men are ready to ſeize the Prey. How did the Angel protect a ſincere trembling *Lot* againſt the invaſion of a whole City, and ſecured his perſon whilſt he blinded his enemies eyes that they could not find the door. Inſtruments cannot deſign more maliciouſly, than Chriſt watches over them affectionately. Chriſt hath his Eye to ſee your works and danger where Satan hath his Throne.

* *Arram.* in Epiſt. lib. 1. c. 9.

*Pſal. 83. 3.

Rev. 2. 13.

2. *Will you fear men, who have a God to watch over their motions?* What Counſels can prevail where God intends to over-rule their reſolves? There is no place ſo cloſe as to keep private reſolutions from his knowledge. This was the thought of thoſe States-men againſt whom the Prophet *Iſaiah* thunders, *Iſa.* 29. 15, 16. *Wo unto them that ſeek deep to hide their counſel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark; ſurely your turning of things upſide down ſhall be eſteemed as the potters clay.* Their Counſels were as well known to him as the Potters Clay is to the Potter, which he can either frame into a veſſel, or fling away into the Maſs from whence he took it. God hath not deſpoyled himſelf of his Government; nor will devolve his right upon any men to diſpoſe of his concerns. When men think to act ſo ſecretly, as though they framed themſelves, as though Gods eye were not upon them; He will watch and trace all their Motions, and make them inſignificant to their purpoſes. Satan himſelf, the ſlyeſt and ſubtileſt agent, is too open to God to hide his Counſels from him. Never fear man till the whole combined Policies of Hell can controul the reſolves of Heaven. Till God wants Omniſcience to ive into their ſecrets, skill to defeat their Counſels, and an arm to abate their ower.

3. *Will you fear men or devils who have a God to reſtrain them?*

The great Dragon and General of the Serpents Seed is under a binding-power, who can bind him not only a thouſand years, but a thouſand Ages *. Have his Seed more force to reſiſt Almightineſs, than their Captain? The Prophet ſpeaking of the *Aſſyrians* threatning *Jeruſalem*, and the confuſion in ſome Cities for fear of them, Yet, ſaith he, he ſhall remain at *Nob*, a City of the *Levites*, not far from *Jeruſalem*; where he might have a full proſpect of the City. He ſhall but ſhake his hand, he ſhall not gripe it in his Talons; He ſhall ſhew his teeth, but not bite, ſnarl but not worry, *Iſa.* 10. 32. God will let out ſo much of the enemies wrath, as may anſwer his gracious ends to the Church in purging of them, but the remainder of Wrath, which remains in their hearts for the Churches Deſtruction, he will reſtrain *. As a Phyſitian weighs out ſo much as may curb the Diſeaſe, not kill the patient. The Chain of Providence controuls the Power of Satan, when it doth not change his deſires. The *Egyptians* Will againſt the *Iſraelites* was ſtrong, but his power was weak. Might and Power is only in the hand of God, who Reigns over all, 1 *Chron.* 29. 12. And God will exert ſo much of Power to bridle the inclinations of Nature in the

*Rev. 20. 2.

* Pſal. 76. 9. 10.

the wicked for the good of his People. He will give them ſo much li ne as may ſerve his holy purpoſes, but not ſo much as ſhall prejudice the Churches ſtanding. A Staff is not capable of giving a ſmart blow without the force of the hand that holds it. Wicked men are no more than a ſtaff in Gods hand, *Pſal.* 10. 5. *The Rod of my Anger, the Staff in their hand is my indignation*; he can either ſtrike with it, or break it in pieces. The Staff is ſtill in the hand of God, and can do no more than what his merciful Arm moves it to; as he can reſtrain it, ſo he can divert it. What ſhould we fear thoſe whoſe hearts are in Gods hands, whoſe enmity is under Gods reſtraint, who can change their fury into favour, or at leaſt bridle it as he doth the Waves of the Sea? No Enemies ſhot can exceed Gods Commiſſion. God often laughs when men Plot, and diſappoints when they begin to act. Sometimes he makes them act contrary to their intentions. *Balaam* comes to curſe the People, and God turns his tongue to bleſs them, which if guided by his own heart, would have poured out execrations upon them *. God puts the words into his mouth, but not in his heart, *verſe* 5. and makes him bleſs that which his heart hates.

* Numb. 23. 7, 8.

4. *Will you fear them who have a God to ruin them?* Though the Beaſt in the *Revelations* hath ſeven heads, a reaching Wiſdom; and ten horns, a mighty power *, (both the numbers of ſeven, and ten, being numbers of perfection in Scripture) yet with all his Wiſdom and Strength he ſhall tumble down to Deſtruction, they can no more reſiſt Gods power, than bluſtring Winds or raging Waves can croſs his Will. When the enemies of the Church are in Combination, like Thorns full of prickles *folded together*, then ſhall they *be conſumed like ſtubble that is dry*, Nahum 1. 10. God loves to defeat Pride, *Exod.* 18. 11. *In the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them.* God waits but the time of their ſwelling to make them burſt. *Abſalom* kills his Brother, withdraws the people from their obedience to the King, ſtirs them up to revolt, enters *Jeruſalem* in his Fathers abſence, polutes his Concubines, engages in deſigns againſt his life, raiſeth an Army againſt him, who would not ſay *David* was in extremity, and *Abſalom* alone proſpering in his deſigns? but when *Abſalom* comes to open force, God ariſes, an Oak catches him, his Mule forſakes him, and *Joab* diſpatches him. *Senacherib* had proſpered in his Conqueſt of *Judea*, taken many ſtrong Towns, laid ſiege to *Jeruſalem*, ſollicites the People to revolt, blaſphemes the God of Heaven, and then an Angel comes and makes a dreadful ſlaughter in a night, and he returning to his own Countrey is killed by his own Sons *. Gods Arrows ſhall never miſs their mark, and he hath more than one to ſtrike into the hearts of his enemies, *Pſal.* 18. 14. *He ſent out his arrows and ſcattered them.* What reaſon then to fear even multitudes, who can never be too ſtrong for that God who gave them that little ſtrength they have!

*Rev. 17. 3.

* 2 Kings. 19. 7, 35, 36, 37.

Secondly, The ſecond Duty to which we are exhorted. If all Gods Providences tend to the good of his Church and People,

2. *Then cenſure not God in his dark Providences.* As we are often too haſty in our deſires for mercy, and are not content to ſtay Gods time; ſo we are too haſty in making conſtructions of Providence, and will not ſtay Gods leiſure of informing us. When God ſeems at the beginning of every Providence to ſpeak the ſame language as Chriſt did to *Peter* in waſhing his feet, *John* 13. 7. *What I do, thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhalt know hereafter*: The Inſtruments are viſible, the action ſenſible, but the inward meaning ſtill lies obſcured from our view. We are too ſhort ſighted to apprehend and judge of Gods Works: Man cannot underſtand his own way *; much leſs the ways of an infinite God. Gods Judgments are a great deep *, we may ſooner fathom the deepeſt part in the Sea, underſtand all the turnings of thoſe ſubterranean paſſages, lave out the Ocean with a ſpoon, or ſuck in, into our Bellies, that great maſs of waters, than underſtand the ways of God with our ſhallow brains. He makes darkneſs his Pavilion: He is ſometimes very obſcure in his ways. Neither the greatneſs of his Means, nor the wiſdom of his workings, can be fully apprehended by men. We have ſence to feel the effects, but not heads to underſtand

* Prov. 20. 24.

* Pſal. 36. 6.

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the reaſons and methods of the Divine Government. *Eccleſ.* 3. 11. *No man can find out the work that God makes from the begining to the end.* Though a man may ſee the beginning of Gods works, yet is he able to walk underſtandingly along with Divine Wiſdom in every ſtep it takes? will he not loſe the tract often before it comes to an end? 'Tis not the face, but the back-parts of Providence which we behold; why then ſhould we uſurp an authority beyond our ability, and make our ſelves Gods Judges; as if infinite Wiſdom and Power were bounded within the narrow compaſs of our purblind Reaſons? His ways are beyond our tracing, and his Councils too high for our ſhort meaſures. Since therefore God ſatisfies the Righteouſneſs of his own Will, let us ſubmit our curioſity to his Wiſdom, and forbear our Cenſures of that exact righteouſneſs and ſuperlative wiſdom which we cannot comprehend.

1. Therefore, *Firſt fix this in your minds, that God is Righteous, Wiſe and good in every thing.* Good, therefore nothing can be hurtful to his People: Righteous, therefore nothing Unjuſt. Wiſe, therefore nothing in vain; our injurious thoughts of him make us ſo uncharitable towards him, and greater Cenſurers of his righteous ways, than we are of mens wicked actions. Clouds and Darkneſs are about him: our eye cannot pierce through his darkneſs, or ſee the frame of his counſels, yet let theſe Principles be kept as the Center, that *Righteouſneſs and Judgment are the habitation of his throne* *. He is righteous in his darkneſs, wiſe in his cloudineſs; though his Judgments are unſearchable to us, and his ways paſt finding out by our moſt induſtrious inquiſitions; and a depth of knowledge and wiſdom there is in them, too deep for us to meaſure *. God was always Righteous, Wiſe, and Good, he is the ſame ſtill: Though the motions of the Planets be contrary, yet the Sphere where they are fixed, the natures wherewith they were created, are the ſame ſtill. Though the Providences of God have various motions, yet the Spring of his Counſel, the Rule of his Goodneſs, the Eye of his Wiſdom, the Arm of his Power are not altered: He acts by the ſame Rule, diſpoſeth by the ſame Wiſdom, orders according to the ſame Righteouſneſs; he is unchangeable in the midſt of the changeable effects of Providence. The Sun is the ſame body, which admits of no inward alteration, keeps exactly its own motion, though its appearances are ſometimes ruddy, ſometimes clear, its heat ſometimes more faint, at another time more ſcorching; its diſtance ſometimes nearer, ſometimes farther off. He muſt be very ignorant that thinks the objects upon which we look through a Priſme or Trigonal glaſs, change their colours as often as they are repreſented ſo, in the various turnings of the Glaſs. You ſee the undulations and wavings of a Chain which hangs prependicularly, one part moves this way, and another that way, but the hand that hold's it, or the beam to which it is faſtned, is firm and ſteddy.

* Pſal. 9. 2.

* Rom 9. 33.

2. *Diſtinguiſh between preparations to the main work, and the perfection of the work*; between the motions of Gods eyes, and the diſcovery of his ſtrength, his eyes move before his power. The neglect of this was the cauſe of the *Iſraelites* uncharitable Cenſures of the kindneſs of God: they interpret Gods reducing them into the Straits near the Red Sea, a deſign for their deſtruction, which was but the preparation for their compleat deliverance, in a way moſt glorious to God, and moſt comfortable and advantagious to themſelves.

He that knows not the uſe of the Grape, would fooliſhly cenſure a man who ſhould fling them into a Winepreſs, and ſqueeze them into maſh, which is but a preparation of them to afford that generous liquor which was the end of their growth. God treads his Grapes in a Wine-preſs to draw from thence a delicate Wine, and preſerve the juyce for his own uſe, which would elſe wither upon the ſtalk, and dry up to nothing. We judge not the Husbandman angry with his ground for tearing it with his Plow; nor cenſure an Artificer for hewing his Stones, or beating his Iron, but expect patiently the iſſue of the deſign. Why ſhould we not pay the ſame reſpect to God which we do to men in their Arts; ſince we are leſs capable of being Judges of his incomprehenſible Wiſdom, than of the ſkill of our fellow-creatures? God in his croſs Providences prepares

Morn. de veritate Rel. Chriſtian. *cap.* 12. p. 210, 211.

the Church for fruitfulneſs whilſt he Plows it. He may ſeem to be digging up the Bowels of the Church, while he is only preparing to lay the foundation in *Sion* for the raiſing a noble ſtructure; and in what ſhape ſoever he appears in his preparations, he will in his perfection of it appear in glory, *Pſal.* 102. 16. *When the Lord ſhall build up Sion, he ſhall appear in glory*, and evidence that he was reſtoring, whilſt we thought him deſtroying; and healing, whilſt we thought him wounding. As God hath ſetled a gradual Progreſs in his works of Creation, ſo by degrees he brings his everlaſting Counſels to perfection. The ſeaſons of the year are not jumbled together, but orderly ſucceed one another; and the coldneſs of the Winter is but a preparation for a ſeaſonable Spring, and a Summer Harveſt. We do not unrighteouſly accuſe God of diſorder in his common works, why ſhould we do it in his ſpecial works of Providence? Do we diſparage the Muſitians skill for the jarring and unintelligible touches in the tuning the Inſtrument, but rather wait for the Leſſon he intends to play? If we ſtay for Gods fuller Touches of this great Inſtrument of the World in the way of his Providence, it will, like *Davids* Harp, chaſe away that evil Spirit from us which is now too apt to cenſure him.

3. *Fix not your eye only upon the ſenſible operations of providence, but the ultimate end.* As in a Watch the various wheels have different motions, yet all ſubſervient to one end, to tell the true hour of the day, and the motion of the Sun; ſo are all the Providences of God. Should any have been preſerved in the Deluge upon ſome high Mountain, who had not known the deſign of the Ark, and had ſeen it floating upon ſuch a Maſs of Waters, he would have judged the People in it in a deplorable condition, and have concluded that it would have broke againſt the Mountain, or been overturned by the Waves; yet that was *Noah*'s preſervative. Had any of us been with Chriſt, and acknowledged him the Saviour of the World, and yet ſeen him Crucified in ſuch a manner by men, and judged only by that, what wiſe and what juſt conſtructions ſhould we have made of that Providence? much the ſame as ſome of his Diſciples did, *Luke* 24. 21. *We truſted that it had been he which ſhould have redeemed* Iſrael. But the whole deſign is ſpoiled, we were fools, and he an Impoſtor. Yet this which ſeemed to be the ruine of Redemption, was the neceſſary high way to it by Gods conſtitution. No other way was it to be procured, *ver.* 26. *Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to have entred into his Glory?* His entrance into glory to perfect our Salvation, was the end of the ſenſible ſuffering wherein he laid the foundation; as they charge Chriſt with impoſture, not conſidering the end, ſo do we God with unrighteouſneſs, when we conſider not his aim. The end both beautifies and crowns the work; The remarks of Gods Glory in the Creation are better drawn from the ends of the Creatures, and their joynt ſubſerviency to them, than from any one ſingle piece of the Creation. We muſt not only conſider the preſent end, but the remote end, becauſe God in his Providence towards his Church hath his end for after times. God acts for ends at a great diſtance from us, which may not be compleated till we are dead and rotten. How can we judge of that which reſpects a thing ſo remote from us, unleſs we view it in that Relation? Gods aims in former Providences were things to come, his aims in preſent Providences are things to come. As the matter of the Churches Prayers, ſo the objects of Gods Providences are things to come, *Iſa.* 45. 11. *Ask me of things to come, concerning my ſons.* The matter of their Prayers then were, that God would order all things for the coming of the *Meſſiah*. The matter of the Churches Prayer now is, that God would order all things for the prefecting the Meſſiah in his myſtical Body. The whole frame of Providence is for one intire deſign. 'Tis one intire Book with ſeven Seals *. The beginning of a Book as well as the middle hath relation to the end. The deſign of Gods Book of Providence is but one in all the ſeven Seals and periods of time.

Rev. 5. 1.

4. *Conſider not only one ſingle act of providence, but the whole ſcheme, to make a concluſion.* The motions of his eyes are various, but all ends in diſcoveries of his ſtrength. Men do not argue from one ſingle propoſition, but draw the concluſion from ſeveral propoſitions knit together. 'Tis by ſuch a Spiritual Logick

Logick we are to make our concluſions from the way of Providence; as in the reading Scripture, if we take not the whole Period, we may make not only non-ſenſe, but blaſphemy, as in that of the Pſalmiſt, *Thou art not a God that hath pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.* If a man ſhould read only, *thou art not a God*, and make a full ſtop there, it would be Blaſphemy; but reading the whole verſe, it is excellent ſence, and an honourable declaration of Gods holineſs. Such Errors will be committed in reading the Books of Providence, if we fix our eyes only in one place, and make a full ſtop where God hath not made any. We judge not of a Picture by the firſt draught, but the laſt lines; not by one ſhadow or colour, but by the whole compoſure. The Wiſdom of God is beſt judged of by the view of the harmony of Providence. The ſingle threads of Providence may ſeem very weak, or knotty and uneven, and ſeem to adminiſter juſt occaſion of cenſure; but will it not as much raiſe the admiration to ſee them all woven into a curious piece of branched work? Conſider therefore Gods ways of working, but fully judge nothing, till the concluſion, for that is to judge before the time. Judge not then of Providence at the firſt appearance, God may ſo loſe the glory of his work, and you the comfort.

Burges of Juſtification, part 2. Serm. 2. P. 12

Thirdly. The third Duty. *Inquire into providence, and interpret all publick providences by this Rule.* We muſt ſearch into it, though we are not able to find out all the reaſons of it. What can be a braver ſtudy than that which is the object of Gods eternal counſel? We are conformed to God in our Wills when we have the ſame ends in our motions; and we are conformed to God in our underſtandings when we have the ſame object of our thoughts; ſome Providences have their interpretation written in their foreheads, we may run and read; ſuch as his ſignal Judgments in the World, which expreſs the very ſin for which they are inflicted; others are wrapt up in a harder ſhell, and more covers, and therefore more labour to reach the kernel; ſome are too high for our knowledge, none for our enquiry. 'Tis our duty to ſeek after God, though we can never arrive to a perfect knowledg of him. *Job* 11. 7. *canſt thou by ſearching find out God? canſt thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?* He prohibits not the ſearching, though he aſſerts the impoſſibility of finding him out to perfection. What hath God given us faculties for, but to ſearch after him? and we muſt not do it to ſatisfie our curioſity, but to encreaſe our knowledge, and conſequently our admiration of his wiſe and powerful care. Diligence muſt be uſed too. Our firſt thoughts about things of concernment, are uſually confuſed; ſo are our firſt ſights of Providence. Providence is a great deep, deep things are not ſeen without ſtooping down. We muſt παρακυψαι as the Angels do when they ſearch into the things of the Goſpel *. But let this aim of God at the good of his Church be the rule of your interpertation. Without this Compaſs to ſteer our judgments by, we may both loſe and rack our ſelves in the Wilderneſs of Providence, and fortify our natural Atheiſm and Ignorance inſtead of our Faith. I muſt confeſs the ſtudy of Providence is in ſome reſpect more difficult than in the former Ages of the World, becauſe God ſeems to manage things in the Church more by his Wiſdom than Power, which is not ſo intelligible by man as the ſenſible effects of his ſtrength. That Attribute he manifeſted moſt in Miraculous ways, and the viſible Miniſtry of Angels, as we read in Scripture-ſtories; now he employs his Wiſdom more in ordering ſecond cauſes in ordinary ways to his own high, merciful, and juſt ends. Yet ſince the diſcovering of Chriſt, God hath given us a rule whereby we may diſcern much of his Wiſdom in the knowledge of his end, as the knowledge of Chriſt removes the Veil from the Scripture in our reading of it *. *The ſame Vail remains in the reading of the Old Teſtament, which Veil is done away in Chriſt,* (which Veil is ſtill upon the *Jews*) and makes us underſtand thoſe parts of the Old Teſtament, which otherwiſe would be utterly obſcure; ſo in the reading the Books of Providence, the knowledg of this end of God in them, will help us to underſtand the meaning of that which otherwiſe would non-plus the Reaſon of man. He that knows the end of one that is making a Watch, will not wonder at his framing ſmall wheels, and filing little pins; but he that underſtands nothing of the deſign, would count it ridiculous for a man ſo to trifle a-

* 1 Pet. 1 12

*2 Cor. 3. 14, 15, 16.

way his time. Without the knowledge of this end, we ſhall expoſe our ſelves to miſerable miſtakes. As *Plutarch* miſtook the cauſe of the ceaſing of Oracles, aſcribing it to the change of the nature of the Soil, not affording thoſe exhalations as formerly; or the death of the Demons which gave thoſe Oracles. He had judged otherwiſe, had he known or believed the riſing of a Higher Power, the Son of Righteouſneſs in the World, who impoſed ſilence upon thoſe Angels of darkneſs; the moſt famous Oracles in the World ceaſing about the time of Chriſt. To imagine to interpret the motions of Providence without a knowledge of Chriſt and the deſign of God for his Church, is as vain as to imagine we can paint a ſound, or underſtand a colour by our ſmell; Correct Senſe by Reaſon in this work, and Reaſon by Faith. To what end hath God preſcribed Faith to ſuccour us in the weakneſs of Reaſon, if it had been capable to underſtand his ways without it, and if we make no uſe of it upon ſuch occaſions?

Fourthly, A fourth Duty. *Conſider the former providences God hath wrought for the church in the paſt ages.* Let him not loſe the preſent glory of his paſt works, *Pſal.* 102. 18. *This ſhall be written for the generation to come, and the people which ſhall be created ſhall praiſe the Lord.* Even for that work of his which is written to be done in former Ages. God loves to have his former works read and pleaded. 'Tis a keeping a ſtanding praiſe of him in the World. We have had the benefit of them, it is fit God ſhould have the glory of them from us, as well as from thoſe who immediately injoyed them. Our good was bound up in every former preſervation of the Church. If the Candleſtick had been broken, where had the Candle been? Had the Church been deſtroyed, how could the Goſpel have been tranſmitted to us? let the Duty we owe to Gods Glory engage us to a conſideration of them; and the benefit we have had by them alſo incite us; we uſually forget not things that are ſtrange, nor things that are profitable; His works of old have been works of Wonder in themſelves, and profitable to us. To what end are the Praiſes of God diſcovered to the Generations to come, but that they ſhould reflect thoſe Praiſes to Heaven again, and convey them down to the Generations following? *Pſal.* 78. 4. *Shewing to the generation to come the praiſes of the Lord.*

1. *This will help us in our inquiries in preſent providences.*

There is a beautiful connexion between former and latter Providences; they are but ſeveral links of one Chain. The Principle and end is the ſame; That God from whence they come, that Chriſt to which they tend, is the ſame yeſterday to day and for ever. What God doth now, is but a Copy of what he pourtrayed in his word as done in former ages; There are the ſame goodneſs, the ſame deſign in both. The Births of Providence are all of a like temper and diſpoſition. We cannot miſs of the underſtanding of them, if we compare them with the ancient Copies: For God is in the Generation of the Righteous, the ſame God ſtill. God is the ſame, his ends are the ſame, the events will be the ſame.

2. *It will ſupport our Faith.* The reaſon of our diffidence of God in the cauſe of the Church, is the forgetfulneſs of his former appearances for her. O! if we did remember his former goodneſs, we ſhould not be ſo ready to doubt of his future care. This was the Pſalmiſts care in his deſpondencies, and in his overwhelming troubles of ſpirit, *Pſal.* 77. 9. *Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger ſhut up his tender mercies?* but *verſe* 10. He concludes it his *infirmity*, and reſolves upon a review of the Records of Gods ancient works for his People, *and the years of the righe hand of the moſt High*; theſe times wherein he declared his Power and his glory, and ſo proceeds to the top of all their deliverances, *viz.* that out of *Egypt*. Doth Gods Wiſdom decay? or his Power grow feeble? Is not his Intereſt the ſame? Is he not a God ſtill like himſelf? Is not his glory as dear to him as before? Hath he caſt off his affection to his own name? Why ſhould not he then do the ſame works, ſince he hath the ſame concern? God himſelf to encourage us calls them to our remembrance, *Iſa.* 50. 2. *Is my hand ſhortned that I cannot redeem, or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I do dry up the ſea, I make the Rivers a Wilderneſs,*

Wilderneſs, &c. Am not I the ſame God that dried up the Sea, that wrought thoſe ancient wonders which amaz'd the World? What doth your diſtruſt ſignifie but the impair of my Power? Rouſe up your ſelves to a conſideration of them! And thence gather freſh ſupplies to ſtrengthen you in your preſent dependence upon me! He puts us in mind of them, becauſe we are apt to forget them. *Gen.* 15. 6. When it is ſaid *Abraham* believed in the Lord, and it was accounted to him for righteouſneſs; God anſwered him, *v.* 7. *I am the Lord that brought thee out of* Ur *of the Chaldees*, keep up thy Faith, and to that end, remember what I did for thee before in calling thee! caſt thy eye upon that place whence I delivered thee! either from the Idolatries of the place, or the perſecution he was in for the true Worſhip of God. And as God puts him in mind of his Mercy he had ſhewn to him before for the encouragement of his Faith; ſo the people of God have made uſe of them to this end. *Goliah*'s Sword was counted by *David* the fitteſt for his defence in his flight, becauſe it had been a Monument of Gods former deliverance of him, 1 *Sam.* 21. 9. When he asks for a Sword or Spear, *Abimelech* ſaid, *the ſword of* Goliah *whom thou ſleweſt, is here*; and David *ſaid, there is none like that, give it me.* How haſty he catches at it! There is none like that Sword that hath ſo ſignal a mercy writ upon it. That very Sword will not only defend me againſt my enemies, but guard my Faith againſt thoſe Temptations that would invade it. This encouragement of Faith and Hope is the end of God in his tranſmiſſion of the Records of his former Providences to us, *Pſal.* 78. 6, 7. *That the generation to come might know them, and declare them to their children*; From one Poſterity to another, *that they might ſet their hope in God.*

3. *It will enliven our Prayer.*

'Tis a mighty Plea in Prayer. How often doth *David* urge it? Thou haſt been my help, thou haſt delivered my Soul from Death, wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling? but in the Churches concerns too, 1 *Chron.* 16. 11, 12. *Seek the Lord and his ſtrength, ſeek his face continually: remember the marvellous works that he hath done.* A reflection upon what God hath done, ſhould be enjoyned with our deſires of what we would have God to do for us. When *Moſes* was praying upon the top, while *Iſrael* was fighting with *Amalek* at the foot of the hill; he had the Rod of God in his hand, *Exod.* 17. 9. That miraculous Rod which had amazed *Pharaoh*, whoſe motion ſummoned all the Plagues upon them. That Rod which had ſplit the Sea for their paſſage, broached the Rock for their thirſt, and had been inſtrumental in many Miracles: certainly *Moſes* ſhewed this rod to God, and pleaded all thoſe wonderful deliverances God had wrought inſtrumentally by it. No doubt but he carried it with him to ſhew to God for a Plea, as well as to the *Iſraelites* to ſpirit their Reſolutions againſt their Enemies.

4. *It will prevent much Sin.*

A forgerfulneſs of his former works is one cauſe of our preſent Provocations. It was ſo in the caſe of the *Iſraelites* ſin, *Pſal.* 106. 7. *They remembred not the multitude of his mercies, but provoked thee at the ſea, even at the red ſea:* they had loſt the memory of ſo many Miracles in *Egypt*, and which aggravated their Sin, *they provoked him at the Sea, at the red ſea*; they provoked him under a preſent indigency, as well as againſt former mercy: they provoked him in that place of ſtreights where all the powers on Earth could not have relieved them, had Heaven neglected them. The Provocation you may ſee, *Exod.* 14. 11, 12. which ſprang from a forgetfulneſs of his kindneſs ſo lately ſhewed to them. How apt are we to forget old Mercies, when we are ſo naturally apt to blot out of our memories mercies newly received? If this were well conſidered by men, it would prevent their enterprizes againſt the Church, and conſequently their ſhame and ruine. Are there Records of any who have hardened themſelves againſt God and proſpered *. How might in that reflection be ſeen the * Job 9. 4. fruſtrations of Counſels, diſgracing of attempts, ſhowers of Fury and Vengeance from Heaven upon the heads of ſuch? The reaſon why the wonderful works of God were to be made known to poſterity, was, that they might not be as their Fathers, a Stubborn and Rebellious Generation * of men. If they did con- * Pſal. 78. 6, 8. ſider thoſe tranſactions of God in and for his Church, they could no more think to

ſtop

ſtop the breath of perpetual powerful Providence, than to bridle in a Storm, or ſtop the motion of the Sun. To conclude this: Gods Providential Judgements are to be remembred: though they are for the puniſhment of the age that feel them, they are alſo for the inſtruction of the age which ſucceeds them; *tell* מרנ number, be as exact as in your Accounts, wherein you take notice of every number, minute, and cipher. The works of Providence as well as the Doctrine of God, are parts of a Childs Catechiſm, they are to keep up the conſideration of them in themſelves, and hand them in inſtruction to their Children.

Fifthly, The fifth Duty. *Act faith on Gods Providence.*

Times of trouble ſhould be times of confidence; fixedneſs of heart on God would prevent fears of heart. *Pſal.* 112. 7. *He ſhall not be affraid of evil tydings, his heart is fixed*; how? *truſting in the Lord: his heart is eſtabliſhed, they ſhall not be moved.* Otherwiſe without it we ſhall be as light as a Cock moved with every blaſt of evil tydings, our hopes will ſwim or ſink according to the news we hear. Providence would ſeem to ſleep, unleſs Faith and Prayer awakened it. The Diſciples had but little Faith in their Maſters account, yet that little Faith awakened him in a Storm, and he relieved them. Unbelief doth only diſcourage God from ſhewing his power in taking our parts. *Every one will walk in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever*, *Micah* 4. 5. Heathens will truſt in their Idols, and ſhall not we in that God that lives for ever? Have we any reaſon to have a leſs eſteem of our confidence in God, than Heathens had of and in their Idols? we ſhould do our duty, which is Faith and Hope, and leave God to do his work, which is mercy and kindneſs. By unbelief we deny his Providence, diſparage his Wiſdom, and ſtrip him of his Power; we have none elſe to truſt, no creature can order any thing for the Churches good without Gods commiſſion and direction; what ſhould we truſt him for? for that wherein his glory is concerned, which is more worth to him than all the World beſides. Truſt him moſt when inſtruments fail. God takes them off ſometime, to ſhew that he needs not any, and to have our confidence rightly placed on him, which ſtaggered before between him and the Creature.

1. *All the godly formerly did act Faith on a leſs foundation.* The godly Patriarchs who lived eight or nine hundred years, depended upon Providence that long time, and ſhall not we for ſeventy years, the uſual term of mans life! They had Promiſes to ſupport them, we have not only the ſame Promiſe, but the Performances of them too. They had Providences, we have the ſame and more, all upon Record in Scripture, all ſince the Canon of Scripture was cloſed; whatſoever God hath remarkably done for his people in all ages. *Adam* had but one Promiſe, and but little experience of Gods Providence, yet no doubt truſted in him. We have a multitude of Promiſes, not only pronounced, but ſealed, confirmed by many repetitions, which are freſh obligations laid by God upon himſelf. The experience of all the Providences of God towards his Church for above five thouſand years; and ſhall our Faith ſtagger when upon us are come the ends of the World? doth it become us to have our Obligations to Faith ſo ſtrong, and our Exerciſe of it ſo weak? The promiſe of Chriſt
* Iſa. 7. 14. * that a Virgin ſhould bring forth a Son, was thought by God a ſufficient ſecurity to ſupport their confidence in him againſt the fury of their enemies; It being a greater wonder that a Virgin without loſs of her Virginity ſhould bring forth a Son, than the routing of an Hoſt of Enemies. Is not then the performance of this Gods actual ſending his Son to us through the Womb of a Virgin, a higher ground of confidenee fot the Churches ſucceſs in every thing elſe, than barely the Promiſe could be? All creatures in danger have a natural confidence in God, *He is the confidence of all the ends of the earth*; but the Churches confidence may be more firmly placed in him, becauſe he is particularly the God of their Salvation, *Pſal.* 65. 5. *By terrible things, in righteouſneſs, wilt thou anſwer us, O God of our ſalvation, who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth.*

2. *His*

2. *'Tis your only way to have mercy for the Church, and for our ſelves.*

If he *take pleaſure in them that hope in his mercy*, as it is in *Pſal.* 147. 11. He will take pleaſure to relieve them, He will *ſtrengthen the bars of their gates*, *verſe* 13. If he take pleaſure in them that hope in his mercy, then the ſtronger and more lively their hope is, the more intenſe is Gods pleaſure in them. If they do not hope in his Mercy, he hath no pleaſure in them, and no delight to them. He hath a goodneſs laid up for them that fear him, and he will lay it out too for them that truſt in him, *Pſal.* 31. 15. *O how great is thy goodneſs which thou haſt laid up for them that fear thee, which thou haſt wrought for them that truſt in thee before the ſons of men?* 'Tis laid up for all that fear him, but it is wrought for them that truſt in him. It is manifeſted upon ſpecial acts of truſt and relyance, and wrought before the ſons of men. Thoſe that own God publickly in a way of relyance, God will own them publickly in a way of kindneſs. Faith is the key that unlocks the Cabinet of ſpecial Providence. Thoſe eyes which move about all the World, are fixed upon thoſe that truſt in him, *Pſal.* 33. 18. *The eye of the Lord is upon them that hope in his mercy.*

The ſixth Duty. *Wait upon God in the way of his providence.* Wait upon him as he is a faithful Creator *, much more ſince the title of being our Redeemer is added to that of our Creator, which ſtrengthens his Relation to us. Not to wait, diſparageth his care, bounds his power, or reflects upon his Wiſdom, as if he had ſtript himſelf of his immenſe goodneſs, and forgot both his Promiſe and his People; as if he had cancelled the Covenant, and given up his whole intereſt to the Luſts of men. Wait in the ſaddeſt appearances; the hour of Chriſts death was diſmal in the World, and darkneſs upon the Earth; A Miraculous Eclipſe of the Sun taken notice of by the very Heathens; yet were we never nearer to happineſs than in that dreadful time when our Saviour was moſt dyed in his own Blood. The Sanguine Complexion of the Evening-sky, is a preſage of a fair ſucceeding Morning; ſo many times is the red Veſture of the Church.

* 1 Pet. 4. 19.

1. *Wait upon him obedientially.*

Commit your ſouls to God, but *in well doing* *. Uſe no indirect means; a contempt of the precept cannot conſiſt with Faith in either Promiſe or Providence. The obeying part is ours, the governing part is Gods, *Prov.* 23. 17. *Let not thine heart envy Sinners; but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long; for ſurely there is an end, and thine expectation ſhall not be cut off.* God will govern all the day, but we muſt fear him all the day. When fear on our part attends Government on Gods part, there will be an end of our carnal fears, and a good iſſue of our hopes. The greateſt deliverances of his Church have been when his People has ſtood ſtill. *Exod.* 14. 13. As that deliverance was a type of all future, and a ground of Faith; ſo the carriage God enjoyned was a rule to his People in all future ſtraits. 'Tis againſt the Laws of Gods Government for thoſe liſted in his Service to ſtir without order. The Law is our ſtanding-Rule of Duty. Providence cannot be a ſtanding viſible Rule, becauſe of the variety and ſeeming croſsneſs of it ſometimes to our apprehenſions. Do not preſume to lead God, but be led by him: 'Tis our ſafety to follow him, 'tis our ſin and danger to preſume to be his Directors. We may loſe our ſelves when we are our own blind guides, and fall into a ditch; but when we follow God, he hath wiſdom to foreſee the Precipices we may ſtumble into, and goodneſs to divert us from them. By interpoſing carnal devices, men may prehaps have their ends, but with little comfort, perhaps much bitterneſs to themſelves. *Jacob* by his haſty uſing his own and his mothers ſinful project for the Bleſſing, got it indeed, but a croſs too, for he was a man of Sorrows all his days. By waiting in Gods way, we ſhall have our ends with more ſweetneſs, becauſe purely a fruit of Gods care and goodneſs.

* 1 Pet. 4. 19.

2. *Wait patiently.* How often are our Spirits troubled about future events, and are affraid of the evil which threatens us, as if we were in pain for God, and in doubt of his wiſe Conduct? Think not Gods time too long. He

waits

waits as much for a fit opportunity to ſhew his Mercy, as you can wait for the enjoyment of it, *Iſa.* 13. 18. *Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you; bleſſed are all they that wait for him.* 'Tis a part of our beſtedneſs to wait for God, ſince it is a part of Gods kindneſs to wait for a fit ſeaſon to be gracious to us. 'Tis not for us to preſcribe Rules to God, but follow the Rules he preſcribes to us. He hath freely made his Promiſe, let him be Maſter of his own time to make it good. He will ſhew as much Wiſdom in accompliſhing, as he did Mercy in declaring it. God can do things in a moment, but it is his wiſdom to take time, that his People may have time to exerciſe their truſt, their hope, and their patience. He will take time in the ways of his Providence, as well as he did in the works of Creation. He allotted ſix days to that which he could have framed in a minute. He is Judge of what is needful for us, and when it is needful for us. If God ſhould give us that, which is a mercy in its own nature, many times when we deſire it, it might not be a mercy. If we will truſt the skill of his Wiſdom for the beſt ſeaſon, it cannot but be a mercy, for he will give it us with his own glory, and grace wrapt up in it, which will make it ſweeter to himſelf when his Wiſdom is honoured, and ſweeter to us when our good is promoted. Gods methods appear in the end both wiſer and better than our frames. Infinite goodneſs aims more at our welfare, than our ſhallow ſelf-love; and infinite wiſdom can conduct things to our welfare better than our ſhort-ſighted skill. He that knows all the moments of time, knows beſt how to time his actions. As God ſtaid for a fulneſs of time to bring the great Redemption by Chriſt into the World, ſo he ſtays for a fulneſs of time to bring all the great conſequences and appendices of it unto his Church. *Every thing is beautiful in his time.* In its own time; In Gods time, not in ours *, &c.

* Eccleſ. 3.11.

3. *Wait conſtantly.* Though the Wheels of Providence ſeem ſometimes to ſtand ſtill *, and God ſeems to put a period to the care of his Church, yet let not us neglect our Duty. Wait a while, and the Wheels will be put upon their former rolling. Some particular paſſages of Providence may trouble us for a while, but in the iſſue God may anſwer our deſires above our expectations, and thereby confute our fears. His Providences are ſometimes like Rivers that run under ground, out of ſight, but will riſe again with a delightful Stream, with ſome new Medicinal quality, contracted from the Earth by the way. *Joſeph* a Priſoner waits upon God for his Liberty, and God gives him freedom with preferment. God can bring about his Peoples ſafety by unexpected ways. Who would have imagined before, that his own Dream ſhould make him a Captive, and *Pharaoh*'s Dream make him a Favourite? The chief Butler remembers him not till he was in an exigencie, and the divining skill of the Wiſe men of *Egypt* confounded. *Joſeph* loſt nothing by waiting upon God, who made ſo many circumſtances concur to promote his Honour. Wait therefore upon him in the ſoreſt afflictions. The Church is only afflicted in Mercy, but the Enemies of it are pulled up by the roots, *Jer.* 30. 11. *I am with thee to ſave thee; though I make a full end of the Nations whither I have ſcattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in meaſure.* God deals with his People as a Father, who corrects to reform, not to deſtroy; but with his enemies he deals as a Judge. God's Providence, like *Moſes* his Rod, may ſeem ſometimes a devouring Serpent, but it is to convince the *Egyptians*, and deliver the *Iſraelites*.

* Ezek. 1. 21

4. *Wait in the uſe of lawful means for preſervation*; Not to uſe means, is to ſlight his Providence; not to truſt it. It ſeems not to conſiſt with the wiſdom of God, to order things always ſo, as to be neceſſitated to put forth an extraordinary power in things which his creatures by a common Providence can naturally accompliſh. God ſaves by natural means; when they will not ſerve the turn, he will ſave by ſupernatural. God choſe an Ark to preſerve *Noah* in. He did not want ſupernatural means for his preſervation. He might have catched him up in a Cloud, and continued him there till the drying of the waters. *Noah* doth not diſpute the buſineſs with God, but prepares an Ark according to his order, and he was righteous in his obedience as well as in his truſt. God would not preſerve our Saviour by a Miracle, when ordinary means

means would ſerve the turn. He commands *Joſeph* by his Angel to flee into *Egypt* with the Child *. *Joſeph* deſires not God to preſerve him by an extraordinary power to ſave his pains of travelling; he ſubmits to Gods order, and God quickly clears the way for his return. Indeed ſometimes the wheels of Providence are lifted up from the Earth, and do not go in the ordinary tracts *; but Miracles muſt be left to Gods Pleaſure, for us to deſire them is to tempt our great Governor. * Mat. 2. 13. * Ezek. 1. 19.

The Seventh Duty. *Pray for the Church.*

'Tis an encouragement that our Suit in this caſe will not be denied. The deſire of welfare is conformable to his Counſel, which ſhall ſtand notwithſtanding the Devices of men. His Counſel in particular concerns of men ſhall ſtand, much more is the ſtability of his Counſel for the Church. He is a God hearing Prayer in a way of common Providence, and a God hearing Prayer in a way of ſpecial attention, *Pſal.* 61. 1. *Hear my cry, O God, attend unto my prayer.* *David* deſires that God would hear him, as more particularly concerned in his caſe. He is ſo in the concerns of his Church; will he hear an *Iſhmael* crying for himſelf, and young Lyons roaring for their Prey, and ſtop his Ears to the voice of his own Spirit in his People, pleading for the Church, dearer to him than the whole maſs of Nature? We have greater Arguments to uſe than in any other caſe. The Relation the Church hath to God; The affection God hath to the Church. *Lazarus whom thou loveſt is ſick*, was *Martha*'s argument to Chriſt. What greater encouragement to our Petitions, than Gods affection, than Gods Relation? God loves to have our affection comply with his; God loves others the better for ſoliciting its welfare. *Moſes* had the greateſt manifeſtation of Gods Love after he had prayed for the *Iſraelites* *, though in a caſe of ſin, and preſently after in *Exod.* 33. 11. God ſpeaks with him *face to face as a man ſpeaks to his friend*; and in the ſame chapter, and the beginning of *Exod.* 34. God ſhews him *his glory* as much as he was capable to bear. *Daniel* was a great Petitioner for the Church *. He was Gods great favourite upon that account, and had the cleareſt and higheſt Revelations made to him of the courſe of Providence in the World. Prov. 19. 21. * Exod. 32. 32 * Dan. 9. 3, 21. Dan. 10 2, 5.

The eighth Duty. *When you receive any mercy for the Church in anſwer of Prayer, give God the glory of it.*

The variety of his Providences gives us matter for new ſongs and compoſitions. What Volleys of joyful ſhouts? what Hallelujahs to God do we find upon the Ruin of Antichriſt, *Rev* 19. 1, 2, 3. God calls for Praiſe out of the Throne, *verſe.* 5. and the Church returns it, *verſe* 6, 7. 'Tis God rides upon the Cherub, 'tis God that ſits upon the wings of the Wind, 'tis God who is in all Inſtruments to quicken their motions, and direct them to their ſcope. Pſal. 149. 1. Pſal. 18. 10.

The ninth Duty. *Imitate God in his affection to the Church.*

Chriſt did what he did for the good of his Church: God doth what he doth for the advantage of the Church. Let the ſame mind be in us that was in Chriſt; let the ſame end be ours which is the end of God. Thus we ſhall be like our Creator, thus we ſhall be like our Governor, thus we ſhall be like our Redeemer. Men take it kindly from others that love thoſe they have a reſpect for. God loves all that love his People, and bleſſes them that bleſs them, *Gen.* 12. 3. *I will bleſs them that bleſs thee, and curſe them that curſe thee.*

The tenth Duty. *Look after ſincerity before God.*

'Tis for the ſecurity of ſuch that God ſhews himſelf ſtrong. No man that fully believes and underſtands this Doctrine, but ſhould be glad to be of that happy Society, that Aſſembly of the firſt born, who are under the care of a watchful eye, and the mighty power of the God of the whole Earth. When God choſe *Iſrael*, the very ſtrangers ſhould for their own Intereſt joyn with them *. And to ſuch as *take hold of his covenant* he promiſes to *give a name in his houſe that ſhall not be cut off* *. Yea, even *to the ſons of the ſtrangers that ſhould joyn themſelves to the Lord. v.* 6. Let this encourage us to Chriſtianity. God never encouraged men to be Chriſtians by Promiſes of Worldly * Iſa. 14. 1. * Iſa. 56. 4, 5.

greatneſs, but by Promiſes of a conſtant care of them for their happineſs, by Promiſes of making all things work together for their good. If God will ſhew himſelf ſtrong for thoſe that are perfect in heart towards him, then he hath no ſtrength for thoſe that are unſound and falſe in heart towards him. No man hath an intereſt in his ſpecial Providence without Faith. The Power, Knowledg, Wiſdom of God, are all ſet againſt him. Though the whole World be in commotions, the Earth be removed, and the Mountains caſt into the depths of the Sea, there is no ground of fear to Faith; but what Buckler againſt them hath Unbelief and Hypocriſie? What ſecurity againſt Wrath can Riches give you? What defence againſt his power can your Potſherd ſtrength afford you? It was not for *Jobs* wealth that God made his boaſts of him, but for his ſincerity, *Job* 1. 8. *Haſt thou conſidered my ſervant* Job, *that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man?* And for the want of this he loaths a World. Labour therefore for ſincerity towards God; beg it of God. Get the evidence of it, and preſerve it.

ERRATA.

Page 12. Line 25. Read *by this.* p. 16. l. 1. r. *enquires.* p. 16. l. 5. r. Abner. p. 23. l. ult. r. *ſhowers.* p. 25. l. 22. r. *great.* p. 29. p. l. 56. r. *his Creator.* p. 48. l. 7. r. *ſenſual.* p. 76. l. 24. r. *Marſhal* p. 81. l 56. r. *riſe then*

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